**From Municipality Level to Street Level: the Impact of Ethnic Diversity on Neighbourhood Cohesion and Fear of Crime**

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**Abstract**

Ethnic diversity is increasing in most European countries. Research suggests that these increasing levels of diversity could result in less neighbourhood cohesion and more fear of crime. In this article, we examine both hypothesised outcomes of ethnic diversity, using survey data of the Dutch Safety Monitor 2014 (N = 86,382) in combination with register data. The register data enable the construction of a fine-grained measure of diversity. The effects of diversity on neighbourhood cohesion and fear of crime are assessed at four levels: municipalities, districts, neighbourhoods and streets. The results of the multilevel analyses show that ethnic diversity at the two lowest levels – streets and neighbourhoods – is modestly related to less neighbourhood cohesion and more fear of crime. Moreover, we found that recent increases in diversity are unable to explain differences in neighbourhood cohesion and fear of crime.

**Introduction**

The population of European countries is becoming increasingly ethnically diverse (Crul, 2016; Vertovec, 2007). This development is reflected in the municipalities, neighbourhoods and streets people reside in. Researchers have argued that living in an ethnically heterogeneous environment may have certain negative consequences for its inhabitants. These consequences include declining levels of social cohesion and rising levels of fear of crime. The claim that ethnic diversity harms cohesion has attracted widespread scholarly interest after the introduction of Putnam's (2007) 'constrict hypothesis'. According to this

hypothesis, ethnic diversity in the living environment challenges social solidarity and decreases social trust (Putnam, 2007). The assumed detrimental effect of diversity on cohesion has been studied frequently by (European) scholars, resulting in mixed findings (see for overviews Portes and Vickstrom, 2011; Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014). Overall, the different studies tend to the conclusion that ethnic diversity has negative effects on especially neighbourhood related indicators of cohesion (Morales, 2013; Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014). It is, however, still unsettled why and under which circumstances this negative effect of diversity occurs (Koopmans *et al*., 2014). Moreover, Laurence and Bentley (2016) recently argued that the negative effect of ethnic diversity may be overestimated if researchers overlook variables that correlate with (but are not caused by) social cohesion. These overlooked variables drive down cohesion rather than ethnic diversity itself. Given the common knowledge that poverty is highly correlated with diversity *and* can be disruptive to the functioning of communities (Letki, 2008), we explicitly take into account the role of socio-economic deprivation.

In addition to lower levels of cohesion, ethnic diversity is considered to be associated with a second negative consequence: increased levels of fear of crime. This line of reasoning suggests that living in close proximity to ethnic others induces fear (Merry, 1981). Research on ethnic diversity and fear of crime has been conducted almost exclusively in the American context (Chiricos *et al*., 1997; Covington and Taylor, 1991; Moeller, 1989; Pickett *et al*., 2012). The relationship between these variables is under-researched in the European context of diversity; to our knowledge, only one study has analysed the association between ethnic diversity and fear of crime at a local European level (Hooghe and De Vroome, 2016). This lack of research is surprising since feelings of unsafety experienced by residents of ethnically mixed neighbourhoods are a major social and political issue in a range of Western European countries including Sweden, France, Great Britain and also the Netherlands, which is the focus of this study (Müller and Fischer, 2015: 790).

Ethnic diversity and the extent to which it affects social cohesion or fear of crime are generally studied separately; scholars focus either on cohesion or on fear of crime. These negative outcomes of diversity can, however, be explained by similar mechanisms (Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014).

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Accordingly, we will examine both cohesion and fear of crime and their associations with ethnic diversity in the Dutch context. More specifically, the study aims to improve our understanding of the effects of ethnic diversity on neighbourhood cohesion and fear of crime. We will use data of the Dutch Safety Monitor 2014 (N = 86,382) in combination with individual-level register data of Statistics Netherlands.

We build on previous research in the following three ways. Firstly, the relationship between ethnic diversity on the one hand and neighbourhood cohesion and fear of crime on the other hand will be analysed simultaneously at different levels: the municipality, district (in Dutch: *wijk*), neighbourhood and street segment. Although it is still unusual to test multiple contexts in the same study (Lupton and Kneale, 2012: 126), such an approach is considered to be the "more ideal" way to research contextual effects (Hipp, 2007: 660). Besides, the street segments provide the opportunity to assess how ethnic diversity in the micro-context (e.g. Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2015) is associated with neighbourhood cohesion and safety feelings. Secondly, we will further explore the conditions under which diversity has negative consequences by including a time dimension. More specifically, a dynamic measure of ethnic diversity will be added to the analyses. Rather than solely relying on a 'static' measure of ethnic diversity, we will also consider how rapidly a context's level of ethnic heterogeneity has changed. The underlying argument is that recent increases in ethnic diversity can be more disruptive than stable levels of diversity (Schaeffer, 2014: 65). Lastly, we will employ a more fine-grained operationalisation of ethnic diversity than researchers generally do: a Herfindahl-Hirschman-Index (HHI) based on a distinction of 18 different ethnic groups. The aim of the '$HHI_{18}$' is to do more justice to the "enormous diversity" of ethnic groups living in European cities (Crul, 2016).

