Out of place? Emotional ties to the neighbourhood in urban renewal in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom
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7. Case Study: Emmen Revisited, the Netherlands

7.1 Introduction

One of the case studies in the Netherlands was on Emmen Revisited, a partnership of the city of Emmen made up of two regional housing associations and local residents, forged in 1997 to stop the exodus of families out of three post-war neighbourhoods (Angelslo, Bargeres and Emmerhout). These neighbourhoods were faced with high levels of nuisance, crime, unemployment and rising tensions between residents. The city government and the housing association Wooncom feared further deterioration and proposed an integral approach of town planning, public housing and social issues, involving all local parties. From the start explicit attention was devoted to the social dimension of urban renewal, making Emmen Revisited an appropriate case to study the effects of spatial and social regeneration.

Emmen is one of the 31 big cities in the Netherlands. The city owes its existence to large-scale peat extraction, starting in the middle of the nineteenth century. The 1930s, however, marked an end to this industry, which resulted in poverty and unemployment. After the Second World War, the rapid industrialisation of Emmen provided new employment opportunities, which was accompanied by another population boom. With 110,000 inhabitants nowadays living in the city centre, six newer residential areas and thirteen villages in the immediate vicinity, the city is also known as the Green City. The municipal territory covers no less than 35,000 hectares, making it one of the largest cities in the Netherlands. Each

inhabitant enjoys at least one tree and 124 m² of green space. Its unique urban planning design received international attention. The “woonerf”, a residential area in which a number of devices are employed to create a safer environment, was invented in Emmen in the 1960s.

In spite of its abundance of green living space, the city is experiencing similar problems to the other big cities in the western, more urbanized part of the Netherlands known as the “Randstad”; deterioration of neighbourhoods, rising levels of crime and vandalism and increasing socio-economical differences within the population of Emmen. Emmen is, therefore, part of the Dutch big city policy on urban renewal, albeit as a somewhat special case. Although one of the 31 big cities in the Netherlands (with over 100,000 inhabitants), its location in the relatively more rural area of the Netherlands (the province of Drenthe in the north east of Holland) allows the city to deal differently with its urban problems. While in the west of Holland, where the majority of the big cities are located, space is scarce and fiercely competed for, Emmen has an abundance of green space at its disposal. Where most big cities can only dream of more space to accommodate new (preferably wealthy) inhabitants or keep hold of their present (wealthy) ones, Emmen has it readily available.

On the other hand the city is faced with the more rural problems of small villages, which are emptying out, due to young people and families moving to the urban west to pursue a career or education. The elderly and less fortunate, who are left behind, face a rapid decline in local amenities, while they need them most to make a living or to be able to live independently. Does this unique geographical setup provide new opportunities for urban renewal that are not only able to tackle big city problems but also small scale village dramas?

Data collection
To assess the results of this approach after almost ten years and to evaluate the effectiveness of the coalition, the planning and execution of interventions were reconstructed based on document analysis, interviews with key figures and analyses of existing monitoring data. Many documents, ranging from official policy reports and research papers to more informal project proposals, resident newsletters and even minutes of meetings were analysed to paint a first picture of Emmen
Revisited. The documents were used to describe the manner in which urban renewal was conducted, in particular how spatial and social interventions were developed along side each other. To add more detail to the picture, 20 key figures were interviewed who were intimately involved with the partnership over the years, and represented the different parties that participated. The interviews focused on the development of Emmen Revisited in the last ten years and the progress (and setbacks) they witnessed in the three neighbourhoods as a result of these developments. The results of the different research strategies are discussed below. This chapter provides an historical overview of Emmen Revisited from the start in 1997 to the present date and discusses important mile stones along the way, which have shaped the integral programme and its specific attention to the emotional ties of residents.

