Realistic regeneration: housing contexts and social outcomes of neighbourhood interventions in Western European cities

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Housing contexts and social outcomes of neighbourhood interventions in Western European cities

Wouter van Gent
REALISTIC REGENERATION

Housing contexts and social outcomes of neighbourhood interventions in Western European cities

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom
ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties ingestelde commissie,
in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel op donderdag 19 november 2009, te 14:00 uur

doork

Wouter Pieter Cornelis van Gent

geboren te Apeldoorn
Promotiecommissie

Promotor: Prof. dr. S. Musterd
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This research was made possible and co-funded by the Corpovenista/Habiforum Research Programme.

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Lay-out and cover design: www.suusvandenakker.com

Printed by Ipskamp Drukkers BV
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Pursuing a major professional and personal goal for about three and a half years is not unlike an Olympian enterprise. It requires practical support and good working conditions, but also a sustained level of focus, ambition, and drive.¹ These requirements cannot be attained on one’s own. Without the aid of others, this dissertation would not have been possible. While several chapters already acknowledge some people, I would like to take this opportunity to (again) thank those who have been vital to this PhD project.

First, I have to thank the seventy or so regeneration professionals who were all kind and patient enough to endure my tedious questions. They were absolutely fundamental to my understanding. I wish to thank my promotor Sako Musterd for giving me the opportunity to do a PhD in the first place.² Moreover, I appreciate his support, guidance, trust and his kind nature. Furthermore, his knowledge of and insight in the field of urban studies were invaluable. I also own a debt of gratitude to my co-promotor Wim Ostendorf. His wit and his critical down-to-earth attitude forced me to be ever more specific in my writings and reasoning. I very much enjoyed the supervisory meetings with the three of us, which were both intellectually stimulating and gezellig. I look forward to continue working and writing together in the near future.

In addition to my esteemed promotores, other members of the academic community need to be mentioned as well. I would like to thank Ronald van Kempen (Utrecht University), Roger Andersson and Emma Holmqvist (Uppsala University), Peter Lee, Alan Murie, and Rob Rowlands (University of Birmingham), Montserrat Pareja and Montse Simo (University of Barcelona) for taking the time to discuss my cases, for reviewing my work, or for helping me organising my fieldwork abroad. Also, my fieldwork in Catalonia would not have been possible without the enthusiastic assistance of Jordi Ribot Thunnissen.

Several organizational structures provided the necessary conditions to conduct my research. These include the Amsterdam institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies (and Gert van der Meer in particular), the Urban Geographies research group, and the Corpovenista/ BSIK Habiforum programme. Also, I want to thank the members of the Corpovenista klankbordgroep (Jiri Anton, Ruud Geelhoed, Jan Kraak, Adriaan Hoogvliet, Harry Platte) for providing comments on my work from the perspective of practice.

In addition to institutional support, AMIDSt provided me with many wonderful colleagues. They contributed to my PhD through discussion and reflection on theory and on doing research, but most of all they provided a good social atmosphere. I am proud to call some of them my friends today. At the risk of forgetting people, I want to mention my roommates Erik, Magali, Willemijn, and Hebe as well as Manuel (also for providing some of the spark for this research project), Rogier, Perry, Ewald, Anna, Els, Amanda, Tineke, Francesca, Albert, Michael, Koen, Thomas, Stan, Iris, both Marco’s, Sebastian, Bas, Thea, Inge, Marjolein, and Annika (thanks for providing the musical soundtrack of my PhD!). As members of our little reading group, Joram, Brooke, Edith and Fenne deserve a special mention. Over at the psychology department, I consider Job to be a great colleague and friend.

I wish to thank Willem and Mendel for agreeing to act as my paranimfen. In addition to his friendship, I appreciate Willem’s comments within the reading group, his inquisitive nature and his taste for discussing anything and everything. I consider Mendel one of the best friends and the greatest roommate I ever had. He significantly added to the enjoyment of coming to the office every day. Also, if I didn’t agree with Tom to have a coffee with him one faithful day in 2003, I would have probably never have become an urban geographer.

