

What factors are associated with the quality of neighbour relations?



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

A neighbourhood is a social community, geographically localised within a city, town, suburb or rural area (Simandan, 2016). Neighbour relations are very important as high levels of support from neighbours results in optimal levels of welfare and wellbeing (Greenfield & Reyes, 2014). This is due to neighbours providing one another with practical and emotional support, through acts such as: lending items, keeping an eye on one another's homes, assisting each other and sometimes relying upon one another in the case of emergency (Lau, Machizawa, & Doi, 2012; Thomése, Tilburg, & Knipscheer, 2003; Walker & Hiller, 2007). However, neighbours can also be a source of nuisance and conflict (Cheshire & Fitzgerald, 2015). This essay will discuss what factors are associated with the quality of these neighbour relations, and what factors may cause conflicts within neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood attachment is the emotional tie which people create with their geographical context; it is discussed interchangeably as 'place attachment' (Hernández, Carmen Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, & Hess, 2007), 'sense of place', 'rootedness' or 'place identity' (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Casakin, Hernández, & Ruiz, 2015). Neighbourhood attachment is related to various social phenomena including: participation in the community, low levels of incivility and social trust (Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2003; Lewicka, 2005). Méndez and Otero (2018) found that the effects of inequality when experiencing neighbourhood disputes can be diminished through developing emotional ties between individuals and their neighbourhood i. e. through neighbourhood attachment. However, establishing causality is generally difficult in studies on place attachment (Lewicka, 2011), due to the correlational nature of the data.

In order to maintain a good neighbourly relationship, neighbours engage with each other ' on the front', ' in the garden', or ' at the door' (Stokoe, 2006). Yet, despite the relationships between neighbours, they usually get to know information concerning one another such as: marital status, sexual orientation and family set-up (Stokoe, 2006). However, Crow, Allan and Summers (2002) warn that ' good' neighbouring is depicted by a balance between friendliness and privacy, as too much interaction and support can lead to ' over-neighbouring' (Harris & Gale, 2004).

Cattell (2004) suggested that neighbourhood conditions and characteristics are what either encourages or discourages cooperation. Residential and environmental aspects of neighbourhoods have been significantly associated with positive mental wellbeing, and therefore, resulting in neighbourhood attachment – being satisfied with the house and landlord, having a good internal reputation within the neighbourhood and feeling that the neighbourhood has a good sense of community (Bond et al., 2012).

Research has found more significant neighbour relationships among older adults than in younger populations (Suanet, van Tilburg, & Broese van Groenou, 2013). Thus, research has shown that the combination of old age and residence in a deprived neighbourhood, lacking this attachment, increases the risk of loneliness, feeling unsafe and feeling dissatisfied (Scharf, Phillipson & Smith, 2005; van der Meer, 2006; Scharf & Gierveld, 2008). However, Hülür et al. (2016) found cohort differences over 20 years which showed that current older adults are actually less lonely and less dependent on external circumstances – clearly social developments have occurred over the last decades. In addition, Toruńczyk-Ruiz and Lewicka <https://assignbuster.com/what-factors-are-associated-with-the-quality-of-neighbour-relations/>

(2016) found that the effect of perceived age diversity was dependent upon neighbourhood ties; those with fewer ties had less neighbourhood attachment with neighbours of different ages. Likewise, neighbours are also seen as a great source of contact for single individuals, as they are more likely to require assistance than those in a relationship (Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2016). This study, however, only controls for proximity to parents and siblings in relation to the neighbourhood effects of married and single individuals, and no measures of proximity to friends were made, which may be responsible for some of the differences.

