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Pinkster, F.M.

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4. Localized social networks, socialization and social mobility in a low-income neighborhood in the Netherlands

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Abstract

The assumed negative effects of living in a low-income neighborhood on the social mobility of already poor residents are central to the current political debate about disadvantaged neighborhoods in the Netherlands. A case study in The Hague addresses the question of which social mechanisms in the daily life of residents might contribute to reduced social mobility in the long run. On the basis of interviews with neighborhood experts and residents about local social networks, job search strategies and work ethics, evidence can be found for limited opportunity structures and negative socialization processes. However, the findings suggest that these mechanisms work more subtly than generally assumed in the research literature, as the specific socio-spatial context also provides opportunities and negative effects are selective rather than generic.

4.1 Introduction

Social mixing is a key ingredient in urban policy throughout Europe. In the Netherlands, the ideology of social mixing has strongly influenced the current Big Cities Policy which targets the population composition of low-income neighborhoods through physical restructuring of the largely social housing stock. Central to the Big Cities Policy is the idea that neighborhoods should *'form a safe, healthy and social environment, and not a source of deprivation'* (Ministry of BZK, 2004, p. 19). Social mixing addresses livability, safety and neighborhood management issues in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods (Uitermark, 2003), as well as the unwanted exclusionary consequences of the concentration of poverty for individual residents. Indeed, the Dutch government has expressed strong concerns about the relationship between segregation in the larger cities and faltering social mobility of residents: *'While the physical and economic infrastructure [of cities] have 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'* (Ministry of BZK, 2004, p. 17). The foremost focus of social mixing programs is on diversifying the housing stock to accommodate more affluent households, and therefore on achieving a socio-economic mix, but the debate on mixed neighborhoods is increasingly influenced by the troubled relationship between the segregation and integration of immigrants in Dutch society (Van der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2005; Musterd, 2003).

Whether the concerns about the negative effects of concentrated poverty and the expected benefits of social mixing through tenure-diversification are founded is a source of discussion in the academic world (Galster, 2005; Musterd and Andersson, 2005). This discussion not only deals with the question to what degree residents' opportunities are influenced by their social and physical surroundings, but also the question of which mechanisms in daily life contribute to these long-term neighborhood effects. In the case of the Netherlands, research on the existence of neighborhood effects on social mobility – seen as a change over time in the residents' socio-economic characteristics, such as income, labor market attachment and labor market performance – has led to mixed conclusions (Van der Klaauw and Van Ours, 2003; Van der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2005; Musterd, de Vos, et al., 2003). Given that there is a correlation between the population composition at neighborhood level and individual socio-economic mobility, neighborhood effects seem to be selective in that not every resident in a disadvantaged neighborhood context is affected by their residential surroundings in the same way or to the same degree. Neighborhood effects differ depending on a number of different personal characteristics, such as age, labor market attachment, ethnicity, education, although it is unclear how interaction between these social distinctions might lead to differential individual outcomes and how the observed correlations come into being in the daily life of residents. Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that additional qualitative research in these neighborhoods is needed to study which social mechanisms in the daily life of residents contribute to their reduced social mobility (Buck and Gordon, 2004; Ellen and Turner, 1997; Galster, 2003). Such qualitative studies might offer what Hedström and Swedberg (2001) call explicit or generative explanations that help us understand how individual actions of residents in the daily life of disadvantaged neighborhoods express themselves on the aggregate level as neighborhood effects. Moreover, in view of differential neighborhood effects found in Dutch quantitative studies, qualitative case studies might help us to understand why neighborhood effects are selective and apply to some groups of residents, and not to others. This article discusses such a qualitative case study in a low-income neighborhood in the Netherlands that addresses the question of whether in the daily lives of residents social mechanisms at the neighborhood level might contribute to reduced social mobility in the long run.

4.2 Mechanisms behind neighborhood effects

Various mechanisms have been identified in the research literature which can help us understand how neighborhood effects arise. Some of these explanations focus on the specific population composition and social structures within disadvantaged neighborhoods and would therefore be influenced by the social mixing policies that are currently used in the Netherlands. Hypotheses about such mechanisms therefore formed the starting point of this study. Explanations for neighborhood effects that take the population composition as a starting point identify social interaction at the local level as being the deciding factor in mediating neighborhood effects (Briggs, 2003; Galster, 2005; Sampson, Morenoff, et al., 2002; Small and Newman, 2001). While it is widely acknowledged that people's activity patterns and most of their social interactions surpass the neighborhood level, it has been shown that this is less the case for unskilled, low income residents (Fischer, 1982). As a result, poor residents in poor neighborhoods are worse off than their counterparts in more mixed

neighborhoods: their social contacts are limited to other unskilled, low income residents. Negative interpretations of these relations between residents are twofold.