I would like to express my gratitude to those who are further away from academic life, but had a major influence on my sanity, stability and happiness. These people include my friends, of whom I shall only mention the talented Suus van den Akker, who graciously agreed to do the cover design and lay-out of this book. I wish to thank Femke and the Bax/ Groenhof/ Henkes family for many memorable and dear moments. A special nod goes to Laura for, among other –far more important-things, checking my Dutch summary. Lastly, no language or words can fully express my gratitude and love for Peter, Corry, and Roseline. Without them, I would never have come this far.

August, 2009

¹ I have actually discussed this analogy with a professional Olympic athlete and he agreed that there are several similarities.
² In that vein, I should also thank Eva van Kempen and Willem Salet for allowing a Social Informatics student to participate in a geography/ planning masters programme.
1. Introduction: How to understand neighbourhood regeneration

_This is typical for falsification in social research. It is messy (...), it is partial (...), it is provisional (...)._  
— Andrew Sayer

This study is concerned with the regeneration of urban neighbourhoods. As William Grigsby and his colleagues (1987) once argued, the quality of any neighbourhood is always in a state of perpetual decline through aging and usage (see also Megbolugde et al., 1996). However, affluent residents are generally able to stall the decline of their homes perpetually. As a result, affluent neighbourhoods generally are well-maintained through private initiative. However, for many neighbourhoods, intervention in the form of physical redevelopment or subsidies is required whenever an area reaches a point at which it only attracts residents who do not have the means to ensure proper upkeep of the dwellings and the neighbourhood (see also Robson, 1975). In Western Europe, the quality of the dwellings is of (semi-) public concern in case of social housing. What's more, also the upkeep and liveability of the neighbourhood is ultimately seen as the responsibility of the public sector regardless of tenure structure. So, the state plays a major role in the regeneration of neighbourhoods.

Regeneration traditionally concerns the physical state of an area’s housing and public environment and its effect on public health. However, when neighbourhoods are regarded as ripe for regeneration, they are commonly labelled as ‘concentrated’, ‘poverty-stricken’, ‘segregated’, or plainly as ‘problem areas’. These labels are used in many Western European countries, which face different sorts of socio-economic problems in some of their older urban neighbourhoods. This suggests that some sort of social change is important as well in neighbourhood regeneration policies and practices. It may even be more important than physical deterioration or public health. In many cases, the problems of these neighbourhoods are associated with a concentration of minority groups or of a socio-economic class living within the area.

At least until the 1970s and 1980s, social economic divisions in Western European cities and societies were tackled through the social policies of the Keynesian welfare state. This structure of social agreements held the grand promise of universal care, social equality and full employment. However, as the Keynesian welfare state structure was inherently contradictory and unsustainable, it came under reform (Cerny, 2000). This means unsettling the old settlements and devising new settlements according to new, more market liberal, principles. Urban policies, that seek to regenerate neighbourhoods and revitalize urban economies, play a key role in the new settlements and in redefining what social policy should entail. It signifies a move away from grand scale redevelopment and new town policies to a more piecemeal approach to the city and how to manage its social problems. Furthermore, the limited territorial focus of regeneration policies also signifies a move from universalism on a national scale to selectivity with a focus on regional and local scales (Cochrane, 2007).

The rescaling of urban governance does not mean that the role of national state has become insignificant (see Brenner, 1999). On the contrary, it is central in understanding neighbourhood regeneration as many of the overarching policies and funding mechanism originate from the central state. A such, neighbourhood regeneration does not only produce social change in terms of liveability and social economic change at the local level, but is also socially produced itself within and by its context. This duality is central in this study.
This study deals with neighbourhood regeneration which aims for social change within the context of Western Europe. It will appraise the state’s ability for social change at a local and supra-local level through policies and practices of regeneration. In addition, this study will focus on explaining the social strategies of neighbourhood regeneration. Like the social practice of neighbourhood regeneration, this study will place an emphasis on social change through housing-related mechanisms and on the housing context as the explanans. Before discussing some common characteristics of regeneration in Western Europe and the study’s research design, a brief overview of academic explanation for social differentiation in the city will be given. Next, change in post-WWII neighbourhoods will be discussed. The regeneration of this type of neighbourhoods will form an important part of the empirical basis of this study, because many are currently deemed problematic by European politicians, policymakers, journalists, observers, academics and the general public.

