



Living together in multi-ethnic cities: people of migrant background, their interethnic friendships and the neighbourhood

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Article

**Living together in multi-ethnic cities: people of migrant background,
their interethnic friendships and the neighbourhood****Abstract**

This paper explores the extent to which people of different origins, natives and migrants, come together in everyday life in Europe. Instead of looking at overall ‘perceptions’ and ‘stances’, which are context-dependent and mediated through political-ideological currents and discourses as well as broader patterns of prejudice, we focus on sustained close contacts that suggest meaningful and organic relationships. Since it is most often people of migrant background who are blamed for leading ‘parallel lives’ and ‘not integrating’, we chose to focus on them and their interethnic friendships. Moreover, we seek to understand the relevance and role of the neighbourhood context in the development of those relationships. Despite the expressive fears in public discourses about the supposed negative impact of the presence of immigrants and ethnic minorities on social cohesion, our findings indicate that close interethnic relationships are not uncommon in diverse European cities. They further highlight that the neighbourhood context plays an important role in the first years of migrants’ settlement. Relationships in the neighbourhood develop in less formal social settings and are also less demanding in terms of host-country cultural

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9 skills on the part of the migrants, thus giving the opportunity to newcomers to develop
10 close interethnic relationships with natives. Finally, the analysis supports the positive
11 role of diversity at the neighbourhood level in the development of interethnic
12 friendships and stresses the importance of the neighbourhood's socio-spatial
13 characteristics and its location in the wider urban net.
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22 **Keywords:**

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24 Ethnic diversity, immigrants' social networks, interethnic friendship, neighbourhoods.
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26 everyday multiculturalism
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Introduction

Ongoing immigration in European societies amidst the economic and political turmoil at times of globalisation, restructuring and crisis, have given rise to growing concerns over social cohesion. A shift in policy agendas and public debates during the past decade or so have signalled a retreat towards assimilatory views, and a concomitant backlash against multiculturalism and diversity (e.g. Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010). Alarming talk of ‘inassimilable’ difference and of immigrants and minorities living ‘parallel lives’ are much concentrated in European cities and in specific neighbourhoods that are deemed as ‘problematic’. Such worries, widely reproduced by mainstream media, are often vocalised by politicians publicly announcing the failure of multiculturalism as a viable political project.

A series of mostly quantitative studies have come to confirm such fears, suggesting an overall negative relationship between ethnic diversity and social cohesion¹. An influential paper by Putnam (2007) has proposed that, at least in the short and medium run, diversity negatively affects social solidarity and social capital. This gave way to a nascent subfield exploring different aspects of this relationship. Yet, findings remain to date contradictory and therefore inconclusive.

Most of these studies are based on attitudinal data collected through opinion surveys – data that may largely reflect local discourses on ethnic relations without providing an accurate picture of the experience of actual everyday interaction (see

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9 Jerolmack and Khan, 2014). One may expect that in negatively represented
10 neighbourhoods or in socioeconomically deprived areas concentrating stigmatised
11 social categories (broader) polarising discourses are more prevalent. The prevalence of
12 such discourses, however, does not necessarily preclude the existence of positive
13 interethnic contact locally (Wise, 2005; Noble, 2011). Neither does a more diversity-
14 friendly neighbourhood discourse necessarily indicate sustained interethnic interaction
15 (Simon, 2000; Wassendorf, 2013).
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24 While conclusions are commonly drawn in relation to increasing anxieties
25 surrounding 'segregation' and a supposed decline in social capital in diverse western
26 cities, it is rather surprising how little is known about how diversity is actually lived on
27 the ground (Wise, 2010: 42). Research has shown that the development of interethnic
28 relations in everyday life follows a different logic than that represented in national
29 discourses and assumed by policy makers (e.g. Pratsinakis 2014; Simon, 2000;
30 Wimmer, 2004). To be sure, power relations are always present, as are various degrees
31 of intolerance and discomfort towards difference (Wise, 2010; Pratsinakis, 2014).
32 However, despite the alarming talk about immigrants and minorities concentrating in
33 ethnically diverse neighbourhoods and related worries about social cohesion, available
34 evidence shows that people of diverse ethnic backgrounds do get along in shared urban
35 spaces (Noble, 2010, Wise, 2010; Lobo 2009; Wessendorf, 2013). As Wise (2010: 42)
36 aptly argues 'the closer one looks, the more it becomes obvious that 'parallel lives' are
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9 not necessarily the prevailing norm'. In contrast, despite its apparently tenuous,
10 apolitical invisibility, 'everyday multiculturalism' in many cases works as a cohesive
11 force which resists and transcends fragmentation and division (Werbner, 2013: 416).
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15 To assess the extent of and circumstances in which local experiences comply to
16 this image, further research is necessary on everyday practices, actual interaction and
17 the development of sustained relationships between people of different origins in multi-
18 ethnic cities. As a step in that direction and drawing on a dataset generated from a
19 survey conducted in 18 neighbourhoods in six European cities (see Górný and
20 Torunczyk-Ruiz, 2014), this paper explores the development of interethnic friendships
21 and seeks to understand the relevance and role of the neighbourhood context in their
22 development. Given that the patterns of interethnic contact may differ for people of
23 native or migrant background (Lancee and Dronkers, 2011; Górný and Torunczyk-Ruiz,
24 2014), and considering that immigrants and their descendants are found at the epicentre
25 of rising concerns over social cohesion, we restrict our attention to them.
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39 The paper departs from a brief overview of relevant literature. We next
40 introduce our study, data and methodology, before proceeding to a descriptive account
41 of the extent of interethnic friendship among people of migrant background in six
42 European cities. After identifying the individual, contextual and neighbourhood
43 characteristics that seem to play a role in the development of close interethnic relations,
44 we employ a logit regression model to explore the relevance of the neighbourhood
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9 context. Our conclusion summarises key findings, situating them in broader theoretical
10 debates.
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12 13 14 15 **Diversity, interethnic contact and social cohesion** 16