First, as a result of interrelations at the local level, poor residents in poor neighborhoods lack the useful social resources in their personal networks that are necessary to 'get ahead' in life (Granovetter, 1995; Lin, 1999; Wellman, 1992). Although they might receive various forms of social support within the neighborhood to help them cope and get by (Briggs, 1997; MacDonald, Shildrick, et al., 2005), they lack the necessary 'weak' ties to more affluent and educated people, who can form a bridge to and familiarize them with formal institutions or structures such as the housing market or labor market, and help them escape their marginalized situation. In the case of employment and social mobility, poor residents in poor neighborhoods consequently lack the necessary information and access to jobs. In other words, the informal socio-spatial context of the neighborhood limits the opportunity structures of residents when it comes to work. A methodological difficulty in studying such processes is how to determine whether relations between neighbors are 'weak' or strong ties. Quite often this is determined on the basis of social distinctions such as class, ethnicity or family background. For example, similar ethnic backgrounds between neighbors are expected to result in an exchange of social support. Such relationships are therefore interpreted as a strong tie. In contrast, social relations between people of different backgrounds, for example of socio-economic status or class, are considered to be weak ties. Through these ties, more educated, well-positioned individuals can provide useful resources and opportunities described as 'bridging' capital to other, unskilled individuals. Such a distinction is also made in the public debate about social mix policies in the Netherlands. It is assumed that living in a neighborhood with a high share of low-income families and immigrants leads to few useful social resources and little knowledge of the Dutch language, thereby limiting their opportunities on the labor market. However, it is not ethnic background, class or lifestyle per se that defines whether a tie is strong or weak, but the opportunities, social support and shared resources that result from this relationship. It is therefore important to establish whether living in the same neighborhood leads to interaction and what resources and opportunities are embedded in these interrelations. This includes questions about what local social contacts mean in terms of social, emotional or financial support in general, and in particular in terms of job information and job search strategies.

A second set of social explanations for neighborhood effects focuses on norms, values and behavior that are shared by residents (Briggs, 1997; Friedrichs and Blasius, 2003; Small and Newman, 2001; Wacquant, 1993). It is hypothesized that, through their contacts with their neighbors, poor residents in poor neighborhoods develop deviant attitudes and behavior when it comes to education, employment and the labor market. Such socialization hypotheses are inspired by Lewis' culture of poverty-thesis (1968) and Wilson's (1987) and Massey and Denton's (1993) description of life in the American ghetto of the 1980s. For example, explanations based on socialization processes deal with the negative impact of the lack of role models for children, and the contagious quality of criminal behavior amongst youths and unemployment amongst adult residents. When it comes to employment and social mobility, socialization hypotheses usually focus on deviant work ethics. These socialization processes might be the result of direct interaction within locally oriented social

structures, but also of indirect interaction, by which just sharing the same space creates an awareness of the other's behavior (Lofland, 1973). From this perspective, the neighborhood is seen as a specific socio-spatial context where residents recognize and adopt each other's behavior versus the outside world where their attitudes and behavior are viewed as deviant.

To summarize, it is assumed that the population composition of disadvantaged neighborhoods leads to unfavorable socio-economic outcomes in the long run through mechanisms of negative socialization and limited resources. These hypotheses have been developed on the basis of American research of the black ghetto and the question is whether they are applicable to the Dutch context. Both in socio-economic and in ethnic terms, Dutch 'concentration' neighborhoods are relatively heterogeneous compared to their American counterparts (Aalbers and Deurloo, 2003). Consequently, they might not meet the necessary thresholds to create the collective socialization processes mentioned above (Musterd and Andersson, 2005). Still, the evidence of differentiated neighborhood effects seems to contradict this line of reasoning and suggests that these mechanisms do occur, albeit selectively.

4.3 A Dutch case study

The focus of this article is a case study in a low-income neighborhood in The Hague in the Netherlands. The aim of the study was to gain a greater insight into the degree to which social mechanisms within the neighborhood, resulting from the local population composition, influence residents' employment opportunities and work ethics. On the basis of the research literature, two research questions were formulated:

1. To what degree are low-income residents in a disadvantaged neighborhood locally oriented in their social contacts?
2. How does the formal and informal local social context contribute to residents' employment opportunities and work ethics?

Several studies on neighboring in the Netherlands have found that the neighborhood has lost its meaning when it comes to social relations. For example, most residents in restructured and now socially mixed areas have little to no contact with their neighbors (Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003; Blokland, 2003; Dekker and Bolt, 2005; Kleinhans, 2002). The question is whether this principle holds true for poor residents in low-income neighborhoods. For example, in a Dutch study on residential segregation and inter-ethnic social ties Van der Laan Bouma-Doff (2007) shows that there is a strong and negative association between ethnic concentration and the probability of maintaining contact with native Dutch. She therefore concludes that "*contrary to scholars who argue that the neighborhood is no longer a significant context in individual lives, it is still linked with social interaction*" (p. 1013). Like this study, however, most research on disadvantaged neighborhoods focuses on issues of social cohesion or interaction between different groups of residents, rather than on within group processes where the above-mentioned mechanisms of socialization and limited opportunity structures might be present.

The case study was conducted in Transvaal-Noord in The Hague, a low-income neighborhood[7] where the percentage of families with an income below the official poverty line is more than twice as high as the city average. It can be expected that, if neighborhood effects and their underlying social mechanisms exist anywhere in the Dutch context, Transvaal might be a likely candidate. The case study included interviews with neighborhood experts as well as low-income residents[8]. Interviews with neighborhood 'experts' provided an insight into the informal social structures within the neighborhood, the degree to which different groups of residents were locally oriented in their social life and the degree to which the neighborhood experts had encountered the processes of negative socialization and limited opportunity structures in their neighborhood work. Experts were both professionals, such as neighborhood officials, local social workers, local educational workers and law enforcement, as well as 'professional' residents, such as neighborhood representatives, members of informal neighborhood organizations, cultural organizations, volunteer workers and other informal key figureheads. A total of 24 professional interviews were conducted and numerous neighborhood meetings, activities and festivities were attended.