Socioeconomic status (SES) has been associated with the quality of neighbour relations; Méndez and Otero (2018) found that the presence of neighbourhood conflict is linked to socio-spatial inequality, suggesting that individuals of medium and low SES backgrounds are more likely to encounter neighbourhood conflict. Similarly, Toruńczyk-Ruiz and Lewicka (2016) found that perceived income diversity was negatively related to neighbourhood attachment. However, Nieuwenhuis, Volker and Flap (2013) found no association between income diversity and neighbourhood relationship quality. However, the generalisability of these studies either providing evidence or disputing this association is limited; with Méndez and Otero (2018) using data from only Santiago, Toruńczyk-Ruiz and Lewicka (2016) using data from only Poland and Nieuwenhuis et al. (2013) using only Dutch data.

Cheshire and Fitzgerald (2015) suggested that neighbours are actually more likely to be a source of conflict than support, which is consistent with the study by Michaux, Groenen and Uzieblo (2017) who found that 76% of <https://assignbuster.com/what-factors-are-associated-with-the-quality-of-neighbour-relations/>

residents in their study have been confronted with some sort of problematic behaviour from their neighbours.

Nieuwenhuis et al. (2013) established two types of problems encountered by neighbours: private nuisance and anti-social/criminal behaviour. Private nuisance involves neighbour disputes around issues concerning noise, odours, air pollution and garden issues. Noise is one of the main factors causing disputes in neighbourhoods and is reported as the most frequent source of neighbour nuisance (Nieuwenhuis et al., 2013; Michaux et al., 2017). Thus, reporting physical and psychological effects such as: hearing loss, stress, sleep disruption, poor physical and mental well-being, cognitive deficits and annoyance (Bronzaft, 2002; World Health Organisation, 2011). Yet significantly, Stokoe and Hepburn (2005) observed that noise is treated as though it has a straightforward meaning when actually, noise perception and noise annoyance are both psychological and subjective phenomena (Koprowska, Łaszkiwicz, Kronenberg, & Marcińczak, 2018). Some types of noise are more tolerable, such as a baby crying, yet others, such as loud music, may be interpreted as antisocial (Stokoe, 2006); 'anti-social' complaints are often seen from older occupier's, frowning upon the conduct of their younger neighbours, viewing them as noisy and disruptive (Buys & Miller, 2012; Baker, 2013). Cheshire, Fitzgerald and Liu (2018) found that 11% of neighbourhoods were characterised as low complaint areas, 53% of neighbourhoods fall into a subgroup characterised by high chances of noise complaints and 36% into a subgroup whereby noise forms part of the problem alongside building, parking and pet issues.

Although pets can bring neighbours together, they can also create tension within the neighbourhood (Power, 2018). Dogs, in particular, have been described as a 'cared for nuisance' (Fielding, 2007), with their barking being the prime irritant (Fielding, 2006). Fielding (2008) conducted a study and found that 38.5% of participants lived in dog-keeping households. In addition, out of the 29 nuisances listed, dogs barking at night was reported as the most common one and the most frequently occurring (at least once a week). Dogs roaming on property were reported as the second most common nuisance and also as the second most frequently occurring nuisance. Although all these findings were gained from the Bahamas, a study in Dominica supports these results, as the inability to sterilise female dogs, due to lack of resources in these locations, lead to the vast population of dogs roaming on property (Alie, Davis, Fielding, & Moldonado, 2007). However, although this is seen as a nuisance, previous studies have indicated that most dogs are kept "for protection" with barking considered almost as important as "guarding" (Fielding & Plumridge, 2005). Yet others keep dogs as a companion (Ruiz-Izaguirre & Eilers, 2012). Therefore, unless laws address the issue of dogs barking or there is a shift in dog keeping patterns; this longstanding neighbourhood nuisance will persist to cause conflict in society (Fielding, 2008).

What counts as private and public is often another cause of neighbourhood disputes - for example, gardens are seen as a space for interaction with neighbours, but they are made private through fences and walls. And depending on the activity taking place (changing clothes in the window or

looking into a neighbour's window), private spaces can be constructed as public spaces, and neighbours can take offence (Stokoe, 2006).