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20 Central to the theorising in the field of social cohesion and interethnic relations is a
21 schematic and rather misleading juxtaposition of the so-called contact and conflict
22 theories². Accordingly, the former assumes that intergroup contact leads to the reduction
23 of prejudice while the latter suggests that intergroup contact may actually increase it.
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25 Recent research on social cohesion and diversity provides evidence in both directions.
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27 Some scholars have concluded that these are negatively associated (Alessina and La
28 Ferrara, 2002; Costa and Kahn, 2003), while others found that diversity improves
29 perceptions of, and relations between, ethnic groups (Oliver and Wong, 2003; Marschall
30 and Stolle, 2004). Along these lines, Putnam's US-based study (2007) came not only at
31 a time of high politicisation of migration and diversity issues, but also just when a
32 theoretically sensitive critique of previous results started being formulated (e.g. Hooghe,
33 2007). Putnam interpreted his findings through a framework which he called *constrict*
34 *theory*. Contrasting the *contact hypothesis*, which in his reading predicts that diversity
35 erodes the in-group/out-group distinction and enhances out-group solidarity, and the
36 *conflict theory*, which predicts the opposite, he proposed that diversity in fact reduces
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9 both in-group *and* out-group solidarity and social capital.

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11 His argument has stimulated much debate, ranging from criticism (e.g. Portes
12 and Vickstrom, 2011) to replications of his study in Europe. The latter largely refute
13 Putnam's thesis (Gijssbets et al, 2012; Vervoort et al, 2011) with the exception of the
14 impact of (ethnic) diversity on trust, generally found to be negative (Lancee and
15 Dronkers, 2010; 2011; Laurence, 2011). This growing body of work nevertheless
16 provides contradictory evidence, partly deriving from different datasets, variables
17 explored, analytical procedures, and interpretations. For instance, with respect to what is
18 actually analysed, whilst some studies examine 'trust' (variably measured) as their
19 dependent variable (Lancee and Dronkers, 2010; 2011), others focus on composite
20 indices of social capital (including trust) (Letki, 2008; Gundelach and Freitag, 2014),
21 social cohesion (including categories of social capital) (Gijssbets et al., 2012; Laurence
22 2011), interethnic attitudes (Havekes et al., 2014), or neighbourhood attachment (Górny
23 and Torunczyk-Ruiz, 2014). Similarly, with respect to findings, the structure and
24 direction of causality differ: rather than diversity, there may be socio-economic factors
25 negatively affecting the above dimensions of social cohesion, such as deprivation
26 (Letki, 2008), disadvantage (Laurence, 2011) or neighbourhood decline and disorder
27 (Havekes et al., 2014).

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49 Few recent studies on diversity and social cohesion take into account actual
50 contact between people of different backgrounds. When they do, this comes into the
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9 analysis in the form of independent variables or items in composite indices of social
10 capital, e.g. concerning the respondents' extent, frequency and/or quality of
11 (interethnic) contact (Putnam, 2007; Letki, 2008; Lancee and Dronkers, 2011; Gijssels
12 et al., 2012; Gundelach and Freitag, 2014). In other cases, interethnic contact is
13 examined in its mediating role in the relationship between diversity and social trust, or
14 between diversity and tolerance (Laurence, 2011; Górny and Torunczyk-Ruiz, 2014).
15 Only few studies in this strand of research have directly examined actual interpersonal
16 contact as a dependent variable (Vervoort et al., 2011; Vervoort, 2012; Kouvo and
17 Lockmer, 2013). Even scarcer is a focus on close interethnic contacts, i.e. 'strong' ties
18 such as friendships.
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31 Regarding immigrants' interethnic friendships in particular, evidence from the
32 Netherlands and Canada suggests that these concern mostly relationships with the
33 majority population, which are subject to time and relate to immigrants' integration
34 (Martinovic et al, 2009; 2011). The latter partly depends on the local context of
35 settlement as a field of encounter and socialisation. As emerging from our own survey,
36 the neighbourhood appears to be a focal point of immigrants' social life (Schnell et al.,
37 2012) and thus a key field where bridging ties may potentially develop. To the extent
38 that the local context may determine interethnic contact, some of the above-mentioned
39 studies tend to focus on neighbourhood population structures. Accordingly, Vervoort et
40 al. (2011) and Vervoort (2012) found that ethnic concentration positively influences
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9 interethnic relations among different minority groups but not with natives (Vervoort et
10 al., 2011; Vervoort, 2012), while Martinovic et al. (2011) concluded that living in a less
11 concentrated area increases interethnic contact. In these studies however, the dependent
12 variable was a measure of respondents' interethnic social ties in general and not of those
13 that developed in the neighbourhood itself. This makes the examination of the
14 relationship between ethnic concentration and the development of interethnic relations
15 problematic.
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24 This paper aims at critically contributing to this debate by focusing on the
25 development of actual interethnic contacts and the role of the neighbourhood context.
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27 More concretely, we focus on the close interethnic ties, i.e. friendships, of people of
28 migrant background, which we approach as a positive situation reflecting pathways to
29 integration, social interaction and participation. We further investigate the role of the
30 local context, in our case the neighbourhood, as a site of meaningful encounter and
31 contact, and examine which neighbourhood characteristics seem to foster interethnic
32 friendships. Building on the same dataset as Górný and Torunczyk-Ruiz (2014) which
33 is unique in differentiating between immigrants' interethnic ties that developed in their
34 neighbourhoods of residence from those formed elsewhere, we go beyond conventional
35 assumptions that the more interethnic relations the residents of a neighbourhood have,
36 the more inducing the local characteristics are in the development of such relations.
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To the best of our knowledge, this study is also the first on interethnic friendships to be based on an international dataset comprising different neighbourhood types across six European cities, making the finding more generalizable and providing a measure of the development of interethnic friendships in European urban neighbourhoods. As such the paper further contributes to another strand of recent literature, that on everyday multiculturalism and interethnic belonging in the city (Wise and Velayutham 2010; Noble 2010; Wise 2010; Lobo 2009; Werbner 2013), with which the current paper shares a common critical stance towards the problematization of ethnic diversity.