**Theoretical framework**

This study examines the erosive effects of ethnic diversity. Putnam's constrict theory proposes a direct negative effect of diversity on social cohesion and a range of related phenomena such as number of close friends, trust and citizen participation. These negative outcomes occur because living in an ethnically

heterogeneous environment triggers anomie and social isolation (Putnam 2007). How diversity actually triggers social isolation or 'hunkering' is, however, not fully explained (Savelkoul *et al.*, 2011:1093; Scheepers *et al*., 2013: 93).

To explain why and how ethnic diversity can cause lower levels of social cohesion and higher levels of fear, Van der Meer and Tolsma (2014) introduce two mechanisms: the anomie and the threat mechanism. The anomie mechanism relates ethnic diversity to feelings of anomie. It emphasises how diversity and its different facets – in terms of linguistic diversity and diversity in social norms – causes feelings of anxiety and uncertainty among inhabitants of ethnically diverse environments. Consequently, residents avoid interaction and hence socially isolate themselves from their (co-) residents. When an environment is increasingly perceived as unfamiliar, feelings of unsafety will increase as well – in the same way that the ability to interpret and order an environment improves feelings of safety (e.g. Blokland, 2008).  In an 'orderly' environment, inhabitants do know who to trust and what to expect. Disorder, by contrast, signals a loss of having such control. In these environments, residents will feel more vulnerable and thus more fearful (Covington and Taylor, 1991).

The threat mechanism is mainly inspired by so-called 'conflict theory' and proposes that ethnic diversity fosters competition between ethnic groups over scarce goods such as jobs and housing, and over nonmaterial resources such as morality and identity (Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014: 463). This (perceived) competition and conflict translates into feelings of threat. Originally, the argument is primarily about an in-group versus an out-group and how the settlement of the latter group spurs competition *between* these groups and, at the same time, improves solidarity *within* a group (Blalock, 1967; Quillian, 1995). In the case of diversity, however, it is expected that living in close proximity to ethnic others results in generalised negative effects – both within and between the different groups. A possible explanation might be that diversity intensifies the processes of competition and threat. These processes will result in general feelings of hostility and uncertainty, ultimately causing fear of crime and a hesitation to mingle with others.

In sum, the two mechanisms predict that diversity induces feelings of threat and anomie, thereby reducing overall levels of social cohesion and feelings of safety.

*Empirics*

Scholars in various countries have rushed to test Putnam's constrict hypothesis using a range of social cohesion indicators. Overall, these studies conclude that ethnic diversity is consistently associated with only certain components of social cohesion and, more specifically, with neighbourhood related indicators of cohesion (Morales 2013; Van de Meer and Tolsma 2014). A similar picture emerges when considering the outcomes of Dutch research which primarily examined the effect of ethnic heterogeneity on forms of citizen participation, on generalised or interethnic trust, and most frequently, on indicators related to neighbourhood cohesion. These results show that frequency of contact with neighbours is especially (negatively) influenced by ethnic diversity (Gijsberts *et al*., 2012; Scheepers *et al*. 2013; Tolsma *et al*., 2009; Völker *et al*. 2007). Other components such as (generalised) trust or volunteering seem to be unaffected by ethnic diversity (Lancee and Dronkers, 2011; Tolsma *et al*., 2009). The relationship between diversity and cohesion thus depends on the components under study.

Some evidence suggests that socio-economic disadvantage is the key element undermining cohesion. Research has shown that deprivation damages the sense of community; being disadvantaged and living in a disadvantaged environment undermines the willingness to interact and engage socially, thereby decreasing the sense of belonging (Laurence, 2011; Letki, 2008; Ross *et al*., 2001). Since ethnically diverse areas also tend to be the more disadvantaged areas, it is crucial to take the context's level of deprivation into account. The same holds for deprivation at the individual level.

The relationship between ethnic diversity and fear of crime has mainly been studied in the context of American neighbourhoods. In these studies, 'diversity' is generally equated with the (perceived) proportion of Afro-American residents (Chiricos *et al*., 1997; Covington and Taylor, 1991; Moeller, 1989; Pickett *et al*., 2012) and, to a lesser extent, Hispanics (Eitle and Taylor, 2008). Results indicate that higher levels of diversity in the living environment are associated with a greater fear of crime, especially

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among white residents (Chiricos *et al*., 1997; Moeller, 1989). In the European context, cross-national research has shown that when inhabitants describe their neighbourhood as an area where many migrants live, higher levels of fear of crime are reported (Semyonov e*t al*., 2012). The actual size of the migrant population at country level is, however, unrelated to fear of crime and safety feelings in the neighbourhood (Semyonov *et al*., 2012; Visser *et al*., 2013). More recently, Hooghe and De Vroom (2016) concluded in their study on fear of crime in Belgian communities that the actual level of non-EU nationals in municipalities – rather than the perceived composition – is positively related to fear of crime.