Anti-social and criminal behaviour highlight more serious issues within a neighbourhood, involving damage to property, physical abuse, threats and intimidation (Jacobs & Arthurson, 2004). This can also relate to unwanted pursuit behaviour, encapsulating behaviours ranging from serious, criminalised, and clearly unacceptable behaviours (e. g. threatening) to moderate or mild behaviours which are acceptable in some social contexts (e. g. giving flowers) (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007). These unwanted pursuit behaviours are generally perceived as annoying, upsetting, threatening, and privacy-violating (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Palarea, Cohen, & Rohling, 2000). However, it should be noted that the nature of the study by Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. (2000) relies on reports given by one individual, in which their current affective state may have impacted their retrospective report, so another less subjective method may have changed the nature of the results.

Ethnicity has also been associated with the strength of neighbourhood relations; some research associated increased diversity with poorer relations among neighbours, in particular, trustworthiness (Alesina & Ferrara, 2002; Delhey & Newton, 2005; Dinesen & Sønderskov, 2015). Likewise, Schneider (2008) proposed that a higher proportion of immigrants increases prejudice in the majority, however, this could be due to the 'clash of lifestyles' between residents and the diversity of neighbourhoods (Ufkes, Otten, van der Zee, & Giebels, 2012). On the other hand, Wang, Zhang and Wu (2017) discovered that residents in neighbourhoods with a higher presence of migrants are more trustful towards out-group members. In support of this, <https://assignbuster.com/what-factors-are-associated-with-the-quality-of-neighbour-relations/>

Hanson (2017) found that prejudice reduces due to positive intergroup contact. Controversially, Toruńczyk-Ruiz and Lewicka (2016) reported that perceived ethnic diversity was positively related to neighbourhood attachment, stating that it is not the actual level of diversity that matters but how people perceive it, so ethnic diversity can result in a positive social outcome.

Furthermore, religious conflict is deemed a geographical conflicting issue (Kong, 2006). Lancee and Dronkers (2011) found that religious diversity negatively affects the quality of contact with neighbours and trust in the neighbourhood. However, others have found that ethnicity and religion have an insignificant effect, as relations are mediated by other factors such as disadvantage (Taylor, Twigg & Mohan, 2010; Laurence, 2011; Nieuwenhuis et al., 2013). Yet it should be noted that religion is more than 'an object of empirical study' (Korf, 2006), and when studying religion, effort needs to be put into clarifying what religion is and the extremity of the religious beliefs. Also, it is possible that an underlying factor such as lifestyle differences can cause this conflict and it may not be the cause of religion at all.

In several Western Countries, mediation services are in place to tackle problems with neighbours by supporting face-to-face coping strategies; these interventions are needed according to the elevated number of police interventions in neighbour disputes, residents are often unsuccessful in coping with their disputes constructively (Nieuwenhuis et al., 2013; Michaux et al., 2017). These studies are limited due to their use of Dutch data; however, their methods vary. Michaux et al. (2017) used questionnaires for 365 participants, yet the study by Nieuwenhuis et al. (2013) utilises the <https://assignbuster.com/what-factors-are-associated-with-the-quality-of-neighbour-relations/>



Survey on the Social Networks of the Dutch, first conducted in 1999, so together, these methods give a broader perspective. Some rely on legality to deal with neighbour disputes, which can be problematic; evictions fail to solve the underlying causes of the issues and displace problematic tenants onto other locations (Hunter & Dixon, 2001). Habibis et al. (2007) argued that strategies to solve neighbourhood disputes should include addressing the cause of neighbour problems, such as the appropriate construction of social housing, to minimise the disputes concerning noise and conflict over shared space. Nevertheless, the efficacy of the different coping strategies remains understudied (Dutton & Winstead, 2011; Geistman, Smith, Lambert & Cluse-Tolar, 2013).