The nascent literature studying diversity and social cohesion in the tradition of social capital research initiated by Putnam (2007) has been blind to qualitative accounts of everyday encounters, neglecting insights gained from empirical work on local sites of habitual contact. In so doing, it tends to reproduce mainstream views of multiculturalism discussed from a top-down perspective, as a set of policies concerned with the management of diversity by nation states. In this perspective, the problematisation of diversity implies specific policy remedies for ‘immigrants and minorities living parallel lives’, which are however based on a moralistic discourse of conditional tolerance promoting national cultural norms and whiteness as prerequisites for social cohesion (e.g. Amin 2002; Phillips 2007; Fortier 2008). Such a discourse and related policies forces racialised ethnic minorities to ‘integrate’, rather than addressing

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9 society as a whole and setting the conditions that would foster meaningful intercultural
10 interaction in shared urban spaces of multiethnic coexistence.

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13 Recent literature on everyday multiculturalism has inquired into those conditions
14 paying most attention to everyday encounters occurring in ordinary spaces and
15 situations in the ebb and flow of daily life (Wise 2010; Blokland 2014; Noble 2010).
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17 Although this literature shows that diversity is being experienced as a normal part of
18 everyday social life in many places, it does not provide a measure of the degree to
19 which everyday encounters translate to sustained close relations and the conditions
20 under which this happens. Studying the development of interethnic friendship is
21 important because it is through more regular and sustained relationships that meaningful
22 intercultural dialogue can take place. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) showed that contact in
23 the form of cross-group friendships is more strongly associated with positive intergroup
24 attitudes than other forms of contact. More recent experimental longitudinal studies
25 support this finding evincing of a causal relationship between cross-group friendships
26 and positive out-group evaluations (Davies et al., 2011, however see Matejskova and
27 Leitner 2011). Still, although research evinces of the positive consequences of
28 interethnic social ties and friendship for social cohesion, relatively little is known about
29 the degree and determinants of such ties (Sigelman et al., 1996; Fong and Isajiw, 2000).
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31 Our study aims to contribute in this respect by exploring the development of interethnic
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friendships in diverse European neighborhoods and understanding the relevance and role of the neighbourhood context in their development.

Data and methodology

Our analysis is based on data generated through the GEITONIES (meaning ‘neighbourhoods’ in Greek) international research project. A survey was conducted during 2009-10 in eighteen neighbourhoods in six European cities, namely, Lisbon, Bilbao, Thessalonica, Rotterdam, Vienna and Warsaw, offering examples from the different migration experiences of northern, southern and Central/Eastern Europe. Three neighbourhoods were selected in each city, all with a share of migrants higher than that of the whole city but with different characteristics in terms of their socio-demographic and urban structure (for an overview of neighbourhood profiles see Górný and Torunczyk-Ruiz. 2014: 6-7). The survey generated a randomly-selected sample of approximately 200 respondents per neighbourhood, making up a total of 3668 individuals, split in about half between people of native and migrant background. The latter group includes the ‘second generation’, i.e. native-born respondents of immigrant background and those who arrived in the host country as minors up to six years of age, comprising 16.5 % of the ‘migrant’ sample (though largely concentrated in Vienna and Rotterdam).

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9 The survey gathered a wealth of information, including details on the
10 respondents' social networks. Concretely, the GEITONIES study looked at two types of
11 interpersonal relationships: the respondents' 'overall social contacts', i.e, their wider
12 social circle, and their 'most important' ones, i.e, their network of 'close' relationships
13 (including relatives) outside the household. In this paper, we focus on this latter type of
14 networks. Respondents were asked to list up to eight people according to four broad
15 categories of contacts: (a) people they spend their free time with, (b) people they would
16 ask for advice in important decisions (and vice-versa), (c) people they give or receive
17 help, and (d) other people close or important to them. The mean number of reported
18 contacts for respondents of migrant background was as low as 3.1, suggesting that the
19 respondents reported the core of their social networks. For each of these contacts, the
20 survey recorded key information about their socio-demographic profile, the context and
21 circumstances of meeting, and the patterns of contact in two periods: 'then' (at the time
22 respondents moved into the neighbourhood) and 'now' (at the time of the survey).
23 Respondents have not reported themselves whether their close contacts are of the same
24 background or not; this was estimated by comparing one's origin to that of her/his
25 contact, using parents' country of birth as a proxy for both while correcting for the
26 second generation.
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48 Strong interethnic ties are found to be much more frequent among respondents
49 of immigrant background; 52.4 % had at least one close 'interethnic' contact (compared
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9 to just 9.5 % among natives), and for the majority (86.5 %) these include relationships
10 with natives, with 31 % maintaining close ties with natives only. It thus appears that
11 strong interethnic ties are not uncommon among migrants and their descendants in
12 European cities. Given that immigrants' social networks tend to be more concentrated
13 spatially, the neighbourhood appears to be an important field for socialisation for them,
14 yet only partly for the development of strong interethnic ties. Among immigrants' total
15 number of strong interethnic ties, 17 % were originally met as neighbours, while the
16 majority (38,5%) as colleagues or fellow students.
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26 Approximately one third of the 815 immigrants with 'interethnic' friends have
27 first met (at least one of) those contacts in their neighbourhood of residence. Restricting
28 our attention to these contacts only, we find that their distribution along the 18
29 neighbourhoods does not follow the same pattern as the general distribution of close
30 interethnic ties. In fact, in the areas with the highest shares of immigrants having
31 'interethnic' friends, the majority of such contacts were first met outside these
32 neighbourhoods; hence the areas themselves do not seem to foster the development of
33 neighbourly interethnic relations (but simply concentrate more immigrants with
34 interethnic contacts). The reverse is the case for (some of) the areas with low shares of
35 immigrants generally having interethnic ties, but most of these ties were actually first
36 met in the neighbourhood. Yet, in this latter case, the neighbourhoods with the highest
37 neighbourly interethnic relations share similar characteristics in terms of their location
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9 in the urban structure, built environment, economic functions, and local migrant
10 concentration; and so do those with the lowest shares of locally-formed interethnic ties.