7.2 Why Emmen Revisited?

In 1997 the housing association Wooncom signed a treaty with the city council of Emmen on the regeneration of three neighbourhoods: Angelslo, Emmerhout and Bargeres. These three post-war neighbourhoods were at the forefront of urban design in the 1960s, establishing a new design for residential areas called the “woonerf”, in which a number of devices were employed to create a safer environment. This design has been carefully copied by many Dutch cities. However, the post-war design no longer met the demands of today’s inhabitants. Young families were moving away due to a lack of suitable housing to buy. Elderly residents, looking for independent housing with care facilities close by, were also forced to move to the centre where these facilities were available. This left empty houses behind that were not in high demand, resulting in void properties. The residents that were left behind had limited opportunities on the housing market and were forced to stay, witnessing the decline of local amenities and their neighbourhood. Living in Angelslo, Emmerhout and Bargeres became a negative choice, residents stayed out of lack of alternatives. Poor housing and neighbourhood facilities were not the only problem; the neighbourhoods were faced with high levels of nuisance, crime, unemployment and education deficits.
The arrival of new residents from different ethnic origins and with different customs caused further tensions between residents.

The problems that Emmen was facing are not unique to the city, neither is the solution that the city council initially proposed; building new residential areas on the outskirts of the city, which were more in line with the demands of today's housing market. However, the housing association Wooncom feared this would only aggravate the problems; more residents would leave the city centre, increasing the number of void properties. Research commissioned by the housing association, confirmed these fears; the research conducted by KPMG predicted a void increase of ten percent in the existing housing stock, a sharp increase of economically inactive residents and a decline of social economically more successful residents. In response to these figures, the housing association decided to give priority to the regeneration of the present neighbourhoods and to develop parts of the new residential areas inside these neighbourhoods.

This approach was again not unique for Emmen. More unique was the approach the housing association had to regeneration; from the start the housing association believed that physical regeneration would not be sufficient. Starting from this assumption, the housing association reflected on its social role in the urban renewal of the three neighbourhoods. Wooncom realised that they could not fulfil this role on their own. To tackle the combination of problems that persisted in the neighbourhoods, co-operation was necessary with a large number of local parties that could contribute with their own knowledge in a joint effort to regenerate the area.

### 7.3 The start of Emmen Revisited

Wooncom established a partnership with the city council of Emmen under the name Emmen Revisited, in which both parties committed themselves to the regeneration of the three neighbourhoods. Three tenant boards, one for each neighbourhood, and the citywide Tenant Federation joined the partnership. The partnership proposed an integral approach of town planning, public housing and social issues, based on equality, whereby each party is involved in the planning and the decision-
making. Each partner remained responsible for their share of the work in their particular field, however, agrees to discuss their work with the other partners before it is put to action. In contrast to other urban renewal programmes, the city council was no longer the director of the regeneration but shared the seat with all parties involved, effectively placing the directory seat between the local partners.

The new approach needed a new organisational structure to accommodate all the parties involved. Each neighbourhood should be able to contribute in their own way, although coherences needed to be observed at the city level. To safeguard the coherence in the proposed plans of the different neighbourhoods, an executive board was installed to which the general directors of both housing associations were appointed, combined with the alderman of the city council who was responsible for housing within the city. For the co-ordination of day to day affairs, a project team was formed headed up by two project leaders; one supplied by the city administration and one supplied by Wooncom. At the neighbourhood level employees from both the housing associations and the city administration joined forces in neighbourhood teams. Each team was responsible for the implementation of initiatives at neighbourhood level and, in order to do so, maintained contact with all parties involved in the neighbourhood. The teams were joined by a representative of the housing association, a neighbourhood coordinator on behalf of the city administration, a social worker and the chairman of the tenant board.