The professional interviews were followed by thirty interviews with low income residents of three largest ethnic groups in the neighborhood, namely with Moroccan, Turkish and Hindustani-Surinamese residents. These groups were recognized by the professionals as displaying strong localized networks with varying degrees of self-organization and social control within these networks. Residents were approached at local playgrounds and parks and through various formal and informal organizations, quite often with the help of informal key persons or former respondents. The semi-structured, in-depth interviews focused on three different topics. In order to acquire more insight into selection mechanisms in the neighborhood, questions were included about people's residential history, the positive and negative aspects of living in the neighborhood and their wish to move out of the neighborhood. A second topic was residents' local contacts. A distinction was made between contacts that originated in the neighborhood and relations that resulted from other shared characteristics, such as extended family connections, work relations or shared cultural or religious affiliations. Questions were included on the extent to which residents had social contacts with their close neighbors and other people in the neighborhood, and on their perception of their fellow residents[9]. Questions were also included on the actual content of these relations, from recognizing each other on the street to different forms of social support. Similar questions were asked about people's personal backgrounds, family situation and extended family and friends networks. The final section focused on the residents' employment situation and history, their work search strategies, the importance attached to work and, more generally, their perceptions of the importance of work and education. Besides these formal interviews, numerous chance conversations

7 *The neighborhood was selected on the basis of the lowest scale of administrative boundaries. These boundaries overlap to a large degree with actual physical boundaries in the form of major thoroughfares.*

8 *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.*

9 *In the interviews, neighborhood was defined in subjective terms: it was left up to respondents to determine which social relations in their support network lived 'in the neighborhood'.*

with other residents, for example at community centers, neighborhood meetings and at the local public park, provided additional interview material.

4.4 The research area

The centrally located quarter of Transvaalkwartier in The Hague is divided into three neighborhoods housing a total of 14.600 inhabitants and covering around 81 hectares. Transvaalkwartier was developed at the start of the 20th century for the lower working class, a function that it has kept throughout the 20th century. Transvaal-Noord is the most marginalized of the three neighborhoods (see Figure 1). The majority of the housing stock here consists of socially rented dwellings (76 %). In 2000 almost half of the households in Transvaal-Noord had an income below the poverty line, and two thirds of all households received some form of housing subsidy through the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (Central Bureau of Statistics). In 2003, the average income of neighborhood residents was amongst the lowest in the city and more than half of the residents had a what was determined as a low income[10]. The share of residents dependent on social benefits was almost twice the city average. Many families struggle financially to keep their heads above water and a side-effect is that a lot of residents are in debt and many social housing units are sublet illegally to earn people some extra money. This has, in turn, attracted illegal immigrants and has led to overcrowding.

Figure 1: Spatial concentration of poverty in The Hague, Netherlands. Source: Regional Income Statistics (2000), Statistics Netherlands. Map produced by author. 1 cm : 5 km.

10 *Defined as the bottom 40% of the national income distribution.*

Since the late Sixties, Transvaal has been a destination neighborhood for immigrants. In 1980, only 3.5 % of the Dutch population were of ethnic descent, but the student body of neighborhood schools in Transvaal was already largely of non-Dutch origin. The first immigrants were from the former Dutch colony of Suriname, followed by Moroccans and Turks. More recent newcomers are of Ghanaian and Chinese origin and throughout the year Transvaal is home to a substantial group of labor migrants from Poland and Bulgaria. The influx of immigrants has caused large numbers of Dutch inhabitants to leave the neighborhood, and Dutch people currently make up only 11.3 % of the local population[11] (The Hague Department of Statistics, 2004). Those who still live in the neighborhood raised there children there and have seen them leave the area. Most stay because of the cheap housing prices in the neighborhood. Very few of them would raise their children in Transvaal in the current situation. At the moment, the largest ethnic groups are Turkish (24.8 %), Surinamese (24.7 %, the majority of whom are Hindustani-Surinamese), and Moroccan (16.6 %). Just over half of these residents are first generation. Through family reunion and marriages in their country of origin, Moroccan and Turkish immigrants continue to account for a substantial share of newcomers, while the share of Surinamese residents is slowly decreasing, particularly due to the fact that there are few newcomers and the majority of second generation immigrants tend to leave the area.

Transvaal-Noord does not have a favorable reputation. The area has considerable crime problems, from drug dealing and prostitution to problems with petty crime and intimidation by groups of young male residents. The largely social housing stock is of low quality and the small apartments are not equipped to house large immigrant families. The open staircases of multi-family housing blocks make it easy for local youths, junkies and prostitutes to 'hang around' without being seen, which exacerbates the safety problems in the area. The maintenance of public spaces is also a problem. Streets are often littered with trash, old newspapers and plastic bags, and vandalism and graffiti are visibly present. Due to these problems and in combination with the concentration of low income households and ethnic minorities, Transvaalkwartier has been designated as a restructuring area under the Major Cities Policy. The first new private dwellings in the southern part of the quarter were finished late 2005. Large parts of Transvaal-Noord are scheduled for demolition between 2008 and 2011. Only one third of the 4200 residents in Transvaal-Noord will be able to return.

4.5 Interaction at local level

Neighborhood experts characterize Transvaal as a neighborhood with strong informal social structures on the one hand, and a considerable lack of social cohesion on the other. Although seemingly a paradox, they coexist due to the fact that most residents are locally oriented in their personal social network, but have little to no contact with their direct neighbors or other residents of different social backgrounds.