1.1 Academic explanations for social differentiation in the city

Urban life in academia and the arts has always been depicted in terms of the differences in social standing between the city’s inhabitants. Indeed, the multiple manifestations of differences in architecture, material goods and living styles are key in defining modern urban life. The diversity of urban life is reflected in the diversity of academic explanations since the early 20th century.

Social differentiation was central in the work by the members of the influential ‘Chicago School’. The ‘School’ was characterised by a human ecological stance in research, which was taken from natural sciences (see Park et al., 1925/1967). The ‘human ecology’ method opened the door for several landmark studies which excel in descriptive grace and ethnographic richness (e.g. Wirth, 1927, Zorbaugh, 1929/1976). However, the method’s focus on ‘natural areas’ within the city was ambivalent in terms of unit of geography. In addition, the cause for the social situation of the residents tends to be attributed to the social dynamic of the area itself. Furthermore, human choice and institutions within urban social systems received little attention (Chudacoff, 1994). A similar critique could be made for factorial ecology and social area analysis approaches, which also followed the human ecological approach. Both approaches were able to map socio-spatial relations within the city, but were insufficiently able to provide causal explanations (Van Kempen, 2002).

The behavioural approach, however, emphasised choice and preference and ethnic or demographic characteristics of individual households as the key to explain spatial patterns of urban social life (e.g. Rossi, 1980, Michelson, 1977, Clark, 1992, Clark et al., 1986). As the attention is focused on the demand-side of housing and less on constraints, the state plays only a minor role in this approach (Van Kempen, 2002).

Rex and Moore (1967) adopted a Weberian approach to overcome some of the limitations of the Chicago school. Their approach sought explanations for urban social formations in the struggle between classes over the use of houses. A class struggle in Weberian sense is likely to emerge when there is a difference in access to property between individuals in a market situation. The difference will lead to political and policy action by different ‘housing classes’. However, the concept of housing class is somewhat problematic because it essentially obscures the relationship between individual behaviour and structural constraints. Nevertheless, this research was influential in its treatment of housing as a scarce commodity in the city and thus as a constraint for individual choice. Furthermore, the

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3 In addition to Max Weber, their approach to sociological explanation was also influenced by Karl Mannheim and Gunnar Myrdal (Rex and Moore, 1967, p. 5).
approach implies that power plays an important role in the social formation of the city. In the 1970s several strands of urban research emerged which highlighted the importance of wider institutional frameworks and power relations in the social formation of the city. These strands include the neo-Marxist radical approach, the managerial approach and the political economic approach.

The neo-Marxist approach to the urban research kicked into gear with works of, among others, David Harvey and Manuel Castells. In his Marxist analysis of the city, Harvey (1973) argued that ‘urbanism entails the geographic concentration of socially designated surplus product’ (p. 246). In simpler terms, in the capitalist system, surplus of production is ‘reinvested’ in urban (re-)development with the aim to create extra surplus. As such, it shapes the face and soul of the city. So, the spatial residential pattern within the city, i.e. social segregation, is essentially a ‘tangible geographical expression of a structural condition in the capitalist economy’ (p. 273).

In his attempt to understand the laws that govern urban social practices, Castells (1977) focused on the political process and power struggles within the city. He sees space as an expression of social structure which is made up of the combinations of ideological, political and economic systems, which define urban social practices through time. Urban planning is essentially the intervention of the political to ensure a reproduction of the dominant mode of reproduction. Furthermore, in his view social movements act as a counterbalance in the urban class struggle.