Plans and initiatives were discussed at each level; the partners called this ‘the permanent debate with the neighbourhood’. Realising that physical regeneration spans a much longer period than the time that is needed to put social programmes into action, the partnership tried to bring both programmes closer together by a continuous feedback of spatial planning to the social partners in the neighbourhoods. This cyclic process of informing and decision sharing was needed to prevent the implementations of planning without local support. Local support from partners in the neighbourhoods, including the residents living in these areas, was deemed necessary to prevent not only costly delays in the implementation stage, but also to ensure the contributions and involvement of these parties as essential elements for sustainable and vital communities in these neighbourhoods.
The cyclic process of information and decision sharing started with the drawing up of specific plans for each neighbourhood. Together with local parties so-called district developmental plans were drawn up, which presented an overview of the present situation in each neighbourhood in terms of environmental quality, amenities and social structure. Based on the premises that no actions would be taken to address any of the present problems, a future image of each neighbourhood was projected from these descriptions, spelling doom for the three neighbourhoods. The doom scenarios allowed the parties involved to establish goals for the future, which were translated into clear choices and specific actions, subdivided into five themes that corresponded with the experiences of residents; area reputation, housing, usage of space, co-operation and social cohesion. Actions and choices were documented in so-called ‘starting documents’, which were discussed with local parties in each neighbourhood. From these consultations district platforms were established: twice a year 20 to 25 local organisations (tenant and resident groups, police officers, teachers, youth workers, societies representing disabled citizens, local businesses, etc.) came together to discuss the feasibility and desirability of the proposed measures in each district and readjust the plans accordingly. This resulted in a detailed master plan for the development of each neighbourhood and a complex organisational structure for Emmen Revisited.
7.4 Three Neighbourhoods: Making Plans

Each district development plan meticulously analysed the different problems and potential for urban renewal in each neighbourhood. According to the start documents, Emmerhout was known as an easy going, green neighbourhood with intimate streets; a child friendly area with good quality housing in proximity to country parks and a diverse range of amenities. Nothing wrong at first site, but this image was rapidly changing, according to development plan: the population was in decline due to young families who moved out in search of more suitable housing. The housing stock was considered to be too homogeneous with an abundance of single family homes. The young families who moved out were replaced by singles, couples with no children and ethnic and elderly residents, resulting in a much higher turnover rate, particular for the apartments in the neighbourhood. The increased flow of residents reduced the support for the facilities in the area with more shops and schools available than needed for the number of remaining residents. The higher turnover rate also resulted in the concentration of
problematic families in specific areas of Emmerhout. Complaints of nuisance and dirty streets increased dramatically, while the number of residents dropped by 15%.

In spite of the declining resident numbers, Emmerhout housed a substantial group of residents who have lived in the neighbourhood since it was build. People stayed on average for 11 years in the neighbourhood. These residents were highly involved with the neighbourhood and maintained many contacts throughout the area, in particular with other family members (roughly 30%). Although happy with the social state of the neighbourhood, the residents complained about physical degeneration and criticised the lack of play facilities in the area. According to the start document, recreational opportunities were limited to a stroll around the block. The ample green space in the neighbourhood was described as dull and poorly maintained. The lack of facilities increased the tension between different age groups; bored youth people, who had nowhere else to go, lingered in the shopping centre and on school yards, causing nuisance for other residents.

The start documents painted a similar picture for Angelslo; a population in decline with diminishing support for local facilities. Originally built for the rapidly growing population of industrial workers after the Second World War, the housing stock is considered too homogeneous at present with an increasing number of void properties. Apartments and flats made up almost a quarter of the housing stock in Angelslo. Like Emmerhout, a substantial part of the residents lived in the neighbourhood since it was build, and maintained strong family ties with each other. There was a very active resident board present consisting of equally active cluster committees in each of the six districts of the neighbourhood. In spite of these long term tenants, turnover rates were rapidly increasing, resulting in less social cohesion, more nuisance and tensions between different resident groups. In contrast to Emmerhout, the residents were very satisfied with the green space in the neighbourhood and made extensive use of it.

Bargeres is the youngest of the three neighbourhoods, inhabited by a large proportion of young families. The neighbourhood consists of numerous of “woonerven”\(^\text{19}\), resulting in a wide architecture range with diverse plot sizes.

\(^{19}\) The “woonerf” is a residential area in which a number of devices are employed to create a safer environment. The concept was invented in Emmen in the 1960s.
However, the “woonerven” were only accessible by a labyrinth-like road network, making it difficult for residents and visitors (including emergency services) to find their way around the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood was literally divided by the Orange Canal, cutting residents on the eastern part of from residents in the western part of the neighbourhood. The division was clearly felt in the neighbourhood’s shopping centre where a poor connection between the two parts limited the access of disabled shoppers.