11 *In Dutch population statistics, residents who are born outside the Netherlands or have a parent born in another country are classified as minority residents. Third generation immigrants are classified as Dutch. In the case of Transvaal, the actual share of residents with a non-Dutch ethnic background might therefore be higher than statistics indicate. However, Turkish and Moroccan residents of the second generation often marry someone from their home country. Their children are again registered as second generation.*

Informal social structures

Informal social structures at the neighborhood level consist of close-knit family relations in extended ethnic (family) networks that reach much farther than the nuclear family. The majority of many residents' families live in the area and these family connections were quite often the initial reason for moving to the neighborhood. Family connections offer an essential source of social, emotional and financial support in residents' daily lives. The story of a Turkish resident provides a typical example. As he explained, '*You live in your own community. People help each other. For example, if there's a funeral, money is collected for the surviving relatives. Everyone contributes a little, but you can fill a glass with small drops. […] For Turks, family has a different meaning than for Dutch people. They take care of each other*'. The man, in his mid-forties, is the youngest of four brothers who came to the Netherlands with their parents when he himself was in his early teens. He has an extensive family network of '*more than fifty family members*' in the neighborhood. He is the only one of his generation who has learned to speak Dutch due to the fact that he was good at sports and a member of a largely Dutch sports team during his late teens. Although he is unemployed as a result of back troubles after years of construction work, he is always busy. He spends his time helping out his many family members as an interpreter and translator. During our conversation, for example, he received a phone call from a tax auditor concerning his brother's small grocery store. In return for helping his brother and others navigate through Dutch society with his language skills, they help him out with the costs of repairing his car, cooking dinner when his wife is ill and providing short-term loans when necessary, '*of course, without paying interest, or anything like that*'.

Close family relations such as these are part of larger social structures which mainly follow ethnic lines. However, it is not simply a case of communities based on shared ethnicities as there are numerous Turkish and Moroccan groups that have (as) little (as possible) to do with each other. For example, Moroccan residents with an Arab background have little to do with Moroccans with a Berber background, and Turkish residents from Ankara have little to do with Kurdish Turks from the mountain regions in the East. A young man of Berber-Moroccan origin of the second generation laughed as he explained, '*my parents lived in a small village in Morocco. Now the whole village lives here in Transvaal! Everyone is like family. My parents could never live anywhere else.' Thus, ethnicity intersects with other shared backgrounds such as a shared religious affiliation and/or shared geographical origins that form the basis for extended ethno-cultural (family) networks. In the words of another respondent, 'almost everyone is a distant cousin or nephew.'*. This results in extended social support networks that are an important reason why many residents feel at home in the neighborhood.

The informal social structures have over time become visible in the urban landscape, both in the informal interaction patterns on the street and in the formal social and economic infrastructure. Many shoppers stop repeatedly on the street to greet friends or acquaintances in chance meetings. Indeed, various public spaces in the neighborhood seem to be an important meeting place for residents, although there is always a strong demarcation between groups. For example, in the popular neighborhood park, youth volunteers in the playground can point out precisely which benches are occupied by Turkish or Moroccan women, and by their respective husbands a bit further away. They can also tell you that the Moroccan women are from a relatively liberal background, as their

daughters are generally not veiled. The more religious Moroccan women meet in a playground two blocks down the street. Different groups of residents are also represented in the formal social and economic infrastructure of the neighborhood. For example, there are numerous mosques in the area whose followers adhere to different Islamic traditions, and many coffee houses that serve as meeting places for residents of different backgrounds. Turkish and Hindustani-Surinamese entrepreneurs are the dominant force behind local shops and businesses.

A lack of social cohesion

Despite the importance of local contacts in the social life of individual residents, there is a considerable lack of social cohesion at the neighborhood level. Neighborhood experts talk about a 'social vacuum' alongside the strong informal social structures described above. Indeed, public life seems to be delineated by anonymity. In this respect, the missing nameplates on mailboxes and front doors are a telling sign.

Interaction in multi-family housing blocks with a shared stairwell between neighbors of different ethno-cultural background remains limited to greetings and sometimes small talk. As one volunteer at a community center explained, '*few people know their neighbors. I can't even talk to them, because they don't speak the same language. Can you imagine seeing water leaking through your ceiling, because the neighbors didn't close the faucet, and not being able to explain it to them? It creates a lot of tension.*' Only residents without family in the vicinity or those residents who prefer to distance themselves from their 'own' group, have more meaningful contacts with their neighbors. Quite often these are single mothers, whose children form a link with neighboring families. They help each other out with various domestic activities such as minding each other's children, exchanging dinner or helping to serve coffee at birthday parties. These relationships sometimes cross ethnic lines, as vicinity is the most important criterion for these contacts. Still, such forms of social support between neighbors seem to be an exception.

The anonymity between neighbors goes hand in hand with a perceived lack of social control and safety on the streets. Groups of local youths and drug addicts add to these feelings. Some of them just hang around, while others actively engage in illegal activities ranging from vandalism to drug dealing. Despite extensive efforts by local neighborhood workers to involve residents in reducing such activities, people say that they are afraid to call the police about disturbances on the streets late at night in fear of retribution. Indeed, many residents do not open their doors after dark.