Both authors were preceded by Henri Lefebvre who argued that the state from above and private enterprise from below both strive to absorb and suppress the city, and as such converge to segregation along ethnic and social economic lines. Despite anti-segregationist tendencies and good intentions, the social and political practice of class strategies aim for segregation (intentionally or unintentionally). However, Lefebvre also notes that social pressure and political power may change the good or bad will of politicians (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 140 - 141).

The neo-Marxist approach was valuable in its focus on a context of constraints and opportunities. However, its emphasis on structural conditions may leave little room for individual choice and behaviour in its interpretations. In addition, the Marxist premises tend to restrict venues for explanation to historical-and geographical- materialism. Furthermore, the state is often seen as a homogeneous and homogenizing power in its interventions in the city.

In the urban managerialism or the managerial approach (see also Lipsky, 1980), Pahl examines the role of technical experts and housing managers within the state and argues that they play a crucial role in the allocation of production surplus (in the sense of Harvey). Managers, or gatekeepers, are therefore ‘central to the urban problematic’ (Pahl, 1975, p. 285). Pahl thesis has met some criticism with regard to the supposed centre stage of meso-level policy makers and manager and to the disregard for the ‘top dogs’. Pahl acknowledged this critique and reformulated his thesis by emphasising the mediating role of managers between the state and the private sector and between the central state authority and local population (Pahl, 1977). However, also in Pahl’s revised view the state remains an autonomous bureaucratic power which strives for some sort of ‘national interest’ (Harloe, 1977). This view takes the macro-level insufficiently into account.

While the managerial approach focuses on the state, the political economy approach emphasises the role of both private and public urban elites in the shaping of the city. So-called growth machines, coalitions or regimes aim for capital accumulation and growth maximalisation (see Molotch, 1976, Mossberger and Stoker, 2001, Terhorst and Van de Ven, 1997), and in doing so shape the development of the city, including residential areas (see, e.g. Palm, 1985, Kasinitz, 1988). This approach is mostly focused and based on the
US experience. Some studies aim to explain urban development in Western European cities from the political economy perspective (e.g. Savitch and Kantor, 2002, Fainstein and Young, 1992). The dominance of the (national) public sector over local business interests in many European countries means a different form of political economy. For instance, within the French context, Le Galès (2002) stresses the importance of elites and regimes within public policy networks rather than business networks. Policy networks may include private interests but are characterised by experts, mediators, different policy sectors, interest groups and political leaders.

In addition to class struggle or economic interests, other authors have put forward macro-level explanations for social differentiation and the urban form. These explanations include level of welfare state provisions, politics, demographic change, economic and labour market restructuring, globalisation and socio-cultural trends (see Van Kempen and Marcuse, 1997, Musterd and Ostendorf, 1998b, Murie et al., 2003, Wilson, 1987, Mingione, 2005). The next paragraph will shortly illustrate this multi-level approach for the situation in post-WWII neighbourhoods in Western European cities. However, it is important to note after this literature review that for this study supra-local level structures, notably state and market, on the one hand and individual choice and behaviour on the other hand are both essential to come to any explanation. Moreover, this study will employ an institutional approach which holds that these two come into being through each other (see below).

1.1.1 Change and challenges in post-WWII neighbourhoods in Western Europe

In the decades after WWII, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, large-scale housing estates have been planned and built in and around Western European Cities. Nowadays, a great deal of these estates is associated with a variety of difficulties and problems. These issues include design and physical obsolescence of housing types. More importantly, changes in demographic structures and immigration patterns have led to increasing concentrations of deprived households as well as the presence of new ethnic groups. As a result, some estates are faced with more instances of social conflict, youth problems, and anti-social behaviour. These issues, however, may also be very much related to the discontent or frustrations among residents with the management of the estate and with the stigmatising reputation of the estate and its inhabitants (see Wacquant, 2007, Wassenberg, 2004).

The space available only permits a brief highlighting of the difficulties and their causes (for a more detailed analyses see Hall et al., 2005a, Musterd et al., 2006, Prak and Priemus, 1984). However, for the purpose of this study, two mechanisms that are related to the economic and labour market restructuring and housing will be highlighted here.