Bargeres was characterised by relatively expensive rental housing. The residents could more easily afford to buy their own property, although this caused a higher turnover of residents who were waiting in a temporarily rental homes in Bargeres for the completion of their new house on the outskirts of the city. The temporarily residence of families reduced, according to the start document, the commitment of tenants to their neighbourhood; why invest in their neighbourhood if they were about the leave it? This mentality was further enhanced by the labyrinth structure of the neighbourhood; the overall design lacked uniformity, while the individual “woonerven” did not have an identity of their own, allowing for animosity to settle in. Also, the design of the houses allowed for little social control of the public space as the reception rooms were located towards the back of the houses, facing the private back gardens instead of the public streets at the front. The lack of social control has seen an increase in vandalism, crime and drugs traffic. Bargeres distinguished itself from the other two neighbourhoods by the scale of its problems; while the problems in Emmerhout and Angelslo were predominantly located at the neighbourhood level, the writers of the start document for Bargeres argued that the image and economical position of Bargeres in the city of Emmen were at stake.

Although the different problems facing each neighbourhood were meticulously analysed in the start documents, the proposed solutions for the three neighbourhoods were in contrast remarkably similar: to halt population decline and increase the diversity of neighbourhood population, the housing stock and public space in each neighbourhood needed to be differentiated. It remained unclear how the different lifestyles would be catered for in the renewed neighbourhoods and how this would affect the design of each neighbourhood. In all three neighbourhood
development plans, centre stage was taken by the regeneration of the local shopping centres, which was at odds with observations made in the start documents, stating that residents (particularly in Angelslo and Bargeres) were less focused on their neighbourhood and preferred instead to use facilities and meeting places outside the neighbourhood. It was questionable whether these residents would become more focused on their neighbourhood with a renewed local shopping centre when there was an abundance of shopping alternatives outside their neighbourhood. Even if the new shopping centres would be entirely devoted to residents who are more dependant on the neighbourhood (youth, elderly, residents on social benefits), it still remains unclear how interaction with the (new) residents that shop elsewhere is facilitated in the neighbourhood, while this is a cornerstone of the regeneration plans.

Furthermore, the perceived higher scale problems of Bargeres might be less exclusive to this neighbourhood since both Emmerhout and Angelslo were equally reporting problems with their image, resulting in a more unfavourable economical position in the city region. This commonality suggested that a different design for each neighbourhood would be more fruitful for attracting different residents groups that complement rather than compete with each other for neighbourhood preference.

In short, the performed diagnosis and the proposed solutions were unclear. Although the problems appeared both spatial and social, the initial plans were mainly spatial; the housing stock and the facilities need to be diversified and upgraded. Between 1999 en 2005 the city of Emmen and the housing association Wooncom planned to demolish 444 houses, which would be replaced by 461 new houses of which 213 were reserved for social housing with the other 248 to be sold to residents in the so-called middle and higher segments of the housing market. At the same time, an unspecified number of houses and apartments needed to remain in the affordable range for elderly people and residents in need of special care. The spatial plans were, however, only one side of the integral approach; the importance of a complementary social programme was recognised from the start but proved much harder to develop.
7.5 Developing the Social Dimension

Since 1998 the partnership of Emmen Revisited experimented, in co-operation with local care and welfare organization, schools, police officers, residents and local businesses, with new administrative forms and programmes, which combined physical, social and economic interventions in the urban renewal of the three neighbourhoods Angelslo, Emmerhout and Bargeres. Working out integrated targets proved to be difficult in practice. The development of Emmen Revisited, therefore, can be seen as a journey to combine physical ‘restructuring’ with economic and social interventions.

Although from the start of Emmen Revisited special attention was devoted to the social dimension of urban renewal, it was not quite clear to everybody involved what this meant in practice. The struggle to develop the social dimension of urban renewal was quickly criticised by outsiders as being too physically orientated. The partners themselves added to the confusion by stating different goals. The City Council of Emmen wrote in its policy planning for the year 2015 (Strategienota Emmen 2015) that the main aim of improving the quality of life in the neighbourhoods was to attract new businesses and residents to the area; urban renewal as a condition for economical development. The main purpose of the new (more affluent) residents was to spend more money in the neighbourhood, making the facilities in the neighbourhood more viable. The housing association Woomcom, on the other hand, opted for a physical conditioning; the problems in the neighbourhoods were, in the eyes of the housing association, caused by a segregated deprived population which needed to become more heterogeneous by differentiating the housing stock. In other words, mixed housing stock as a condition for more socially mixed neighbourhoods.