In conclusion, the factors affecting the quality of neighbour relations include: age, relationship status, socioeconomic status, private nuisance, pets, private/public spaces, anti-social/criminality issues, ethnicity and religious diversity. Although these factors often have some sort of effect on neighbourhoods, either positive or negative, not all of these factors are always prominent. Due to some of these factors causing disputes in neighbourhoods, measures are put in place to attempt to tackle them, however, the success of these efforts are questioned.

### References

- Alesina, A. & Ferrara, E. (2002). Who trusts others? *Journal of Public Economics*, 85 , 207-234.

- Alie, K., Davis, B. W., Fielding, W. J., & Maldonado, F. G. (2007). Attitudes towards dogs and other “ pets” in Roseau, Dominica. *Anthrozoös*, 20 (2), 143-154.
- Baker, T. (2013). Home-making in higher density cities: Residential experiences in Newcastle, Australia. *Urban Policy and Research* , 31 (3), 265-279.
- Bond, L., Kearns, A., Mason, P., Tannahill, C., Egan, M., & Whitely, E. (2012). Exploring the relationships between housing, neighbourhoods and mental wellbeing for residents of deprived areas. *BMC public health* , 12 (1), 48.
- Bronzaft, A. L. (2002). Noise pollution: A hazard to physical and mental well-being. *Handbook of Environmental Psychology* , 499-510.
- Brown, B., Perkins, D. D., & Brown, G. (2003). Place attachment in a revitalizing neighbourhood: Individual and block levels of analysis. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23 (3), 259-271.
- Buys, L. & Miller, E. (2012). Residential satisfaction in inner urban higher-density Brisbane, Australia: Role of dwelling design, neighbourhood and neighbours. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 55 (3), 319-338.
- Casakin, H., Hernández, B., & Ruiz, C. (2015). Place attachment and place identity in Israeli cities: The influence of city size. *Cities*, 42, 224-230.
- Cattell, V. (2004). Having a laugh and mucking in together: Using social capital to explore dynamics between structure and agency in the context of declining and regenerated neighbourhoods. *Sociology*, 38 , 945-963.

- Cheshire, L., & Fitzgerald, R. (2015). From private nuisance to criminal behaviour: Neighbour problems and neighbourhood context in an Australian city. *Housing Studies*, 30 (1), 100-122.
- Cheshire, L., Fitzgerald, R., & Liu, Y. (2018). Neighbourhood change and neighbour complaints: How gentrification and densification influence the prevalence of problems between neighbours. *Urban Studies* .
- Crow, G., Allan, G. & Summers, M. (2002) Neither busybodies nor nobodies: Managing proximity and distance in neighbourly relations, *Sociology* , 36(1), 127–145.
- Delhey, J., & Newton, K. (2005). Predicting cross-national levels of social trust: global pattern or Nordic exceptionalism? *European sociological review* , 21 (4), 311-327.
- Dinesen, P. T., & Sønderskov, K. M. (2015). Ethnic diversity and social trust: Evidence from the micro-context. *American Sociological Review* , 80 (3), 550-573.
- Dutton, L. B., & Winstead, B. A. (2011). Types, frequency and effectiveness of responses to unwanted pursuit and stalking. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26 , 1129-1156.
- Fielding, W. J., & Plumridge, S. (2005). Characteristics of owned dogs on the island of New Providence, The Bahamas. *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, 8 (4), 245-260.
- Fielding, W. J. (2006). “ Everyone in Nassau has a dog, and they all bark all night.” Potcakes: A history. *Journal of The Bahamas Historical Society* , 36-43.