In the present study, only the actual level of ethnic diversity will be considered. The level of diversity will be measured in a more sophisticated way than (Dutch) researchers generally do. Due to the "diversification of ethnic groups" (Crul, 2016), frequently used operationalisations to measure ethnic diversity, such as the percentage of non-Western migrants, have become less appropriate.[1] Using the proportion of non-Western migrants is especially problematic, for the following two reasons. Firstly, homogeneity is assumed although considerable heterogeneity exists within this group of non-Western migrants (Bovens *et al*., 2016). Secondly, categorizing migrants as non-Western is criticized for encouraging stereotyping and stigmatization (Van der Haar and Yanow, 2011; Manenschijn, 2008). In order to overcome these problems and to do full justice to a context's level of diversity, we therefore use a more fine-grained measure of diversity.

Ethnic diversity is obviously not the only factor that potentially generates fear of crime. We will include other determinants as well, such as the incidence of crime, socio-economic disadvantage and individual differences regarding age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status. These individual determinants are included based on the so-called vulnerability hypothesis: certain groups feel more unsafe because these groups are physically more vulnerable to victimisation or tend to live in areas with higher crime rates (Brunton-Smith and Sturgis, 2011; Covington and Taylor, 1991).

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[1] Non-Western migrants are generally defined as people born in Africa, Latin America, Asia (excluding Japan and (Indonesia) or Turkey, or at least one of whose parents was born there.

In addition to the 'static' measure of ethnic diversity, we apply a more dynamic indicator of diversity. This allows us to examine the role of changing levels of ethnic diversity under the constrict hypothesis. Other researchers have argued previously that such time dimension should be taken into account when testing the constrict hypothesis (Hooghe *et al*., 2008; Schaeffer, 2014). The underlying argument is that (rapid) increases in diversity generate more threat and anomie than stable levels of heterogeneity. It might even be the case that these increases, as opposed to stable levels of ethnic diversity, drive down social cohesion and erode neighbourhood ties. Most research on the constrict hypothesis has, however, focused on current levels of diversity rather than on changes in diversity over time. Although some cross-national studies include dynamic measures of ethnic diversity (Gesthuizen, *et al*., 2009; Hooghe *et al*., 2008; Kesler and Bloemraad, 2010), these measures are rarely applied in within-country studies (for an exception see Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2012). The same holds for research on fear of crime (for an exception see Pickett et al., 2012).

It is often assumed that the negative effects of ethnic diversity are most pronounced in smaller contexts (Putnam, 2007: 155-156) because people spend most of their (free) time in their immediate residential surroundings (Öberg *et al.* 2011: 353). In addition, people might be more aware of the ethnic composition of smaller contexts rather than larger ones (Sluiter *et al.*, 2015: 83). Under this assumption, researchers have frequently tested the relationship between ethnic diversity and social cohesion in the neighbourhood since the neighbourhood is the smallest unit of analysis available in most cases (for a recent exception see Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2015). Our data, however, allows us to examine the relationship on an even smaller scale: street segments (or six position postal codes), which in most cases represent one street or one side of a street. We expect that the negative effects of ethnic diversity are larger at a smaller level (in our case the street segment) and weaker in the larger contexts.

**Research design**

*Data*

Our data were obtained from the Safety Monitor (2014) and Statistics Netherlands. The Safety Monitor is a survey on crime-related feelings of unsafety and victimisation. Its sample is drawn from the municipality population register. In total, 86,382 respondents (38.8% of the total sample) completed the self-administered questionnaires: either online (47.9%) or through a written questionnaire (52.1%) (Statistics Netherlands, 2015). The respondents reside in 403 municipalities, 2543 districts, 8798 neighbourhoods and 86,382 street segments. In 2014, the average population of a municipality is 41,759 and of a district 6157. Neighbourhoods have on average 1400 inhabitants and street segments 40.

The data of the Safety Monitor were merged with non-public individual register data of Statistics Netherlands, which are available for scientific research under strict conditions. These register data contain the ethnicity of all Dutch inhabitants and information on the economic situation of all Dutch households. The crime rate and changes in ethnic diversity were also derived from Statistics Netherlands and are publicly available. The crime statistics have only been available since the end of 2016.

*Neighbourhood Cohesion and Fear of Crime*

In our analysis, two outcome variables are distinguished: neighbourhood cohesion and fear of crime. The former is measured through a set of six items. These items are *people in this neighbourhood hardly know each other*; *people in this neighbourhood socialize pleasantly*; *I live in a cosy neighbourhood where people help each other out and do things together*; *I feel at home with the people living in this neighbourhood*; *I am satisfied with the composition of the population of this neighbourhood*; and *I have a lot of contact with the neighbourhood* (answer categories: agree completely, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and disagree completely). The items were, if necessary, recoded to ensure that a higher score corresponds to a more positive view on the neighbourhood. The six items appear to form a

unidimensional scale, accounting for 59.77% of the variance. The scale is based on the average of at least four valid answers and is internally consistent with a Cronbach's α of .86.

Next, fear of crime is operationalised by constructing a scale consisting of five items. Respondents were asked how often they do not answer the door during evening hours; avoid certain areas in their neighbourhood; feel unsafe walking in their neighbourhood or being home alone during the evening; and are afraid of being victimised (answer categories: seldom or never, occasionally and frequently). These items also proved to form a unidimensional and internally coherent scale, explaining 52.91% of the variance with a Cronbach's α of .85. The fear of crime scale represents the average of at least three valid answers. A higher score on the scale indicates more fear of crime.