The different visions, and especially the general lack of vision on the social dimension of urban renewal, were recognised within the partnership. As a solution and to developing a more coherent frame for the social dimension, the partnership decided in 1998 to participate in a national programme, commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, department of Social Policy to develop a Community Based Approach (wijkgericht werken) for urban renewal in the Netherlands. This programme, titled “Heel de Buurt” (The Whole Neighbourhood)
was piloted in 10 Dutch neighbourhoods from 1998 until 2001. The main aim of the programme was:

To develop a social infrastructure at the neighbourhood level which facilitated the participation of citizens, increased social cohesion, contributed to the lifting of individual and collective deprivation, in relationship with the physical and economical infrastructure. (Eindrapportage Heel de Buurt Emmen, 2002).

For Emmen, participating in the programme meant a shift in attention from resident participation to organising contacts between residents. The national programme “Heel de Buurt” provided an opportunity to expand the social component of the integral approach. Resident participation no longer consisted solely of voicing residents’ opinion but from that moment aimed to improve the informal contacts between residents and their involvement with the neighbourhood.

7.5.1 From Resident Participation to Social Cohesion

In the first year of Emmen Revisited the social activities were mainly focused on resident participation and creating coherence in the already existing projects, with special attention on young residents. By organising a wide range of sport activities Emmen Revisited tried to appeal to this group and to involve them in the partnership, i.e. the project “Free and Sports”, a co-operation between welfare organisation Opmaat and the department of Sport of the city of Emmen. Together they organised indoor football tournaments. Emmen Revisited provided additional resources and the infrastructure to increase youth participation; in Angelslo a multifunctional sport and meeting ground was built to allow all year round activities. The ground included different playing fields for football, basketball, table tennis and a skeeler track (which doubled as an ice rink in the winter). The facility proved immensely popular with the local youth, drawing young people from adjacent neighbourhoods and beyond. The success of the playing field led to the development of two additional playing fields in Bargeres and Emmerhout. All three playing fields were maintained by local residents’ boards.
Case Study: Emmen Revisited, the Netherlands

Other young residents were reached with a specially renovated bus, which set up camp at different places in the neighbourhoods at set times. Youth workers used the bus as a base for developing contacts with local youth and to provide them with information, i.e. on the dangers of fire works around New Year’s Eve. A spin off version of the bus, the sport bus, allowed young people to borrow sport equipment to organise their own sport activities. Although not stated explicitly, involving young people also meant fighting vandalism and nuisance, caused by lingering youth; a goal that was achieved, according to local residents.

Meeting with residents and meetings between residents became a central element of the regeneration programme in Emmen. Getting young and older residents involved in Emmen Revisited was no longer only for the sake of residents’ formal participation, but was specifically aimed at increasing the social cohesion between residents, while increasing their visibility for social work organisation.

7.5.2 Linking Social to Physical Interventions

Some ‘meeting’ activities were linked to physical interventions, like the porch conversations in the high-rise apartment flats called ‘Haar en Het Weeld’ in Emmerhout. After the renovation of the apartments was completed, residents who shared the same entry (porch) were invited to join a discussion on new communal rules for their building. Where residents came to an agreement, a plate was installed above the front door of the shared entry to symbolise the communal rules. This initiative demonstrates the effort of the coalition members of Emmen Revisited to not only redesign the homes residents live in but also to redesign the ways residents live together in their apartment block.