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12 Three hypotheses could be drawn out of these observations:

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18 1. It is possible that the urban environment itself influences sociability at the
19 neighbourhood level with the neighbourhoods having more dense social infrastructures
20 and more socially inviting public spaces inducing the development of interethnic
21 relations;
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27 2. Location and hence distance from and access to the urban core may play a role
28 in driving residents to use the neighbourhood for free time activities, thus providing
29 more opportunities to meet each other;
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34 3. When immigrants form negligible numerical minorities in the neighbourhood
35 they may tend to stay within co-ethnic social circles.
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40 Our subsequent analytical strategy is as follows. First, we identified the individual
41 characteristics of migrants maintaining strong interethnic ties across the six cities. Then
42 we performed a Factor (Principal Component) analysis, allowing us to classify our
43 neighbourhoods by a number of contextual features (including those deriving from the
44 above hypotheses), thus investigating the role of the neighbourhood in the development
45 of strong interethnic ties. Finally, restricting our attention to those interethnic relations
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9 that developed in the neighbourhood, we combined immigrants ‘individual’ and
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11 ‘contextual’ neighbourhood characteristics in a logistic regression model, in order to
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13 shed light into the mechanisms influencing the development of intimate interethnic
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15 relations at the local level.
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18 19 20 **Individual characteristics** 21

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25 We first explored the extent of close interethnic ties among people of migrant
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27 background in our sample, by cross-tabulating their key characteristics with the
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29 existence or not of interethnic contacts. A number of statistically significant results
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31 allow for some initial observations, with respect to their socio-demographic and
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33 migratory profile:
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- 38 1. Interethnic contacts are more frequent among the second generation. The share
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40 of second-generation immigrant respondents having at least one contact of different
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42 ethnic background is nearly 90 %, while the respective share for the first generation
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44 drops to 44.8 % (N= 1535, Pearson’s Chi square= 178,644, $p < .05$).
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- 47 2. Among first generation immigrants, interethnic friendship is expectedly more
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49 common among those longer settled in the host country: more than half of those who
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51 had lived there for at least 20 years had some interethnic tie, compared to just one out of
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9 four of those who arrived three years prior to fieldwork (Pearson's Chi square = 31,216,
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11 $p < .05$).

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13 3. While we found no differences by gender and family status, certain family
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15 arrangements seem to matter. Having a partner of different ethnic background (about
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17 one fourth of those married) appears to play a role: the share among them who have
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19 interethnic ties is 74.2 %, nearly double than those whose partners are of the same
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21 origin (N= 1226, Pearson's Chi square= 80,169, $p < .05$), while in most of these cases
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23 (66.1 %) contacts with people of different ethnic background were actually formed after
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25 the relationship was initiated. On the other hand, the proportion of migrants with
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27 interethnic ties is far higher (63 %) among those who do not have any children as
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29 compared to parents (47.4 %) (N=1016, Pearson's Chi square= 69,372, $p < .05$).

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35 Such evidence confirms that interethnic intimacy is a dynamic process associated
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37 with broader trends of migrants' incorporation. This latter also includes factors
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39 pertaining to the institutional and socio-cultural environment and the migratory histories
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41 of the national and urban contexts of our study. Therefore, the extent of interethnic
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43 friendship was also explored in an additional set of immigrants' characteristics that
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45 inevitably relate to such broader settings and arrangements. Although statistical
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47 significance was not the case here, a number of noteworthy patterns emerged.
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1. We first assessed the impact of immigrants' religious beliefs and ethnic background on interethnic relations. Neither religion nor ethnicity were taken as individual 'attributes'; rather, they were treated relationally. Religion was examined in relation to the dominant religion in each city (weighting the relevant responses of natives). Accordingly, the frequency of interethnic contacts among immigrants belonging to a religion different to the dominant one is generally lower than among those who share the host country's religion(s) or who are not religious at all. As a measure of ethnicity we grouped together countries of origin in two categories; those that have some sort of bond (historical, colonial, etc.) with the countries of residence and those that do not. Findings differed across cities, with interethnic contact being more frequent among immigrants from former Portuguese colonies in Lisbon, Soviet Greeks in Thessalonica and Germans in Vienna but not for immigrants from former Spanish or Dutch colonies in Bilbao and Rotterdam respectively.

2. Next we examined interethnic contacts in relation to immigrants' language skills, focusing on the first generation only. Accordingly, interethnic friendship is expectedly more frequent among people who command the host-country's language better, yet with the paradoxical exception of those who speak the host country language as their mother tongue, for which significant differences across counties were recorded. Language, therefore, is important but its significance on the development of interethnic relations is far from self-evident and may be seen as context-bound.