*(Changes in) Ethnic Diversity*

To measure the *(static) level of ethnic diversity*, an HHI was constructed for each context. This index represents the probability that two randomly selected individuals within the same context are of a different ethnic background. Its value varies between the 0 (total homogeneity) and 1 (total heterogeneity). Most Dutch researchers  measure diversity either by the percentage of non-Western migrants or an HHI based on the proportion of seven different groups (e.g. Gijsberts *et al*., 2012; Lancee and Dronkers, 2008) or less (e.g. Vervoort *et al*., 2011). Our study distinguishes 18 different groups. This classification is based on a combination of cultural characteristics, such as language, religion and the political system of the country of origin (Jennissen *et al*., 2015).[2]

The *dynamic measure of ethnic diversity* is based on comparing the HHI of 2014 to the HHI of 2009 and subtracting the values. A positive value indicates an increase in ethnic diversity, a negative value a decrease. The dynamic measure of ethnic diversity is, due to data limitations, based on an HHI

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[2] The 18 groups are Anglo-Saxon countries; German-speaking countries; Scandinavian countries; Mediterranean countries; Middle and Eastern Europe; Arabic countries; Latin America; Sub-Saharan Africa; South Asia; Central Asia; South-East Asia and the Pacific; East Asia; former Dutch colonies (Surinam, former Netherlands Antilles); Belgium; Indonesia; Morocco; The Netherlands and Turkey.

constructed on the share of seven groups and is not available at street level. Both diversity measurements are multiplied by ten for purposes of interpretation.

*Control variables*

Several control variables are included at the contextual level. To measure the degree of *socio-economic disadvantage*, an index was constructed that combines the percentage of low-income households, the average income of the context and the percentage of households for which social security is the main source of income (e.g. Vervoort, 2012). Before constructing the index, the distribution of average income was reversed and all indicators were standardised. Lastly, the mean of the standardised indicators was calculated.

To control for *crime*, two variables are included in the analyses regarding fear of crime. This first crime variable captures the incidence of (sexual) assaults and other forms of violent crime such as homicide, stalking and human trafficking, per 1000 members of the population in 2014. The second crime variable represents the incidence of burglary per 1000 members of the population in 2014. The frequency of violent crime is included as researchers assume that this form of crime has a strong impact on people's fear of crime (Ferraro and Grange, 1987; Hooghe and De Vroome, 2016). There is, however, also some evidence for a link between burglary and fear of crime (Taylor, 2001). Due to data restrictions, we cannot control for the incidence of violent crime and burglary within street segments.

We also control for a range of variables at the individual level (see Table 1). The descriptive statistics for all variables are presented in Table 1. Missing values are either included as dummy variables or deleted list-wise.

**INSERT TABLE 1**

*3.5. Analytical strategy*

In order to take into account the nested structure of the data, we carried out linear multilevel regression analyses. The contextual effects were assumed to be fixed across all contexts. Street segment variables were included at the individual level since the values of these variables are unique for each respondent. To determine whether all contextual levels – neighbourhood, district and municipality – should indeed be included in our models, seven different intercept-only (or: null) models were estimated and compared for both neighbourhood cohesion and fear of crime.[3] For both outcome variables, the four-level models proved to have the best fit so that we decided to estimate four-level models. Based on the four-level intercept-only models, the intra-class correlations (ICCs) were calculated. An ICC indicates how much variation in the respondents' answers can be attributed to each contextual level. For neighbourhood cohesion, the ICCs vary from 4.4% (municipality), 5.9% (district) and 7.3% (neighbourhood). For fear of crime, the ICCs vary from 1.7% (municipality), 4.5% (district) and 6% (neighbourhood). These values show that only a low proportion of the variance can be attributed to the contextual levels and that individual-level explanations should certainly not be excluded.

**Results**

The descriptive statistics (Table 1) show that respondents on average score a 3.44 on the neighbourhood cohesion scale (running from 1 to 5). Additionally, respondents score an average of 1.27 on the fear of crime scale (running from 1 to 3). The bivariate analyses (Table 2) indicate that at all levels more ethnic diversity, more socio-economic disadvantage and increases in ethnic diversity are associated with less neighbourhood cohesion. As for fear of crime, it is found that more ethnic diversity, more socio-economic

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[3] Specification of the 7 models: 1. Individual and neighbourhood; 2. Individual and district; 3. Individual and municipality; 4. Individual, neighbourhood and district; 5. Individual, neighbourhood and municipality; 6. Individual, district and municipality; 7. Individual, neighbourhood, district and municipality. The models were compared based on their AIC and BIC values, assuming that lower values indicate better model fit (Finch *et al.*, 2014).

disadvantage, higher crime incidences and increases in ethnic diversity are related to more fear of crime. Again, no differences (expect for differences in magnitude) are found across the four contexts.