- Fielding, W. J. (2007). Knowledge of the welfare of non-human animals and prevalence of dry care practices in New Providence, The Bahamas . *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, 10 (2), 153-168.
- Fielding, W. J. (2008). A note on the cause of the nuisance of barking at night on New Providence, The Bahamas. *The International Journal of Bahamian Studies*, 14 , 1-3.
- Fielding, W. J. (2008). Dogs: A continuing and common neighbourhood nuisance of New Providence, The Bahamas. *Society & Animals*, 16 (1), 61-73.
- Geistman, J., Smith, B., Lambert, E. G., & Cluse-Tolar, T. (2013). What to do about stalking: A preliminary study of how stalking victims responded to stalking and their perceptions of the effectiveness of these actions. *Criminal Justice Studies: A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society*, 26 , 43-66.
- Greenfield, E. A., & Reyes, L. (2014). Continuity and change in relationships with neighbours: Implications for psychological well-being in middle and later life. *Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* , 70 (4), 607-618.
- Habibis, D., Atkinson, R., Dunbar, T., Goss, D. N., Easthope, H., & Maginn, P. (2007). A sustaining tenancies approach to managing demanding behaviour in public housing: a good practice guide. *Final Report-AHURI*, 103 , 1-153.
- Hanson, R. A. (2017). Intergroup Contact through Study Abroad: An Investigation of Effects of Study Abroad on Student Engagement with Racial and Religious Diversity. *All Theses*.

- Harris, K. & Gale, T. (2004). Looking Out for Each Other: The Manchester Neighbourliness Review. *Community Development Foundation* .
- Hernández, B., Carmen Hidalgo, M., Salazar-Laplace, M. E., & Hess, S. (2007). Place attachment and place identity in natives and non-natives. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 27(4), 310-319.
- Hülür, G., Drewelies, J., Eibich, P., Düzel, S., Demuth, I., Ghisletta, P., ... & Gerstorf, D. (2016). Cohort differences in psychosocial function over 20 years: current older adults feel less lonely and less dependent on external circumstances. *Gerontology* , 62 (3), 354-361.
- Hunter, C. & Dixon, J. (2001). Social landlords' responses to neighbour nuisance and anti social behaviour: From the negligible to the holistic? *Local Government Studies*, 27 (4), 89-104.
- Jacobs, K. & Arthurson, K. (2004). Can effective housing management policies address anti-social behaviour? *AHURI Research and Policy Bulletin*, 38 .
- Kong, L. (2006). Religion and spaces of technology: constructing and contesting nation, trans-nation, and place . *Environment and Planning*, 38 , 903-918.
- Koprowska, K., Łaszkiwicz, E., Kronenberg, J., & Marcińczak, S. (2018). Subjective perception of noise exposure in relation to urban green space availability. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* , 31 , 93-102.
- Korf, B. (2006). Geography and Benedict XVI. *Area*, 38 (3), 326-329.
- Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J., Palarea, R. E., Cohen, J., & Rohling, M. L. (2000). Breaking up is hard to do: Unwanted pursuit behaviours

following the dissolution of a romantic relationship. *Violence and Victims, 15, 73-90.*

- Lancee, B., & Dronkers, J. (2011). Ethnic, Religious and Economic Diversity in Dutch Neighbourhoods: Explaining Quality of Contact with Neighbours, Trust in the Neighbourhood and Inter-Ethnic Trust. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 37 (4), 597-618.*
- Lau, D. T., Machizawa, S., & Doi, M. (2012). Informal and formal support among community-dwelling Japanese American elders living alone in Chicagoland: an in-depth qualitative study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology, 27 , 149-161.*
- Laurence, J. (2011). The effect of ethnic diversity and community disadvantage on social cohesion: A multi-level analysis of social capital and interethnic relations in UK communities. *European Sociological Review, 27 (1), 70-89.*
- Lewicka, M. (2005). Ways to make people active: The role of place attachment, cultural capital, and neighbourhood ties. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 25 (4), 381-395.*
- Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years? *Journal of Environmental Psychology , 31, 207-230.*
- Méndez, M. L., & Otero, G. (2018). Neighbourhood conflicts, socio-spatial inequalities, and residential stigmatisation in Santiago, Chile. *Cities , 74 , 75-82.*
- Michaux, E., Groenen, A., & Uzieblo, K. (2017). Unwanted behaviours and nuisance among neighbours in a Belgian community sample. *Journal of interpersonal violence , 32 (13), 1967-1994.*