To summarize, local contacts play a considerable role in people's personal social networks, although they do not seem to result in stronger social cohesion at the neighborhood level. Rather, shared ethnic, cultural, religious and geographical backgrounds become interwoven with the neighborhood in different unconnected, informal social structures. According to neighborhood experts, as well as residents' personal stories, these informal social support structures with their more formal economic and social facilities are an important reason for people to stay in the area and raise their children there, despite the high crime levels and considerable livability problems in the area. This

is certainly the case for first generation immigrants and to some degree for the second and third generation as well, although there are some variations between ethnic groups. In particular, Hindustani-Surinamese residents stimulate their children to translate a higher socio-economic status into a better living environment and to exchange their old neighborhood for middle class areas in the city or surrounding suburbs. To a lesser degree, this phenomenon is also found amongst some Turkish and Moroccan groups. Still, a minority of second and third generation residents also remain in the area because their entire social lives are located there. The question is to what degree these local social contacts influence their employment opportunities and work ethics to the degree that living in the neighborhood becomes a pitfall for social mobility.

4.6 Employment opportunities

The research literature discussed above hypothesizes that the local social context limits employment opportunities through mechanisms related to the social resources in neighborhood social structures. In other words, due to their locally oriented social networks, residents of Transvaal are thought to lack the necessary information about job vacancies and the labor market, with this resulting in chronic unemployment. The findings in Transvaal, however, suggest that the influence of the local social context is more subtle.

Informal job networks

The first way in which the local social context is important for individual socio-economic outcomes is through informal job networks that originate in the neighborhood. In Transvaal, local contacts are an essential condition for residents to find work. Some of the resulting jobs are actually located in the neighborhood, in ethnic shops and businesses or on local market stalls run by fathers, uncles or second cousins. Most jobs, however, are located outside the neighborhood and the relevant information is provided through chains of multiple actors that I refer to as informal job networks. Over the years, some of these networks have been formalized in privately-owned, independent employment agencies that specialize in unskilled labor, for example in construction or in the fruit and vegetable sector and at the flower auction in Aalsmeer. Like other businesses and services in the area, these agencies generally focus on specific groups of residents, mirroring the informal ethno-cultural social structures described earlier. There are, for example, several different Turkish and Moroccan employment agencies as well as agencies for migrant workers with other EU passports. The owners are generally key persons in these job networks who used to live, or still live, in the area. The continuity of their workforce depends entirely on informal contacts, many of whom live in the area, including family members, more distant 'cousins' and also word-of-mouth referrals. For the residents in question, the benefit is that they can pop in daily to see if there is work, as many of these jobs are temporary. The benefit for the employment agencies is that they can guarantee workers in the short term and can collectively organize transportation. For example, male employees often meet at a central point in the neighborhood to be bussed collectively to their next shift. Vans also pick the women up at home because many of them are traditional Muslims and are not expected to travel to work without a chaperone. Another such collectively organized service involves providing dinners for workers, so that

they can adhere to the particular requirements set by their religious background. Thus, these job networks, which have sometimes been formalized into job agencies, provide concrete opportunities for work and fulfill more secondary requirements to make working possible.

There is a considerable difference between ethnic groups and generations as regards the degree to which these (informal) job networks constitute an important job source. In general, local social contacts are essential for first generation Turkish and Moroccan immigrants to find work, but hardly at all for Hindustani-Surinamese people who are traditionally more oriented towards public sector jobs[12]. For second generation Turks and Moroccans, a much smaller number of residents use local connections to find work. Those who do, often start with summer jobs during the vacation. Some of them are college students looking to earn their next year's tuition fees, but many of them are high school dropouts or students of the least advanced secondary schools who have a problem finding work due to their lack of training.

Obviously, the positive side of these informal job networks is that they lead to jobs. From this perspective, interrelations at the neighborhood level do not result in limited opportunity structures to the degree that residents are unemployed and unable to find work due to a lack of information. However, this is only part of the story as there are also drawbacks. Particularly for the first generation, one of the consequences is that most of them never learn Dutch due to the fact that the majority of their coworkers is from their own ethnic group. The 48 year old Turkish resident, who has lived in the area for 19 years, has worked in the vegetable production sector for the same amount of time and who still only speaks three words of Dutch, is no exception. Many neighborhood experts have stressed the negative consequences of this for the second generation, as many children start elementary school with a substantial language deficiency. In the words of one of frustrated volunteer, *'at school they speak maybe 25 hours of Dutch, but in the playground they speak Turkish or Arabic. At home, they speak Turkish or Arabic. When the television is turned on, they watch Turkish or Arab TV channels. So they start with a language deficiency and it only gets worse: the more Dutch you know, the more you pick up at school. And vice versa.'*.

Another drawback is the limited scope of the job networks both in terms of career opportunities and in terms of acquiring a variety of work experience and of developing work-related skills. Job seekers always end up in the same type of unskilled job, quite often with the same companies. Another consequence is that many residents have little to no experience or skills when it comes to job applications (partly because no references are normally required other than family ones, but also because some of the work is under the table). This is a particular problem for second generation youths who have always found sideline or summer jobs via their extended families and have therefore never had contacts with the formal job market. After they have finished their schooling or professional training and start looking for a 'real' job, they lack the knowledge and skills to navigate through the job market and apply successfully for jobs. As one youth worker explained, *'even placing a phone call to express your interest in a simple dishwashing job and to ask for an interview is difficult for some students. They just don't know how one makes polite, formal phone inquiries'*.