**INSERT TABLE 2**

*Ethnic diversity and neighbourhood cohesion*

Table 3 shows the results of the multilevel analysis on neighbourhood cohesion, based on a 'full' model including all individual and contextual variables.[4] Our main interest lies in the effect of ethnic diversity on neighbourhood cohesion. It emerges that more ethnic diversity at the level of the neighbourhood and street segment is significantly related to less neighbourhood cohesion. More specifically, people living in neighbourhoods or street segments with 10% more ethnic diversity score on average 0.06 lower on the neighbourhood cohesion variable (measured on a 5-point scale). The effect of diversity is therefore not very substantial. Moreover, the diversity effects at the neighbourhood and street level are similar in size. This finding is contrary to our expectation that the negative impact of diversity would be larger when analysed at a lower contextual level. The outcomes are in line with previous findings by Dutch scholars (Gijsberts *et al.*, 2012; Lancee and Dronkers, 2011; Völker *et al.*, 2007).

**INSERT TABLE 3**

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[4] Because of potential problems of multicollinearity, we also estimated a model excluding certain contextual variables based on a back-ward model fitting process (Snijders and Bosker, 2012). In that model, ethnic diversity at the district level and socio-economic disadvantage at the municipality and the street level were excluded. This model produced similar results.

The effect of ethnic diversity at the district level is non-significant, indicating that ethnic diversity at this level does not explain differences in neighbourhood cohesion. Lastly, the effect of ethnic diversity at the municipality level is surprising: more diversity is related to more neighbourhood cohesion. The size of this effect is, however, only minor (B = 0.01) with its p-value (0.04) just below the significance threshold of 0.05. It follows that, although the effect is statistically significant, it is not necessarily 'substantively' or 'sociologically' significant (Bernard *et al.*, 2017).

Regarding the control variables, several observations can be made. Firstly, socio-economic disadvantage only plays a role at the level of the neighbourhood: more disadvantage in the neighbourhood is related to less cohesion (B = -0.04). At the individual level, various control variables are significantly associated with neighbourhood cohesion (with the exception of gender and education). It is shown that people who are part of a household with children score higher on average on the neighbourhood cohesion scale (B = 0.14). The same holds for individuals whose household does not rely on social benefits (B = 0.05). Further, people with higher incomes report higher levels of neighbourhood cohesion than their lower-income counterparts. This finding especially holds for the highest income quintile (B = 0.07). Age only has a minor effect (B = 0.002). Lastly, we find that people with a migration background – with the exception of a Western background – experience more cohesion than people from Dutch origin. This applies especially for inhabitants with a Moroccan (B = 0.22) or Turkish (B = 0.19) background.

*Ethnic diversity and fear of crime*

Table 4 shows the outcomes of the four-level regression model of fear of crime; positive B-values indicate more fear of crime.[5] Our expectation – more diversity is related to more fear of crime – is confirmed at the street segment and neighbourhood level. More specifically, when the level of diversity in

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[5] Because of potential problems of multicollinearity, we also estimated a model excluding certain contextual variables based on a back-ward model fitting process (Snijders and Bosker, 2012). In that model, ethnic diversity at the municipality level, the incidence of violent crime at the district level and the incidence of burglary at the municipality level were excluded. This model produced similar results.

a street segment or neighbourhood increases by 10%, inhabitants report respectively 0.007 and 0.016 higher on the fear of crime scale (measured on a 3-point scale). These effects are only minor and although the effects are statistically significant, their 'sociological significance' is (again) rather limited. How ethnically diverse a district or municipality is, is not significantly associated with fear of crime. This finding adds to previous research demonstrating that the ethnic composition of larger European contexts, such as the country, is unrelated to feelings of unsafety (Semyonov *et al.*, 2012; Visser *et al.*, 2012).

**INSERT TABLE 4**

As for the contextual control variables, there are significant associations between the degree of socio-economic disadvantage and fear of crime at all four levels. At the three lowest levels – district, neighbourhood and street segment – more disadvantage is related to more fear of crime. Their B-coefficients are around 0.01. Within the municipality context, more disadvantage is related to *less* fear of crime (B = -0.02). The effects of the two crime rates differ slightly for each context. In neighbourhoods and districts, the effect of burglary incidence is significant (with B-coefficients of respectively 0.002 and 0.005). Higher burglary rates in these contexts are accompanied by more fear of crime. A significant effect of violent crime is present at the municipality level (B = 0.005) and the neighbourhood level (B = 0.0004).

Various individual control variables are significantly related to fear of crime. People with children in their household (B = -0.02) and those who do not rely on social security benefits (B = -0.06) generally report lower levels of fear of crime. The same holds for higher income groups compared to the lowest income group. The significant B-values vary from -0.04 (third quintile) to -0.07 (fifth quintile). Inhabitants with an intermediate (B = -0.03) or higher education (B = -0.07) are also less fearful. By contrast, older inhabitants and ethnic minorities experience more fear of crime and especially inhabitants

with a Turkish (B = 0.06) and Surinamese (B = 0.07) background. Lastly, women (B = 0.15) and victims of burglary (B = 0.18) are more fearful compared to their reference categories. Overall, the results seem to confirm the hypothesis that especially 'vulnerable' groups feel unsafe.

*Changes in Ethnic Diversity*

In addition to a 'static' measure of ethnic diversity, we also estimated models with both a static and a dynamic indicator of diversity. The results of these models are presented in Table 5 (for neighbourhood cohesion) and Table 6 (for fear of crime), including the static measure of diversity (Model a) and both measures of diversity (Model b). The decreases in sample size should be noted. These decreases can be explained by the frequent changes to how municipalities, districts and neighbourhoods are categorized, making it difficult to compare diversity scores across time. For the sake of clarity we decided to only report the effects of diversity and changes in diversity.