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9 3. We also sought to examine the role of immigrants' position in the host country
10 polities, by looking at the extent of interethnic contact in broad categories of migrants'
11 legal status (namely citizenship, long term or permanent status, temporary status, and no
12 permission). Results show that the more stable, safe and secure the migrants' legal
13 status is the more frequent close interethnic contact becomes, and this is a pattern in all
14 cities despite differences in the distribution of different categories of migrants' legal
15 status.
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24 4. Finally, we looked at key socio-economic characteristics, namely education and
25 employment. With respect to the former, we observe an overall pattern of more frequent
26 interethnic contact among immigrants with higher educational levels (ISCED
27 categories), yet one that is not confirmed in all cities (the exceptions being Lisbon and
28 Warsaw). By contrast, immigrants' position in the labour market allows for some
29 interesting insights (e.g. interethnic contacts are more frequent among students, retired
30 persons, migrants employed as executives and professionals, but also skilled blue collar
31 workers, and much scarcer among those involved in housework - mostly women - and
32 the unemployed), but do not overall suggest any consistent pattern and there is a good
33 deal of divergence across cities.
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Neighbourhood characteristics

In order to specify which neighbourhood characteristics are to be considered, a factor analysis was performed to reveal underlying correlations between variables that could be used for a classification of our neighbourhoods. We tested twelve variables describing the urban, social, economic and demographic profile of our case study areas: four from secondary sources and eight from aggregated data derived from the GEITONIES survey. These latter were weighted according to the respective shares of native and immigrant residents in each neighbourhood, based on official statistics, so that our aggregated data are representative of the actual population. The selection of variables aimed at capturing different neighbourhood characteristics, such as socio-economic and demographic features, spatial attributes and residents' perceptions, as illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1. Variables describing the social and economic profile of case study areas

[table somewhere here]

A principal components analysis combined with a direct oblimin rotation method produced four components explaining 77.6 % of the total variance in our data³. Given that the last component consists of one variable only (Educational similarity), it

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9 was excluded from our analysis. The retained three components according to which we
10 have grouped our neighbourhoods are summarised in Table 2. Since a suitable rotated
11 solution was reached, component scores were estimated for each neighbourhood, using
12 the regression method. Given that these scores represent standardised values (mean
13 equals zero and standard deviation equals one), the 18 Neighbourhoods were classified
14 by receiving a 'low', 'moderate' and 'high' value corresponding to the respective
15 components scores (< -1 , -1 to 1 , > 1).
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26 **Table 2. Rotated Components and description**

27 [table somewhere here]
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32 More specifically:

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35 1. Three neighbourhoods scored exceptionally high on Component one, namely
36 San Francisco (Bilbao), Afrikaandewijk (Rotterdam) and Nikopoli (Thessalonica).
37 These are neighbourhoods with large shares of immigrants among the total population
38 which are considered to be problematic in terms of reputation and safety (according to
39 immigrant residents' perceptions), while they are also characterised by high
40 unemployment levels. On the other hand, all Warsaw neighbourhoods and Rekalde in
41 Bilbao received low scores on this Component, given the exceptionally low shares of
42 immigrants there and the respondents' positive views in terms of safety and reputation.
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9 The remaining 11 neighbourhoods were classified as ‘moderate’ (values between -1 and
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11 1).

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13 2. All Viennese neighbourhoods and Schiemond in Rotterdam were assigned a
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15 ‘high value’ in Component two, denoting areas with high GDP/capita and long
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17 settlement histories. On the other extreme, Nikopoli, San Francisco and Szczesliwice
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19 (Warsaw) are areas with recent histories of immigrant settlement and belong to poorer
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21 regions in terms of GDP/capita; hence they received a ‘low’ value in this Component.
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24 The remaining 11 neighbourhoods were categorised as ‘moderate’.

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26 3. Finally, Peraia (Thessalonica) Hoogvliet Noord (Rotterdam) and Costa da
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28 Caparica (Lisbon) were grouped together based on their high scores in Component
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30 three. These are neighbourhoods located far from the city centres, yet characterised by
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32 strong neighbourly relations among residents. San Francisco, Ludo-Hartmann-Platz
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34 (Vienna) and Szczesliwice received a ‘low’ value while the remaining 12
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36 Neighbourhoods were assigned a ‘moderate’ value.
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42 **The neighbourhood as micro-context of interethnic friendship**

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47 The derived component scores described above were used to create three new
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49 categorical variables (neighbourhood scores on Components 1, 2, 3), each coded with
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51 values ‘low’, ‘moderate’ or ‘high’, based on the respondents’ neighbourhood of
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9 residence. These new ‘exogenous’ variables were included together with the
10 ‘individual’ immigrants’ characteristics found to affect interethnic relations, in addition
11 to gender and socio-economic status, in a logistic regression predicting the variables
12 which may explain (some of) the underlying mechanisms that foster the development of
13 close interethnic ties locally. The model employed 12 independent variables altogether
14 and the dependent variable is a dichotomous one (Yes/No) distinguishing between
15 immigrants who met their close interethnic contacts *in their neighbourhood of residence*
16 and those whose interethnic ties were established *outside the neighbourhood*.
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28 **Table 3. Individual characteristics variables employed in the logit model**

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35 The logit model was applied by requesting a forward stepwise (likelihood ratio –
36 LR) method, since no reliable assumption was evident regarding the (accumulated)
37 effect of the predictors (Menard, 1995). Due to missing values in several of the
38 employed variables, 528 out of 815 immigrant respondents with interethnic ties were
39 ultimately included in this analysis⁴. Five steps were necessary to reach a reliable
40 solution and five variables, namely ‘Language Skills’, ‘Length of residence’ (in the host
41 country) and ‘Neighbourhood Scores’ on the three Components present significant
42 values on Wald statistic, which suggests their importance as predictors in our model.
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9 The remaining seven variables were not retained, since their effect was not statistically
10 significant. Table 4 provides a summary of these findings (obtained in the last step),
11 showing the mean predicted chances (probabilities, expressed as percentages) for the
12 'average' immigrant resident of a neighbourhood to establish interethnic relations
13 locally.
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22 **Table 4. Summary of logit regression results**