12 *As Suriname used to be a Dutch colony, many of them spoke Dutch when they arrived in the Netherlands and were of middle class origin, and therefore more capable navigating their way in the formal job market.*

The formal social infrastructure

Another way in which the local social context is important for individual employment opportunities is through the many social institutions within the neighborhood such as local welfare organizations, community centers, schools and youth centers, as well as subsidized private institutions such as religious and cultural centers. This highly developed formal social infrastructure is the result of thirty years of state intervention in the neighborhood and many of these institutions employ local residents and offer traineeships and volunteer positions for residents making the transition from welfare to work. For the institutions, the benefit is that their staff speaks foreign languages and know how to work with clients of different cultural backgrounds. For residents the threshold they have to cross in order to make job enquiries at local institutions is low because they are already familiar with them. Various neighborhood management and livability programs constitute another source of employment through accessible, unskilled jobs such as street surveillance, street maintenance and the supervision of youth activities. The more skilled job openings are often filled by Hindustani-Surinamese people due to their knowledge of the Dutch language and the fact that they are generally more oriented towards the formal job market. Trainees are often second generation Moroccan and Turkish women who are excluded from the informal job networks and who are familiar with the formal institutions from their own childhood. Local jobs also seem particularly attractive to single mothers who can work close to home and their children's school, and the unskilled job openings are often filled by first generation immigrants who speak little Dutch but are forced to work under current employment regulations.

The reason for this attraction is that local institutions have years of experience with minority residents and are therefore perceived to be more tolerant towards minority employees who want to adhere to their own cultural or religious customs, such as fasting during Ramadan or wearing a headscarf. The other side of the coin, however, is that this positive socialization in Transvaal is mirrored by stigmatization and negative experiences elsewhere. A second generation Moroccan trainee explained, *'At the other school which I applied to, they told me that I had to take off my head scarf when teaching, because parents might have a problem with it. I don't want to do that… it's part of my religion. Here, I can be myself. I don't stand out… when I walk around the neighborhood, I look like everyone else'*.

The positive side of the story is, of course, that the local social context provides employment opportunities. At the same time, some neighborhood experts mentioned that the limited scope of students and other residents in their job search might also have a negative side. Quite often, local institutions have an unfavorable reputation, not so much due to the low quality of schooling or counseling, but simply due to the marginalized clientele. Thus, in the eyes of future employers, this might make the employees of local institutions (even) less attractive as potential candidates. There is, however, little concrete evidence to support these assumptions.

4.7 Work ethics and socialization

Another hypothesis in the research literature about the way in which the local social context influences individual socio-economic outcomes is through processes of socialization and deviant work ethics within the informal local social structures. In the case of Transvaal, there is indeed some evi-

dence that such mechanisms are at play. Both neighborhood experts and residents' personal stories provided examples of deviant work ethics amongst adults whereby unemployment seems to be the dominant norm. One resident, for example, described her friends' responses to her finding a job after years of social benefits: *'why would you work for ten euros more, if you can stay at home?'* Indeed, her friends emphasized that she would just lose all the financial extras, such as extra money to replace a broken refrigerator, that come with being dependant on social benefits. She received the same response, for that matter, from the responsible official at Social Services who didn't understand why a single mother with three kids would choose to work. Another very concrete example is the exchange of information amongst locals regarding staying on benefits in a period when the state increasingly tries to force people to re-enter the labor market. One strategy that has recently been found to be effective in avoiding employment in city re-entry jobs as street cleaners is to invent a medical condition. As one respondent explained, *'Suddenly, all these men in their fifties developed dust allergies. Don't think this is a coincidence… they are looking for an excuse not to have to work and hear about it from each other. Dust allergies are impossible to disprove. Many people test positive even if it never bothers them'*.

Moreover, the interviews with neighborhood experts and residents provided examples of how deviant norms and values of first generation residents also play an active role in limiting the opportunities of the second generation. For example, some parents take their sons from school prematurely in favor of an extra income for the household. This is related to the informal job networks described above. Because a job is easily found, some parents choose the extra household income or contribution to a house in their homeland rather than the further education of their children. Their rationale is why study for a future job, when you can get one right now? As a result, some high school students refrain from further professional training to fill unskilled job vacancies. The effect, of course, is not unemployment, but it does stagnate the social mobility opportunities of the second generation in the long run. For daughters, a different mechanism applies. Education is not considered a necessity, as they are not supposed to work and their job lies at home. Particularly amongst more conservative Muslim communities, daughters leave school early for the purpose of marriage. As illustrated by one of the respondents, *'My neighbors are Turkish and have lived next door to us for twenty years. They are quite accessible compared to other Turkish residents. The father came to the Netherlands as a young boy and his Dutch is quite good. He used to say that he wanted opportunities for his children that he never had. Then one day, his sixteen-year old daughter appeared on my doorstep, crying. Her parents had told her that she was to marry a man from her grandparent's village in Turkey and would have to drop out of school. It is just what is expected within these communities'*. Another example was provided by a Moroccan woman in her late twenties who was interviewed at a community center: *'I came to the Netherlands when I was five and went to school here, but when I got married at sixteen, I quit. It's the normal thing to do… then it turned out that I can't have children and I might as well find a job to earn some money. But I have no education and my Dutch is much worse than ten years ago, so now it's really hard to find a job. Now I am sorry that I dropped out of school'*.