- Nieuwenhuis, J., Volker, B., & Flap, H. (2013) A bad neighbour is a great plague as a good one is a great blessing: On negative relationships between neighbours. *Urban Studies*, 50 (14), 2904–2921.
- Power, E. R. (2018). Restrictions on Pet Ownership in Multi-Owned Properties . *Multi-Owned Property in the Asia-Pacific Region*. 153-173.
- Ruiz-Izaguirre, E., & Eilers, C. H. A. M. (2012). Perceptions of village dogs by villagers and tourists in the coastal region of rural Oaxaca, Mexico. *Anthrozoös* , 25 (1), 75-91.
- Sarkisian, N., & Gerstel, N. (2016). Does singlehood isolate or integrate? Examining the link between marital status and ties to kin, friends, and neighbours. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* , 33 (3), 361–384.
- Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organising framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30 (1), 1-10.
- Scharf, T., & Gierveld, J. (2008). Loneliness in urban neighbourhoods: an Anglo-Dutch behaviours comparison. *European Journal of Ageing* , 5 (2), 103.
- Scharf, T., Phillipson, C., & Smith, A. E. (2005). Social exclusion of older people in deprived urban communities of England. *European Journal of Ageing* , 2 (2), 76-87.
- Schneider, S. L. (2008). Anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe: outgroup size and perceived ethnic threat. *European Sociological Review* , 24, 53–67.
- Simandan, D. (2016). Proximity, subjectivity, and space: Rethinking distance in human geography. *Geoforum*, 75, 249-252.

- Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, W. R. (2007). The state of the art of stalking: Taking stock of the emerging literature. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* , 12 (1), 64-86.
- Stokoe, E., & Hepburn, A. (2005). “ You can hear a lot through the walls”: Noise formulations in neighbour complaints. *Discourse & Society*, 16( 5), 647-673.
- Stokoe, E. (2006). Public intimacy in neighbourhood relationships and complaints. *Sociological Research Online*, 11( 3).
- Suanet, B., van Tilburg, T. G., & Broese van Groenou, M. I. (2013). Non-kin in older adults’ personal networks: more important among later cohorts? *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 68 , 633-643.
- Taylor, J., Twigg, L. & Mohan, J. (2010). Investigating perceptions of antisocial behaviour and neighbourhood ethnic heterogeneity in the British Crime Survey . *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 35 (1), 59-75.
- Thomése, F., Tilburg, V., & Knipscheer, C. (2003). Continuation of exchange with neighbours in later life: The importance of the neighbourhood context. *Personal Relationships*, 10 , 535-550.
- Toruńczyk-Ruiz, S., & Lewicka, M. (2016). Perceived social diversity and neighbourhood attachment: The role of intergroup ties and affective appraisals of the environment. *European Journal of Social Psychology* , 46 (7), 818-832.
- Ufkes, E., Otten, S., van der Zee, K., & Giebels, E. (2012). Neighbourhood conflicts: The role of social categorization. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 23 , 290-306.



- van der Meer, M. J. (2006). Older adults and their socio-spatial integration in the Netherlands. *Ageing and society*, 28 (1).
- Walker, B., & Hiller E. (2007). Places and health: A qualitative study to explore how older women living alone perceive the social and physical dimensions of their neighbourhoods. *Social Science & Medicine*, 65 , 1154-1165.
- Wang, Z., Zhang, F., & Wu, F. (2017). Social trust between rural migrants and urban locals in China-Exploring the effects of residential diversity and neighbourhood deprivation. *Population, Space and Place* , 23 (1).
- World Health Organization. (2011). Burden of disease from environmental noise: Quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe. *Burden of disease from environmental noise: Quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe* , 126-126.