**INSERT TABLES 5 and 6**

The most interesting results are those of Model 1b and 2b. In the analysis of neighbourhood cohesion, it emerges that increases in diversity at all levels – the neighbourhood, district and municipality – are accompanied by decreases in neighbourhood cohesion, most notably at the municipality level (B = -0.06). The effects are, however, non-significant. Consequently, the conclusion that increases in diversity play a (negative) role in explaining differences in neighbourhood cohesion cannot be drawn. For fear of crime, the only significant effect of increases in diversity can be found at the municipality level. People living in municipalities where the level of diversity has increased by 10% during the period 2009-2014, report on

average more fear of crime (B = 0.03). Overall, our findings do not provide strong evidence that changes in the level of diversity are particularly disruptive to neighbourhood cohesion or feelings of safety.

**Conclusion and Discussion**

In this study, we researched the negative effects of diversity in the Dutch context. Our multilevel analyses show that ethnic diversity at the neighbourhood and street level is related to less neighbourhood cohesion and more fear of crime. Negative diversity effects are thus not limited to cohesion; our research shows that feelings of (un)safety are affected as well. The impact of diversity is, however, limited. In addition, the diversity effects are not necessarily larger on a smaller scale. The analyses also show that the ethnic composition of larger contexts, such as the district and municipality, plays no role within the studied relationships. It seems that the threat and anomie mechanisms mainly operate at the neighbourhood and street level. Overall, our findings reaffirm that Putnam's constrict hypothesis is supported in the Netherlands but to a limited extent (Gijsberts *et al.,* 2012; Scheepers *et al.*, 2013; Tolsma *et al.*, 2009).

Another finding of our study is that, with one exception, decreases or increases in ethnic diversity at all contextual levels are unrelated to neighbourhood cohesion and fear of crime. This outcome can be interpreted in multiple ways. A possible explanation is that current levels of ethnic diversity are apparently better able to explain differences in neighbourhood cohesion and fear of crime than sudden increases or decreases (over the past five years). Another possibility is that, to fully capture the dynamics of 'time', a longer time period should be examined. Our results, however, indicate that recent increases in diversity are not particularly disruptive to neighbourhood cohesion or fear of crime.

Apart from a static and dynamic measure of ethnic diversity, other contextual variables were included in the analyses as well. In line with other research, our findings indicate that socio-economic disadvantage - at specific levels - reduces cohesion and safety feelings (Laurence, 2011; Tolsma *et al.*, 2009). We also found evidence that people feel more unsafe in areas with a higher crime rate. The exact pattern depends on the type of crime: violent crimes affect fear of crime when aggregated at the

neighbourhood and municipality level. Burglaries, by contrast, are related to feelings of unsafety when aggregated at the neighbourhood and district level. These findings demonstrate that fear of crime is not entirely an "irrational" response, unrelated to objective crime threat (Brunton-Smith and Sturgis, 2011: 335).

Despite the relevance of 'context', we should not exaggerate the role of contextual characteristics in explaining differences in neighbourhood cohesion and fear of crime. These differences are mainly related to individual characteristics. It emerges that especially vulnerable groups (in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and social-economic class) and victims of burglary feel more unsafe. As for neighbourhood cohesion, we also found clear effects of individual characteristics, and especially of ethnicity. Although ethnic minorities experience more fear of crime, they report higher levels of neighbourhood cohesion than Dutch natives. The first outcome is in line with our expectation that ethnic minorities feel more vulnerable and hence experience more fear. The finding that minorities report higher levels of cohesion might be explained by their local orientation; Dutch studies have demonstrated that ethnic groups 'live more locally' than natives and, in addition, see the neighbourhood as an important place for social interaction (Pinkster, 2008; Van Kempen and Wissink, 2014). The extent to which the found individual-level relationships vary across different contexts may offer a fruitful topic for future research. More specifically, cross-level interactions could be modelled to examine to which extent the effect of diversity on neighbourhood cohesion and fear of crime is different for different groups of individuals.

One of the main goals of this study was to employ a measure of ethnic diversity that better reflects a context's level of diversity. For this reason, an $HHI_{18}$ was calculated for each context. In practice, however, our measure of diversity correlates quite strongly with the percentage of non-Western minorities.[6] To empirically disentangle ethnic diversity from concentration remains a complicated task. To anticipate the growing complexity and differentiation of migration and increasing levels of diversification of ethnic groups (Berg and Sigona, 2013; Crul, 2016), we still consider the $HHI_{18}$ as the

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[6] Correlation between $HHI_{18}$ and % non-Western minorities: .85 (neighbourhood level); .87 (district level) and .95 (municipality level).

most suitable way to measure diversity. Furthermore, another limitation of the current study that needs to be addressed is that our analyses are based on cross-sectional data. A causal effect of diversity on cohesion or fear of crime therefore cannot be assumed. Rather than reflecting causal relationships, the found cross-sectional associations may be a consequence of diversity having increased in areas which were already characterised by lower cohesion and more fear of crime. If minorities are more likely to settle in these areas, our associations might be driven by selection bias (for a more elaborate discussion of this point see Laurence and Bently, 2016).