In addition to these classic forms of collective socialization concerning work, socialization processes also influence individual economic action more indirectly. Social control within infor-

mal social networks is considerable and in-group rules of conduct indirectly limit residents' options as regards deviating from the group standard and developing skills or experiences that could lead to better job opportunities. This is illustrated by the story of a resident who was quite active in a neighborhood association where he represented the interests of his own ethnic group. Thanks to the resulting neighborhood contacts he learned Dutch and through his activities at the neighborhood association he became familiar with the housing regulations and the appropriate institutions. He found out that he could apply for a ground floor apartment due to physical disabilities and he was allocated a newly built apartment. This was frowned upon by his friends and acquaintances, who jealously criticized him for representing his own, rather than group interests. In the end, he left the neighborhood association. He now has few contacts outside his own ethnic group and his Dutch is much less fluent than it has been.

Another example of how rules of conduct and social control within local social structures indirectly influence individual economic action is how various rules of conduct restrict the work options of Moroccan and Turkish girls, even when they are allowed to work. For example, a second year university student of Moroccan descent explained how she had found a very interesting sideline job that matched her educational background. As she explained, *'My father is proud that I am in professional training, but didn't want me to take this job. He was worried about what the neighbors would say about me traveling late at night by myself. Such gossip would shame my family'*. In the end, she negotiated living with a relative in one of the suburbs. Her situation was an exception, however, as her father had remarried and was more focused on his new family. Others, she explained, are not always so lucky.

Thus, amongst some groups of residents there is little tolerance for those who act differently or go beyond the social boundaries of their own group. As long as an individual's actions remain within what is perceived to be normal behavior or are used for the interest of their own group, they are accepted. As soon as they are perceived to serve only their own interests or deviate too much from group norms they are disapproved of and the individual in question is put under pressure to conform. Such forms of socialization are much more subtle than the more explicit shared attitudes towards work, but can be just as limiting.

While some of these examples might be written down to family rather than neighborhood effects, they cannot be separated from the neighborhood level. The socialization mechanisms are shaped in a rather segregated socio-spatial context in which the parents' norms and values are continuously reinforced through local interrelations with likeminded others. This can be illustrated by the story of the Moroccan student with the evening job. Her father was not against her taking this job in itself. Instead, he was worried about people's opinions, as was illustrated by his willingness to permit her to move in with her sister away from the scrutiny of their social circle, which allowed her to take the job. Thus, the socialization mechanisms that influence individual economic action are preserved and reinforced through the tight social control within the local social structures, and therefore cannot be separated from the neighborhood. Indeed, it seems that the only way to escape them is to move away.

These examples of collective socialization mechanisms behind neighborhood effects should,

however, be nuanced to some degree. While they are rather common amongst first generation residents, there is a considerable difference between ethnic groups as regards the degree to which they are passed on to the second generation. For example, receiving benefits is the norm amongst Hindustani-Surinamese women of the first generation and the practice is largely accepted because of their responsibility to raise their children properly. However, a different set of norms apply to the second generation who are expected to engage in professional or university training and obtain a high-status job. For this group of residents, therefore, collective socialization towards work is related to the norms about good motherhood. Mothers are encouraged to accept a marginal income-position to guarantee a secure and stable upbringing for their children. Some negative socialization mechanisms can therefore be understood in the context of intergenerational mobility and are not reproduced in the next generation.

Besides differences between ethnic groups, there are also differences within ethnic groups. Part of the explanation for such differences might lie in the cultural and religious background of the parents, as well as the level of education of the parents. This can be illustrated by the stories of two Moroccan men, who both work(ed) in the fruit and vegetable industry and who differ greatly in their aspirations and attitudes towards the education and career opportunities of their children. One is of 'Berber' origin from the northern mountain region. He did not finish elementary school, is illiterate and arrived in the Netherlands with no knowledge of other languages as a result of which he has learned little Dutch over the years. He shows little interest in his children's' schooling or work, and does not see why he should spend part of his income on a costly education as there is plenty of work available though his neighborhood connections. The other man has an Arab background. In Morocco, he finished high school and came to the Netherlands with some knowledge of Moroccan, Arabic and French. This made it easier for him to learn some Dutch. Long ago, he accepted the fact that, as an immigrant, his work options were limited and took a job as a tomato picker. However, he wants his children to have a better life. During the interview, he proudly summed up their educational and career achievements.

4.8 Discussion

The case study in Transvaal-Noord has provided some additional insight into the mechanisms behind neighborhood effects that are related to the specific population composition of disadvantaged neighborhoods. Of course, the possibility of generalizing the research findings and applying them to different social groups or other neighborhoods is limited due to the exploratory nature of this study, the choice for an extreme case and the relatively small sample of interviews. While the study can help us understand how social mechanisms behind neighborhood effects come into being within a specific social context, it cannot answer the question of how widespread such mechanisms are. Indeed, even in the extreme case of Transvaal, many residents seek to improve their situation and hope some day to translate this into a better living situation in better neighborhoods or suburbs. Another consideration is that the described social mechanisms are not only shaped in space, but also in time. To understand how neighborhood effects are reproduced over time and how they influence social mobility in the long run would require a longitudinal research design. Despite these

obvious limitations, the case study shows how the socio-spatial context of a low-income neighborhood can have a negative influence on social mobility.

The limited resource and negative socialization hypotheses in the research literature assume that interaction patterns between residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods can explain the correlation which was found between concentrated poverty and individual socio-economic outcomes. The first step in testing these hypotheses is, therefore, to explore the degree to which the personal social networks of residents are locally oriented. In the case of Transvaal, the majority of residents is indeed locally oriented in their social contacts and dependent on these contacts for various forms of social support. Some of these strong ties already existed through family connections before they moved to the neighborhood and formed the original reason for settlement in the area. At the same time, they are continuously being strengthened and reinforced through larger informal social structures of different ethno-cultural backgrounds within the neighborhood and consequently become an important reason for residents to stay in Transvaal. What is distinctive, therefore, is not so much the fact that residents are locally oriented in their social networks, but the degree to which these networks form a pitfall rather than a springboard for social mobility.