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24 [table 4 somewhere here]
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29 The model replicated the rather paradoxical earlier finding that being a native
30 speaker in the host country's language impacts negatively the development of
31 interethnic relations also at the neighbourhood level. It reveals though an interesting
32 local particularity: migrants whose language skills are 'poor' or 'good' have the same
33 enhanced probability to develop interethnic ties at the neighbourhood, and they are 2.6
34 times more likely to make intimate interethnic contacts locally as compared to those
35 speaking the host country's language as mother tongue. Given that these two language
36 skill categories are the most common among immigrants in our sample, it may be
37 argued that *linguistic skills do not constitute a significant barrier in the development of*
38 *close interethnic contacts at the neighbourhood level*, even if they do play a role in
39 interethnic ties overall.
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9 Equally contrasting to our descriptive analysis are the results on the migrants'
10 length of stay in the host country. While it was generally found that the more years
11 immigrants have been in the country the more frequent their interethnic ties are, rather
12 the opposite holds true for interethnic contacts met at the neighbourhood. Immigrants
13 who have been in the country four to five years may be 4.3 times more likely to have
14 neighbourhood-based interethnic contacts compared to those just arrived (base
15 category), but also to those living in the country for six to ten years (3.2 times more
16 possible compared to the base category). Moreover, those living in the country for 11-
17 20 years are approximately as prone to interethnic friendship as those who are settled
18 for more than 20 years (2.3 - 2.5 times more likely compared to the base group); yet
19 both are considerably less likely to have neighbourhood-based contacts compared to
20 those who are in the country for three to ten years. Excluding immigrants who have
21 arrived very recently, the *length of residence seems to be negatively affecting the*
22 *probability of developing close interethnic contacts at the local level.*
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39 How are we to make sense of these results? The neighbourhood appears as a key
40 place for the development of social relations with 'others' (i.e. mostly natives) during
41 the first years. Through the passing of time, and as immigrants become more involved
42 in the host society, engage in more social fields and are more mobile in their everyday
43 lives, they face enhanced opportunities to meet people of different ethnic backgrounds
44 and establish interethnic contact that might later develop to intimate relationships.
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9 Taking into account the results concerning language skills, it appears that the
10 neighbourhood is a less demanding place of interethnic socialisation. Although poor
11 language skills, generally a common barrier for newcomers, influence the development
12 of interethnic contact with natives and other immigrants, this does not seem to be the
13 case at the neighbourhood level. This may possibly be because relationships in the
14 neighbourhood develop in less formal social settings which are also less demanding in
15 terms of host-country cultural skills on the part of the immigrants.
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24 Turning now to the impact of neighbourhood characteristics, immigrants who
25 live in neighbourhoods that received a 'moderate score' on Component one ('diverse
26 and deprived neighbourhoods') are 5.2 times more likely to develop interethnic relations
27 locally, as compared to those living in neighbourhoods with 'low' scores in this
28 Component, i.e. wealthier areas that are less diverse and thus do not offer opportunities
29 for interethnic contact. Similarly, in neighbourhoods scoring 'high' (that is, very diverse
30 but with social problems), residents are also more likely (3.5 times) to develop
31 interethnic ties there. This is in line with the observation made earlier that when
32 immigrants form negligible minorities and when diversity levels are low locally, they
33 tend to stay within co-ethnic social circles.
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46 The results on the effect of Component three ('remote and sociable
47 neighbourhoods') support the hypothesis suggesting that immigrants settled in remote
48 neighbourhoods (away from the city centre), with higher levels of neighbourly relations
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9 are (1.5. time) more likely to develop interethnic contacts within their residential areas,
10 compared to those in more central districts where social interaction is less frequent
11 (even though this effect is only statistically significant at the 0.1 level). A local
12 neighbourhood ‘culture’ of socialisation can thus also foster interethnic relations. At the
13 same time, neighbourly relations in this case are more intense in suburban areas rather
14 secluded from the centre, where residents spend more time in the neighbourhood (e.g. in
15 public spaces), highlighting the role of location and spatial characteristics.
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31 **Conclusion**

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36 Despite the expressive fears in public discourses about the supposed negative impact of
37 the presence of immigrants and ethnic minorities on social cohesion and about
38 immigrants living parallel lives, our findings indicate that close interethnic relationships
39 are not uncommon in European urban neighbourhoods and that they mostly concern
40 immigrants’ contacts with natives. In accordance to previous research (Martinovic et al,
41 2009; 2011), they further highlight that the most significant determinants are directly or
42 indirectly related to time. This is not to say that there are no tensions related to cultural
43 misunderstandings, growing socio-economic inequalities in cities –increasingly with
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9 ‘ethnic’ characteristics—, the resurgence of racism and natives’ demands on migrants to
10 comply with national norms. Yet, as our analysis highlights, early experiences of
11 migrants’ settlement – **especially in respect to developing contacts with natives - are**
12 **subject to change in the short and medium run, hence far from indicative of their**
13 **integration prospects, and thus** should not be interpreted as signs of integration
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19 ‘failure’ or dismantling of social cohesion.
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22 Migration destabilises and diversifies the structures of people’s affiliations and
23 social networks, and devaluates much of the human and cultural capital they possess.
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25 Apart from their position in the class structure and institutional arrangements in their
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27 place of settlement, immigrants’ social integration is also typically constrained by
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29 native perceptions questioning the belongingness of immigrants in the ‘host society’
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31 and placing them in an inferior position (Pratsinakis, 2014). However, **despite those**
32 **constrictions**, over time immigrants **do** get intertwined with the wider society, and also
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39 develop close interethnic ties.