**Tables**

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics for individual and contextual variables**

|  | **Valid N** | **Min.** | **Max.** | **Mean** | **SD** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighbourhood cohesion | 84731 | 1 | 5 | 3.44 | .78 |
| Fear of crime | 81929 | 1 | 3 | 1.27 | .40 |
| Age | 86382 | 15 | 103 | 51.79 | 18.12 |
| Gender (ref. = male) | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .52 | .51 |
| *Education* | | | | | |
|   Low (= ref.) | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .32 | .47 |
|   Middle | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .29 | .45 |
|   High | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .33 | .47 |
| Children (ref. = none) | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .36 | .48 |
| Social benefits main income source (ref. = yes) | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .94 | .24 |
| *Ethnicity* | | | | | |
|   Dutch (= ref.) | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .17 | .38 |
|   Moroccan | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .01 | .09 |
|   Turkish | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .01 | .11 |
|   Surinamese and Antillean | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .03 | .16 |
|   Other non-western | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .03 | .16 |
|   Western | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .09 | .29 |
| *Income* | | | | | |
|   First quintile (= ref.) | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .13 | .43 |
|   Second quintile | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .21 | .41 |
|   Third quintile | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .20 | .40 |
|   Fourth quintile | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .22 | .40 |
|   Fifth quintile | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .14 | .34 |
| Victim of burglary (ref. = not) | 86382 | 0 | 1 | .13 | .34 |
| *Street segment* | | | | | |
|   Ethnic diversity | 86108 | 0 | 9.05 | 3.12 | 3.10 |
|   Soc. econ. disadvantage | 85916 | -9.05 | 14.65 | .01 | .53 |
| *Neighbourhood* | | | | | |
|   Ethnic diversity | 86318 | 0 | 8.83 | 3.61 | 2.14 |
|   Soc. econ. disadvantage | 86139 | -4.5 | 5.63 | .01 | .83 |
|   Violent crime | 84373 | 0 | 640 | 5.95 | 9.66 |
|   Burglary | 84373 | 0 | 230 | 5.51 | 4.39 |
|   Δ ethnic diversity | 61020 | -3.38 | 4.25 | .17 | .35 |
| *District* | | | | | |
|   Ethnic diversity | 86318 | 0 | 8.45 | 3.71 | 2.1 |
|   Soc. econ. disadvantage | 86140 | -3.98 | 4.25 | .05 | .93 |
|   Violent crime | 84766 | 0 | 278.26 | 6.129 | 6.219 |
|   Burglary | 84766 | 0 | 47.62 | 5.55 | 2.89 |
|   Δ ethnic diversity | 75373 | -3.63 | 3.77 | .15 | .46 |
| *Municipality* | | | | | |
|   Ethnic diversity | 86239 | .62 | 7.37 | 3.83 | 1.95 |
|   Soc. econ. disadvantage | 86097 | -2.74 | 2.45 | .03 | .89 |
|   Violent crime | 86136 | 1.04 | 10.81 | 5.78 | 2.65 |
|   Burglary | 86136 | 0 | 11.92 | 5.46 | 1.95 |
|   Δ ethnic diversity | 84414 | -.63 | 0.9 | .15 | .18 |

**Table 2. Bivariate correlations**

|  | Neighbourhood cohesion | Fear of crime |
|---|---|---|
| *Municipality* |  |  |
| Ethnic diversity | -.239** | .198** |
| Soc.econ. disadvantage | -.194** | .151** |
| Δ in ethnic diversity | -.061** | .044** |
| Violent crime | - | .185** |
| Burglary | - | .152** |
| *District* |  |  |
| Ethnic diversity | -.280** | .237** |
| Soc.econ. disadvantage | -.239** | .216** |
| Δ in ethnic diversity | -.041** | .051** |
| Violent crime | - | .146** |
| Burglary | - | .187** |

|  | Neighbourhood cohesion | Fear of crime |
|---|---|---|
| *Neighbourhood* |  |  |
| Ethnic diversity | -.305** | .246** |
| Soc.econ. disadvantage | -.254** | .218** |
| Δ in ethnic diversity | -.056** | .036** |
| Violent crime | - | .107** |
| Burglary | - | .142** |
| *Street segment* |  |  |
| Ethnic diversity | -.306** | .206** |
| Soc.econ. disadvantage | -.018** | .024** |
| Δ in ethnic diversity | - | - |
| Violent crime | - | - |
| Burglary | - | - |

N 79129

p <.01. *p < .05. **p < .01.***p < .001.