Initially, many of these neighbourhoods tended to function well on the housing market and were not considered problematic or low in status. The standardised and industrial design and construction of modernist medium- and high-rise blocks in green environments fitted modernist and functionalist thinking. More importantly, the design fulfilled a pressing need for housing. However, many estates that were built to house low-income or unemployed households, remain attracting similar households or newcomers. As a result, these areas had a negative reputation and high turnover rates from the start. In other cases, changes outside the estate may have diminished its relative status and attractiveness. It should be noted though that the physical form of high rise housing estates does not automatically preclude processes of gentrification (Van Kempen and Musterd, 1991).
In addition, restructuring of the economy since the 1970s have led to changes in the urban employment structure and regional economy. As a result, the estates’ proximity to work or transport may have altered. Moreover, deindustrialisation left some workers in the estates unemployed and unable to adapt to new occupational structures (Musterd and Ostendorf, 1998a).

Another external change that has affected many estates relates to the changes in the size and status of social-rented sector. As governments have been pushing homeownership as the most-favoured tenure, medium and high-income groups have been drawn away from the social housing sector. Furthermore, the privatisation of segments of the social housing sector has decreased the social stock. Consequently, the social housing sector increasingly caters for a more narrowly defined group. The change in housing preferences and choices affects the reputation and social and demographic characteristics of estates whose social housing stock has not been privatised. This process is referred to as residualisation, which has received considerable attention in view of British housing policies, but also in the Dutch and Swedish cases (e.g. Forrest and Murie, 1990, Jones and Murie, 2006, Turner and Whitehead, 2002, Schutjens et al., 2002, Van Kempen and Priemus, 2002, Elander, 1999). Indeed, even though housing systems differ, the general trend in European countries has been a decrease in social-rented housing, both absolutely and proportionally, and a matching increase in individual homeownership. Owner occupied housing accounts for more than fifty percent of tenure in most Western European countries. On the other hand, the share of public and social housing still exceeds one fifth of the housing in the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, and Sweden (Whitehead and Scanlon, 2007).

So in a typical scenario of decline, the social housing sector is becoming more residualised, the design and quality of the built environment unwanted, and economic restructuring changes the structure of employment and labour demand. Consequently, the position of the estate on the regional housing market declines, which further reinforces the concentration and stigmatisation of ‘urban outcasts’ (see Wacquant, 2008). In Western Europe, the decline in status has also been due to the local and regional supply of newer and more attractive housing, typically single-family housing. As a result, middle-class households move away and are replaced by residents who have less choice on the housing market, such as low-income households and immigrants (Hall et al., 2005b).

1.1.2 Policy response to urban social issues

So, changes in demography, immigration, developments in housing, the legacy of state interventions, and the economy and labour market shape the social situation of urban neighbourhoods. In the last two decades, a type of social policy has matured, which is commonly referred to as urban policy. Urban policies, together with housing policies, typically shape neighbourhood regeneration in Western European cities and as such affect urban life. As mentioned above, the design and philosophies of today’s policy response to urban social problems is markedly different from those of the Keynesian welfare state. As such, urban policies and neighbourhood regeneration may constitute a new urban managerialism. Where the Keynesian welfare state failed to sustainably address poverty and social exclusion for an increasingly diversified population, the state now seeks to manage the urban social issues less comprehensively through new forms of governance and approaches (see Cochrane, 2007).
Although every policy response will be shaped by its institutional framework, Murie and Musterd (2004) were able to identify six common elements based on comparative research on deprived neighbourhood in Western European cities. These elements will form the basis to discuss the state's reaction to urban social issues.

**New neighbourhood targeted initiatives**

Policies tend to target a limited number of neighbourhoods within urban areas. The territorial response to urban social issues involves the integration of different policies and policy instruments in order to maximise effect (see Andersen, 2001, Andersson and Musterd, 2005, Lawless, 2006, Parkinson, 1998). This type of policy strategy is typically referred to as area-based initiative (ABI). The present study will deal with the territorial focus in relation to the objective for social change more extensively.