Another clear example of this effort, albeit on a more personal level, was the project ‘Hulp en Activering’ (Social Support and Activation) in the same neighbourhood. This project combined physical regeneration with social engineering by focussing on the social mobility of residents. After the failure of a project commissioned by the department of Social Affairs in Emmen, in which unemployed residents were offered education and job training to help them find a job, the partners in Emmen Revisited decided to link similar efforts more explicitly to the relocation of residents in urban renewal areas. The assumption behind this link was that residents, whose lives are already uprooted by a changing
environment and the relocation to a new or temporary home, would be more willing to consider changing other areas of their lives and would, therefore, be more motivated to join and complete social mobility programmes. Residents, who needed to be relocated because their homes were to be demolished, were offered additional support in acquiring educational and job qualifications. 400 residents on welfare benefits in the north of Emmerhout were offered this additional support package and almost all residents accepted the offer. Since the start of the project, 103 of them have been successful in getting a job, while a further 244 residents have been accepted at educational institutions. Additional research (Lammerts and Van der Graaf, 2005) on 70 residents who received support confirms the assumption of the coalition partners; residents who combined their relocation with a social support and activation package showed more progress than residents who did not need to move. Progress was particularly visible in the way they planned their time, the social contacts they developed and the way they felt about themselves and the place where they lived: the participating residents reported stronger feelings of belonging and independence. However, they were less positive on the changes in their neighbourhood and showed less improvement in their self-confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Relocated residents</th>
<th>Non-relocated residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social contacts</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of belonging</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independency</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although limited in scope and size, the research demonstrated the importance of the connection between social and physical mobility; some residents who are forced to change where they live are more prone to face and change problems of social deprivation in their personal lives. Moving homes became a moving to opportunity, while remaining in (or at least returning to) the same neighbourhood.
7.5.3 Emotional Ties to the Neighbourhood

The above mentioned projects demonstrate an awareness of the important social and emotional consequences that physical interventions have for residents in renewed neighbourhoods. Rebuilding a neighbourhood means also rebuilding the social network of residents and their emotional ties to the neighbourhood, especially for long-term residents. Aware of this uprooting, Emmen Revisited organised a day of memories when 300 flats were about to be demolished in Emmerhout. Prior to the demolition, residents who lived and had lived in the apartments were invited to write their memories on the walls of the apartments. At the same time a film of interviews with former residents was shown to tell the history of the buildings and aid residents in their trips down memory lane. Immediately after the day of memories, a demolition party was organised. Residents were invited to view the memories written on the wall with the motto “If the walls could speak ...” and a demolition song that was especially composed for the occasion was performed by children from a local school as the first demolition activity took place; the demolishing of a window frame. While this happened balloons went up in the air with messages attached by the children. At the end of the ceremony, residents were invited to join the demolition lunch in the community centre, where the tables were decorated with freshly demolished parts of the apartments, such as building rubble and toilet pots.

This effort demonstrates important ways in which place identity and sense of place can be utilised in aiding inhabitants to make a less uprooting transition to a new place of residence. Addressing the attachment people feel to the place they have lived in for so long when this place is about to be demolished, recognizes the symbolic value of the built environment. The housing association and other local parties can utilise this value, not only to ease the pain of moving and emotional uprooting for residents, but also to aid residents in their attachment to a new environment by organising similar events for residents who return to their renewed neighbourhood.

Another initiative which dealt with the attachment of residents to their neighbourhood is a project developed by local residents of the neighbourhood platforms. They came across the idea at an exchange meeting with other residents of urban renewal areas in the Netherlands, organised by the ‘Landelijke
Samenwerking Aandachtswijken’ (National Co-operation of Deprived Areas), a national platform for active residents, supported by the Department of Internal Affairs. The idea they borrowed was called neighbourhood stage: a play organised by and for residents on life in their neighbourhood and the effect of urban renewal on the lives of residents. Together with the local music school and social workers, the residents prepared to stage a show on the work of Emmen Revisted. The show was to serve as an outlet for emotions in addition to “the more rational stage” of formal residents’ meetings. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funding and the bankruptcy of the local social work organisation, the show has never been performed.