**Table 3. Multilevel linear regression analysis of neighbourhood cohesion**

|  | B SE |  | B SE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | **.002 (.000) *** ** | *Street segment* |  |
| Gender (ref. = male) | .001 (.005) | Ethnic diversity | **-.057 (.002) *** ** |
| *Education* (ref. = low) |  | Soc. econ. disadvantage | -.001 (.005) |
| Middle | .000 (.006) | *Neighbourhood* |  |
| High | .006 (.007) | Ethnic diversity | **-.060 (.005) *** ** |
| Children (ref. = none) | **.140 (.006) *** ** | Soc. econ. disadvantage | **-.043 (.008) *** ** |
| Social benefits (ref. = yes) | **.045 (.011) *** ** | *District* |  |
| *Ethnicity* (ref. = Dutch) |  | Ethnic diversity | -.005 (.006) |
| Moroccan | **.215 (.027) *** ** | Soc. econ. disadvantage | -.010 (.010) |
| Turkish | **.186 (.022) *** ** | *Municipality* |  |
| Surinamese | **.063 (.016)*** ** | Ethnic diversity | **.014 (.007) * ** |
| Other non-western | **.072 (.015) *** ** | Soc. econ. disadvantage | -.003 (.011) |
| Western | .005 (.008) |  |  |
| *Income* (ref = lowest) |  |  |  |
| Second quintile | **.031(.009) *** ** |  |  |
| Third quintile | **.036 (.009) *** ** |  |  |
| Fourth quintile | **.040 (.009) *** ** |  |  |
| Fifth quintile | **.073 (.009) *** ** |  |  |

N 84180

p <.01. *p < .05. **p < .01.***p < .001.

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**Table 4. Multilevel linear regression analysis of fear of crime**

| | B SE | | B SE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | .000 (.000) ** | *Street segment* | |
| Gender (ref. = male) | .145*** | Ethnic diversity | .007 (.000) *** |
| *Education* (ref. = low) | | Soc. econ. disadvantage | .011 (.000) *** |
| Middle | -.034 (.004) *** | *Neighbourhood* | |
| High | -.073 (.004) *** | Ethnic diversity | .016 (.003) *** |
| Children (ref. = none) | -.024 (.003) *** | Soc. econ. disadvantage | .019 (.004) *** |
| Social benefits (ref. = yes) | -.057 (.006) *** | Burglary | .002 (.000) *** |
| *Ethnicity* (ref. = Dutch) | | Violent crime | .000 (.000) * |
| Moroccan | .023 (.015) | *District* | |
| Turkish | .060 (.013) *** | Ethnic diversity | .006 (.004) |
| Surinamese | .073 (.009) *** | Soc. econ. disadvantage | .011 (.006) * |
| Other non-western | .030 (.008) *** | Burglary | .005 (.000) *** |
| Western | -.001 (.005) | Violent crime | .000 (.000) |
| *Income* (ref = lowest) | | *Municipality* | |
| Second quintile | -.009 (.005) | Ethnic diversity | -.003 (.003) |
| Third quintile | -.038 (.005) *** | Soc. econ. disadvantage | -.023 (.006) *** |
| Fourth quintile | -.054 (.005) *** | Burglary | .002 (.000) |
| Fifth quintile | -.068 (.005) *** | Violent crime | .005 (.002) * |
| Victim of burglary (ref. = not) | .184 (.004) *** | | |

N 79129

p <.01. *p < .05. **p < .01.***p < .001.

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**Table 5.  Multilevel linear regression analysis of neighbourhood cohesion and changes in ethnic diversity**

*Model 1a*                                    *Model 1b*

| | B SE | | B SE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Street segment* | | *Street segment* | |
| Ethnic diversity | **-.056 (.002) \*\*\*** | Ethnic diversity | **-.056 (.002) \*\*\*** |
| *Neighbourhood* | | *Neighbourhood* | |
| Ethnic diversity | **-.055 (.006) \*\*\*** | Ethnic diversity | **-.055 (.006) \*\*\*** |
| Δ in ethnic diversity | | Δ in ethnic diversity | -.019 (.109) |
| *District* | | *District* | |
| Ethnic diversity | .007 (.008) | Ethnic diversity | -.009 (.008) |
| Δ in ethnic diversity | | Δ in ethnic diversity | -.009 (0.164) |
| *Municipality* | | *Municipality* | |
| Ethnic diversity | .011 (.007) | Ethnic diversity | **.015 (.007) \*** |
| Δ in ethnic diversity | | Δ in ethnic diversity | -.055 (.303) |

N  = 59483

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01.\*\*\*p < .001.

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**Table 6.   Multilevel linear regression analysis of fear of crime and changes in ethnic diversity**

*Model 2a*                                              *Model 2b*

| | B SE | | B SE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Street segment* | | *Street segment* | |
|   Ethnic diversity | **.006\*\*\*** |   Ethnic diversity | **.006\*\*\*** |
| *Neighbourhood* | | *Neighbourhood* | |
|   Ethnic diversity | **.016\*\*\*** |   Ethnic diversity | **.017\*\*\*** |
|   Δ in ethnic diversity | |   Δ in ethnic diversity | -.005 |
| *District* | | *District* | |
|   Ethnic diversity | .007 |   Ethnic diversity | .007 |
|   Δ in ethnic diversity | |   Δ in ethnic diversity | .006 |
| *Municipality* | | *Municipality* | |
|   Ethnic diversity | -.004 |   Ethnic diversity | -.025 |
|   Δ in ethnic diversity | |   Δ in ethnic diversity | **.031\*** |

N  = 57141

\*$p < .05$. \*\*$p < .01$.\*\*\*$p < .001$.

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