The focus on neighbourhoods also means more contact between housing managers, law enforcement officials, welfare and community workers and residents. These contacts can culminate in governance structures such as public-private partnerships (PPP’s; see below).

**New Policy Strategies for Policy Integration**

There is a rich body of literature on the integrated approach within urban or neighbourhood governance (e.g. Andersen and Van Kempen, 2001, Jessop, 2002, Purdue, 2001, Healey, 1998, Healey, 2007, Jacquier, 2001, Van Beckhoven et al., 2006, Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2008, Ling, 2002, Le Galès, 2002). While the definition of governance is by no means unitary or unproblematic, all definitions share the notion of self-organising networks within or between organisations to exercise power and to instil or prevent social change (Rhodes, 2000). So, the integration may refer to different parties and actors working together to achieve a common goal. In neighbourhood regeneration, these networks are often referred to public-private or public-public partnerships. Partnerships typically mean that contracts bind the parties. Residential participation in policy may take place on a less formal basis.

In addition to the integration of policy actors, the integrated approach may also refer to an integration of policy domains. As mentioned, this type of integration often takes place within the context of area-based initiatives. So, policy integration typically involves a bombardment of initiatives and programmes within the confines of a geographical unit, whereby the intention is not only to practice governance but also to achieve a level of synthesis between the various programmes’ methods and aims for social change. The synthesis of housing and social policies is of special interest to this study (see also Somerville and Sprigings, 2005).

**Targeting Social Groups**

While urban policies used to have strong economic development agendas or were concerned with deteriorating housing conditions (see Robson, 1987), policies have increasingly shown an agenda of social change. Consequently, policies have increasingly specified social groups, such as the unemployed or the poor, who are subject to economic and labour market policies (see below).

In addition, ethnic groups living in the targeted areas are of special concern. As mentioned, Western European deprived urban areas typically have higher concentrations of ethnic minority, or immigrant, residents. To the public eye, this increases the visibility of the neighbourhoods and to some observers adds to the social malaise and constitutes a form of social exclusion. Consequently, integration programmes typically aim to increase cross-cultural exchange and increase participation of ethnic groups in social events, labour market, and in the democratic process. Although the policy language of integration efforts in ‘segregated neighbourhoods’ may suggest otherwise, social or cultural
integration, or lack thereof, and spatial segregation of ethnic groups are not necessarily the same (see Andersson, 2006, Musterd, 2003).

**Economic and Labour Market Policies**

Provided that minimum income salaries are sufficient, work with income is generally seen as the best way out of poverty and social exclusion. Hence, economic and labour market policies are traditionally a cornerstone of remedial action against social economic issues. However, responsibility for these policies has increasingly been transferred from the national state to municipalities. Municipalities are able to translate and tailor large-scale general labour programmes to local contexts, specific social groups and even neighbourhoods. This means that municipalities have to set up their own programmes and institutions, or existing welfare agencies are tasked with new responsibilities. The programmes typically involve (re-)education, language courses, and internship projects. As such, the focus is on the demand side of the labour market. Murie and Musterd (2004) note that the implementation is often handled by offices, which are set up as private firms and have to deliver on specific targets. The business-like approach has led to a tough–love stance towards the unemployed.

Furthermore, there are also supply-side projects which aim to stimulate localised economic development for example in the form of new, or renewed, shopping centres. In Britain, the focus on economic development and social exclusion is typically framed within the aim to increase citywide, or regional, competitiveness.

**Community Development**

An important element in neighbourhood regeneration policies is the development of stronger resident and community involvement. This is done by strengthening and supporting individual residents as well as resident organisations (Murie and Musterd, 2004). The aim is to reduce social isolation or exclusion by stimulating social contacts and the exchange of social capital. Through local social exchanges, residents may receive more opportunities for employment, schooling, or some form of support or help (Delany, 2003). As such, it is related to the social mix strategies in neighbourhood regeneration (Cole and Goodchild, 2001), which will be discussed below.