First, in line with the limited resource hypothesis, it appears that local contacts indeed limit employment opportunities, although not to the degree that they lead to unemployment. Rather, in the case of Transvaal, local informal job networks do provide work opportunities, but these opportunities are limited in scope and are subject to obligations. Moreover, the informal job networks indirectly limit future opportunities because people do not develop the language and communication skills to become independent of these job networks. Thus, the influence of local social relations on work opportunities is at the same time both positive and negative: they lead to work, but not 'the right kind of work'.

Second, evidence was also found to support the negative socialization hypothesis that states that shared deviant norms and values with regard to work influence individual economic action. The interviews with experts and residents provided some classic examples of collective socialization regarding unemployment that are reinforced through considerable social control within local social structures. However, some of these examples should be viewed in terms of intergenerational mobility, as a strategy by parents to ensure successful socio-economic performance by their children. Socialization might lead to reduced social mobility for specific groups of residents, but it is not always reproduced in the next generation. Additionally, there are more subtle processes of socialization at play that indirectly influence employment outcomes. General rules of conduct limit the freedom of individuals to develop secondary skills or gain useful work experience to improve their socio-economic position in the long run. Thus, being locally oriented in one's social contacts not only has negative socio-economic consequences due to more obvious socialization mechanisms with regards to work, but also generates more general rules of conduct within these networks and high levels of social control which are further strengthened by the proximity of group members within the neighborhood.

To summarize, the case study in Transvaal shows that the limited resource and negative socialization hypotheses used as explanatory mechanisms for neighborhood effects should be nuanced to some degree in order to understand how neighborhood effects come into being in the Dutch context. Moreover, an additional finding is that the local social context not only influences individual socio-economic outcomes through informal social structures, but also through the formal social infrastructure. The contribution of the formal social infrastructure to individual opportunities can be interpreted both positively and negatively: while it provides jobs, these might be jobs with few career opportunities in the long run. Undoubtedly, this is the result of extensive involvement of the Dutch welfare sector in urban renewal programs in the last two decades and the resulting concentration of welfare and community services in disadvantaged neighborhoods. It is therefore not surprising that such social mechanisms stemming from the local population composition have not been found in American studies.

A difficult question with regards to these mechanisms behind neighborhood effects is which residents fall into the category of aspiring social climbers and which residents might be potential victims. In the context of Transvaal, social distinctions on the basis of socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, religious differences and differences in geographical background can help explain why different groups of residents are affected differently by the neighborhood context. From the first moment that they arrive in Transvaal, they become part of different informal networks with different norms, values and rules of conduct that shape their own the opportunities and attitudes and those of subsequent generations. Within the same neighborhood this leads to different socio-spatial configurations that generate negative neighborhood effects for some groups but not for others. Additionally, there is considerable variation between these groups in the type of mechanism at play. For example, in the case of Transvaal, classic examples of negative socialization in the form of 'contagion' mechanisms were found amongst Hindustani-Surinamese residents of the first generation and amongst Moroccans of 'Berber' origin, but not amongst Hindustani-Surinamese of the second generation or Moroccans of Arab origin. The strongest example of inter-ethnic variations is the difference between Hindustani-Surinamese residents and Moroccan and particularly Turkish residents in the degree of self-organization in informal job networks. Hindustani-Surinamese are oriented much more towards the formal job market and therefore miss both the positive and the negative effects that informal job networks offer. A final example of intergroup variations is that the more subtle forms of socialization through rules of conduct seem to be particularly present in conservative Muslim communities, specifically limiting the employment opportunities of women.

In order to understand these variations, a more differentiated framework for neighborhood effects should be used. After all, even when most residents in a low-income neighborhood are locally oriented in their social relations, one cannot assume that living in this neighborhood limits the socio-economic opportunities of all residents because residents become part of different social structures. Moreover, in the case of those 'affected', one cannot assume that the same mechanism accounts for negative neighborhood effects amongst different groups of residents.

A final issue that should be raised is how social mixing might influence these differential neighborhood effects. Certainly, the fact that residents with similar backgrounds live close together facilitates the growth of the informal job networks described above as well as the high levels of

social control and strong socialization. As these are deeply embedded in the local social structures, it seems unlikely that these mechanisms would persist to the same degree if group members were spread out throughout the city. Consequently, this might also diminish the negative neighborhood effects for certain groups of residents in the area. However, it might also reduce the positive neighborhood effects for those residents who depend on their informal social structures and on the formal social infrastructure for various forms of social support and jobs. Given that demolition of a large share of the social housing stock in Transvaal-Noord is scheduled for 2008, an important question is to what extent the existing social structures might be replaced by new ones. While this question obviously has to be answered through a longitudinal study of the neighborhood, two hypotheses might be formulated on the basis of the research findings. An optimistic hypothesis might assume that the current local ties will be replaced by new useful ties with more affluent neighbors which will also result in positive socialization. A more pessimistic hypothesis is that the dilution or disappearance of the local informal social structures will leave residents empty-handed and prolong the existence of the current social vacuum between residents of different backgrounds.

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