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41 Concerning the role of neighbourhoods in particular, although they appear to be
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43 important fields for immigrants socialisation (Schnell et al., 2012), our findings indicate
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45 that their role in the development of strong interethnic ties is limited. As previous
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47 studies have shown, everyday cross-ethnic encounters in the neighborhood do not easily
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49 translate to actual close relationships or friendships especially when the ethnic divisions
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51 are also coupled with class divisions (Blockland, 2009). Thus policy makers should not
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9 put too high hopes on government-sponsored mixing interventions, especially since
10 such interventions reproduce stigmatizing perceptions of immigrants' concentration as a
11 problem to be solved. Such mixing interventions sustain ideas of 'immigrants and
12 minorities living parallel lives and not wishing to integrate'⁶ while in practice, as Fortier
13 argues (2008), they tend to be counterproductive calcifying cultures within boundaries
14 across which one should mix.
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22 However, policies could **instead** be directed towards facilitating the process of
23 social integration by **supporting** both immigrants and **natives, prioritising**
24 *neighbourhoods that concentrate newcomers*. **Such measures may emphasise on local**
25 **residents' access to the labour market or welfare services, or on planning**
26 **interventions targeting the urban and social infrastructure (which are often left to**
27 **degrade, contributing to neighbourhood stigmatisation). Equally important are**
28 **measures nurturing interethnic dialogue, easing feelings of distress among**
29 **established residents while countering racist stereotypes. Such neighbourhoods**
30 **may pose actual challenges for policy makers but they also provide potentials for**
31 **the fostering of immigrant-native relations: as our findings indicate, the**
32 neighbourhood appears to be an optimal setting for the development of interethnic
33 relations among migrants *in their early phases of settlement*. Relationships in the
34 neighbourhood develop in less formal social settings and are also less demanding in
35 terms of host-country cultural skills on the part of the immigrants, thus giving the
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9 opportunity to newcomers to develop close interethnic relationships with natives. Over
10 time the neighbourhood gradually loses its significance **as a setting for interethnic**
11 **contact**, as immigrants become embedded in the host societies, acquiring all these skills
12 and capabilities that may allow them to expand their social networks beyond their area
13 of residence.
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20 Finally in respect to the local context, our findings support that ethnic
21 concentration and diversity plays a positive role. Notwithstanding the fact that high
22 immigrant concentrations are often associated with negative reputation of those areas,
23 our model revealed that this does not affect negatively the development of interethnic
24 relations as such. We do see interethnic contact developing in highly mixed
25 neighbourhoods rather than in districts with low migrant presence, which in our sample
26 tended also to have a good reputation. Lastly, the analysis stresses the importance of the
27 neighbourhood space itself and its location in the wider urban net (i.e. physical
28 characteristics and position/function in the conurbation) – both of which are almost
29 completely ignored in the relevant literature and necessitate further research.
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44 **Acknowledgments**

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47 We are grateful to our GEITONIES project partners who commented valuably on early
48 versions of the analysis and arguments presented in this paper. We would also like to
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10 comments and suggestions that helped us improve the paper.
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12

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16
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23 24 **Notes**

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26
27 ¹ Social cohesion is a much contested concept originating in the writings of Durkheim and Tönnies, now
28 conventionally featuring in policy documents. In most of the literature examined here it is often implied
29 rather than directly mentioned, largely associated with measures of social capital, and broadly understood
30 as pertaining to increased social interaction between individuals and groups bounded together by norms
31 of solidarity and trust (Hooghe, 2007; Letki, 2008; Laurence, 2011; Portes and Vickstrom, 2011;
32 Gijsberts et al., 2012).

33 ² In its original formulation, the contact hypothesis did not preclude that contact brings about the
34 reduction of prejudice (Allport, 1954), but was instead concerned *with the conditions* under which this
35 may take place). Reversely, the focus of conflict theory was *on the conditions* that stimulates or
36 smoothens intergroup conflict (Sherif et al, 1961). Thus the two theories were not mutually exclusively
37 but could in fact be assessed within a common framework. Their juxtaposition came later by scholars of
38 quantitative social psychology, sociology and political science (including Putnam) who simplified them,
39 examining *the effect of contact* in general without specifying *the kind of relationship* within which contact
40 occurs and the attitudes and expectations people hold before entering into contact.

41 ³ Components with eigenvalues over 1 were selected, in accordance with Kaiser's criterion (1960), while
42 variables with components loadings exceeding 0.75 were retained, given the small size of our sample (see
43 Stevens, 2002). The KMO statistic reached a value of 0.643.

44 ⁴ Plotting these missing cases against variables and neighbourhoods, we found that they are evenly spread
45 across the sample thus ruling out the possibility of bias.

46 ⁶ Those ideas are based on assumptions that natives are open and willing to mix with immigrants.
47 However, Muller and Smets (2009) in their research in an ethnically mixed neighborhood in Arnhem
48 found out that it was the natives who are not interested in developing relations with people of migrant
49 background rather the other way round as nativistic views of migrants not wishing to integrate – prevalent
50 in the Netherlands– suggest.
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List of tables captions

Table 1:

- a. Given the lack of GDP data at the neighbourhood or even urban level for all cities under study, we retreated to NUTS II, fully aware of the bias this may entail, yet confident that this should reflect the GDP per capita in the six metropolitan areas.
- b. Length of residence was recalculated based on the respondents’ moment of entrance in each neighbourhood. For participants born in the neighbourhood, the respective length of residence equals their age.
- c. The index was constructed by calculating a weighted average of responses to three questions on the extent and frequency of neighbourly relations: whether respondents personally know their neighbours, measured on a five-point Likert scale (1-strongly agree, 5= strongly disagree), and whether they engaged

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in small talk or visits with neighbours, both measured on a five-point scale indicating frequency (1=more than 20, 5=none).

Table 4:

Nagelkerke's $R^2 = 0.243$. $\chi^2(13) = 99.840$. $p < 0.01$

a. Figures in brackets compare the respective variable categories against the base category (0).