This is illustrative of the social programme in Emmen Revisted. Many projects were set up under the umbrella of the social renewal, but a considerable number of projects never reached the finish line or simply ceased to exist once the project time and money ran out. The day of memories, for instance, has never been repeated and the specially designed activities bus has been in the garage for a while. This is not so much due to a lack of care on behalf of the coalition partners but has more to do with a faulty social diagnosis; the content of the social programme has never been properly defined and its link to the physical and economical programmes has never been specified. The development of interlinkages between the different programmes remained implicit and has been confined to incidental experiments in the daily urban practice, with no elucidation of the logic behind these experiments or translation of the project goals into overall programme targets. How do social projects fit into the integral framework of Emmen Revisted and to which overall goals should they contribute? In short, the social programme is poorly defined, resulting in a social programme which is lacking in direction and continuity.

The development of Emmen Revisted demonstrates an ongoing search for combining physical urban renewal with economical and social interventions. This search has resulted in innovative projects, which have widened the scope of the social programme considerably from purely resident participation to include social cohesion and connections to the economical programme through social activation. Furthermore, it has included initiatives which recognise the importance of
neighbourhood attachment and which have sought to actively increase the attachment of residents to their neighbourhood.

In 2006 after eight years of Emmen Revisited, the coalition partners evaluated the fruits of their labour by independent research and tried to define the content of their social programmes and its connections to the physical and economical urban programmes more clearly. In the working programme for 2005 to 2009 the social climate in the neighbourhoods of Emmen Revisited takes centre stage. Social climate is defined in the bigger sense of the word; it includes social security, contacts between residents and also feeling at home in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, physical and economical projects related to this overarching social goal: i.e. projects aimed at increasing the access of residents to the labour market intended not only to improve the financial position of residents, but also their self-esteem. This should ultimately improve the reputation and appeal of the neighbourhood, because in-active residents would no longer dominate the area. In spite of these statements, efforts to influence neighbourhood attachment mainly take place under the banner of project designed for improving the social bonds between residents. The view of the coalition appears to be that when residents get to know each other better, neighbourhood attachment will benefit automatically. Although social contacts are important for feeling at home in the neighbourhood, attachment to place is lost in this view as a goal in its own right in urban renewal.

7.6 Discussion

The development of Emmen Revisited demonstrates an ongoing search for combining physical urban renewal with economic and social interventions, which has widened the scope of the social programme considerably and has included initiatives which recognise the importance of neighbourhood attachment. However, the content of the social programme has never been properly defined and the link to the physical and economic programmes has never been specified, reducing the social programme to incidental experiments in the daily urban practice and fragmentising the integral approach. The development of an integral approach
requires a more structural approach, allowing projects aimed at increasing the place attachments of residents to develop and to become an integral part of the social programme.

However, valuable instigators are available like the day of memories organised in Emmerhout, where explicit attention was given to the emotional ties that residents had developed with a place which is about to be demolished; recognizing the symbolic value of the built environment and providing an outlet for these emotions. This effort demonstrates important ways in which place identity and sense of place can be utilised in helping residents to feel less uprooted in the transition to a new place of residence. The housing association and other local parties can utilise this value to ease the emotional pain of moving and also to aid residents in their attachment to a new environment by organising similar events for returning residents.

Emmen Revisited also demonstrates how bridges can be built between physical and social projects. In the project ‘Hulp en Activering’ (Social Support and Activation) in the same neighbourhood an explicit connection was made between socio-economic and physical interventions. The relocation of residents in urban renewal areas was used to increase the social mobility of unemployed residents by offering them education and job training. This connection was based on the assumption that residents, whose lives were already uprooted by a changing environment and the relocation to a new or temporary home, would be more willing to consider changing other areas of their lives. They would, therefore, be more willing to participate in the social mobility programmes on offer. This assumption proved right and similar initiatives could be helpful in reducing the emotional stress caused to residents by relocation; it recognises the emotional uprooting involved and turns this emotion into a positive experience.

Next to the examples set by Emmen Revisited, the case study demonstrates the importance of an integral approach and organisation. Few cities have a detailed urban renewal programme at their disposal for the whole city that includes different public and private parties and consults them on a regular basis. Emmen Revisited is the exception to the case, where a thorough preparation resulted in a diverse and widely supported programme, in which the social dimension takes a prominent place.