Table 1. Variables describing the social and economic profile of case study areas

N.	Neighbourhood Variables	Explanation
1	Ethnic concentration	Share of immigrants in each neighbourhood, based on last available census data, municipal registries and the GEITONIES dataset
2	Ethnic diversity	Simpson's diversity index, from the GEITONIES data set and weighted by the immigrant population per neighbourhood
3	Distance from centre	Distance from the city centre, based on available data on Google Maps (http://maps.google.com/)
4	GDP/capita ^a	GDP per capita in Power Purchasing Standards (PPS) on NUTS II level, from Eurostat (http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home)
5	Infrastructure	Index based on the existence of parks, community centres, health centres and secondary schools in each neighbourhood
6	Length of residence ^b	Length of residence in the neighbourhood, based on aggregated weighted data from the GEITONIES survey
7	Socialization ^c	Composite weighted index of three different survey items indicating the degree of socialization at the neighbourhood level
8	Stigmatization	Weighted index construction from a survey item indicating the share of immigrants who think their neighbourhood is 'an unattractive place to live'
9	Safety	Weighted Index constructed from a survey item indicating the share of immigrants who think their neighbourhood is 'a safe place to live'
10	Trust	Weighted Index constructed from a survey item indicating the share of residents claiming that 'most people in the neighbourhood would try to be fair' to them
11	Unemployment rate	Unemployment levels in each neighbourhood, based on weighted aggregate data from the GEITONIES survey
12	Educational similarity	Weighted Index constructed from a survey item showing the share of immigrants and natives in each neighbourhood with the same educational levels

a. Given the lack of GDP data at the neighbourhood or even urban level for all cities under study, we retreated to NUTS II, fully aware of the bias this may entail, yet confident that this should reflect the GDP per capita in the six metropolitan areas.

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Table 2. Rotated Components and description

Variables	Loading	Component	Description
Safety (9)	-0.96	1	'Diverse and deprived neighbourhoods'
Stigmatisation (8)	0.89		
Ethnic diversity (2)	0.78		
Ethnic concentration (1)	0.75		
Unemployment rate	0.86		
Length of residence (6)	0.77	2	'Wealthy neighbourhoods with long-term settlers'
GDP/capita (4)	0.76		
Distance from centre (3)	0.81	3	'Remote and sociable neighbourhoods'
Socialization (7)	0.82		

Table 3. Individual characteristics variables employed in the logit model

N.	Variable	Description and Levels of Categories				
		0 (<i>Base group</i>)	1	2	3	4
1	Gender	Male	Female			
2	Education	ISCED levels 0-2	ISCED levels 3-4	ISCED levels 5-6		
3	Generation	1st generation	2nd generation			
4	Length of residence	<4 years	4-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	> 20 years
5	Age	<35	35-49	50-64	>64	
6	Current legal status	Full citizenship	documented stay	temporary status	no permission	
7	Religion	different to natives	same as natives ⁷	no religion		
8	Language skills	mother tongue	good	average	poor	
9	Socio-economic status	EGP class 1	EGP class 2	EGP class 3	EGP class 4	EGP class 5
10	Component 1 score	low	moderate	high		
11	Component 2 score	low	moderate	high		
12	Component 3 score	low	moderate	high		

Table 4. Summary of logit regression results

INCLUDED ON STEP 5 ^a	B (SE)	Odds Ratio - Exp(B)
Constant	-3.28 (0.63)	
Language Skills (good skills compared to 'mother tongue' skills)	0.96 (0.26)	2.6
Language Skills (poor skills compared to 'mother tongue' skills)	0.96 (0.35)	2.6
Length of residence (4-5 years compared to <4 years)	1.46 (0.58)	4.3
Length of residence (6-10 years compared to <4 years)	1.17 (0.39)	3.2
Length of residence (11-20 years compared to <4 years)	0.84 (0.32)	2.3
Length of residence (>20 years compared to <4 years)	0.94 (0.30)	2.5
NoR Score on Component1 (moderate compared to low score)	1.6 (0.43)	5.2
NoR Score on Component1 (high compared to low score)	1.2 (0.52)	3.5
NoR Score on Component2 (moderate compared to low score)	0.49 (0.51)	1.6
NoR Score on Component3 (high compared to low score)	0.42 (0.47)	1.5

Nagelkerke's $R^2 = 0.243$. $\chi^2(13) = 99.840$. $p < 0.01$

a. Figures in brackets compare the respective variable categories against the base category (0).

1
2 Table 1. Variables describing the s
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4 N. Neighbourhood Variables

- 5 1 Ethnic concentration
6 2 Ethnic diversity
7 3 Distance from centre
8 4 GDP/capita(a)
9 5 Infrastructure
10 6 Length of residence(b)
11 7 Socialization(c)
12 8 Stigmatization
13 9 Safety
14 10 Trust
15 11 Unemployment rate
16 12 Educational similarity
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19 Footnotes:

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23 (c)The index was constructed by c
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2 social and economic profile of case study areas
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4 Explanation

5 Share of immigrants in each neighbourhood, based on last available census data, municipal registries and the GEITONI

6 Simpson's diversity index, from the GEITONIES data set and weighted by the immigrant population per neighbourho

7 Distance from the city centre, based on available data on Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com/>)

8 GDP per capita in Power Purchasing Standards (PPS) on NUTS II level, from Eurostat (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>)

9 Index based on the existence of parks, community centres, health centres and secondary schools in each neighbourho

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Description

'Diverse and deprived neighbourhoods'

'Wealthy neighbourhoods with long-term settlers'

'Remote and sociable neighbourhoods'

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ISCED levels 5-6

6-10 years	11-20 years	> 20 years
50-64	>64	
temporary status	no permission	
no religion		
average	poor	
EGP class 3	EGP class 4	EGP class 5
high		
high		
high		

1
2 Table 4. Summary of logit regression results
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4 INCLUDED ON STEP 5 (a)

5 Constant

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