In addition to the social objectives, community development also serves the purpose of public services reform. The move from government to governance requires credible partners for the state to consult, bargain or cooperate with. Strengthening or creating residents, or community, organisations provides a bargaining partner and helps to legitimise policy. Community development and empowerment programmes have been known to involve residents in multi-sector partnership programmes within the framework of area-based initiatives (Goodlad et al., 2005, Alcock, 2004).

Although Murie and Musterd cite examples of community development in continental Europe, most of the literature on community and neighbourhood policy refers to the community politics of the Third Way government in the UK (see Rose, 2000, Amin, 2005, McGhee, 2003, Cowan and Marsh, 2004). These studies point out the implied morality of community policies. Moreover, they criticise the policy’s focus on residents rather than more structural factors as the way out of poverty and exclusion. This particular point will recur in this study as well.

**Restructuring Housing and Residence**

A very important trait of policy responses to urban social issues is the reliance on urban and housing renewal to change the face and, in some cases, the very nature of the neighbourhood. Urban-centred policies after WWII have long focused on ‘slum clearances’ and later on renewal of deteriorated housing. As mentioned, the focus has shifted to
social issues. While housing renewal is rarely stated as a central aim of policies anymore, housing and public space renewal still play a vital role. This is to increase the liveability of an area by improving and beautifying the design and appearance of the neighbourhood. In addition, housing renewal may also involve housing market restructuring policies which typically change dominant tenure from social rental housing to owner occupied housing.

While housing market restructuring and public space renewal also serve their own purposes, this type of intervention is associated with the aim for social change. In that case, it is a form of social mixing policies (see Kleinhans, 2004, Musterd and Andersson, 2005, Ostendorf et al., 2001, Sarkissian, 1976, Uitermark, 2003). Social mixing in Western Europe typically means changing the social composition of a given area by reducing the share of ‘problem categories’, i.e. low income households or certain cultural groups, and increasing the share of middle class, preferably white, households. Housing market restructuring and renewal may serve as a strategy to obtain a new social mix within an area. Larger or more luxurious housing, usually owner occupied, and a more attractive public space can attract middle class households to an area. The assumption is that the middle class presence will have positive external effects on the area and its residents, while the negative effect of poverty and/or ethnic concentrations are reduced. The external effects relate to processes of socialisation, social capital exchange, and role modelling.

1.2 Research approach

This work is interested in explaining the use of neighbourhood regeneration policies and practices which involve housing and the built environment with the specific aim to achieve social change. Before discussing the research questions, the next two paragraphs will elaborate on how this work will regard and explain the social phenomenon of neighbourhood regeneration. First, the critical realist approach will be discussed briefly. This approach forms the basis for how this study will seek to explain the form and outcomes of neighbourhood regeneration and forms the basis for the conceptual model below. Secondly and in relation to realism, a short overview of the institutional approach will be given to elaborate on agency and structure within social mechanisms. The institutional approach is how this study views the interaction and mechanisms through which neighbourhood regeneration takes its form and, subsequently, has its effect on the social life in neighbourhoods and cities.

Critical realist approach

Scientific, or critical, realism is a philosophy of being (ontology), which can be applied to social research (see Archer et al., 1998, Sayer, 2000). Realism’s most distinctive feature for social research is its analysis of causation. The stratification of social reality means that there is an interrelatedness of people’s roles and identities which means that what one person or collectivities can do is dependent on the relation to others. This interrelatedness means that social phenomena and regularities are treated as emergent within social systems. They involve multiple elements and individuals within that system and in doing so may affect the system as a whole. This view is fundamentally different from a naive positivist ontology which tends to reduce social phenomena and regularities to independent individuals and elements in a cause and effect relationship. Also, critical realism offers an alternative view to extreme post-modernist views, which state that because the observer is part of the social world, there are no objective truths and therefore any explanation goes.

The realist view stresses the importance of social context in explaining social phenomena and how this context provides conditions and constraints within the causal
mechanism. In open social systems the same mechanism can have different outcomes according to its context, meaning the geo-historical relationship with other objects which can enable, block, or alter (social) action (Sayer, 2000, p. 10-28). The realist proposition can be reduced to this simple proposition:

\[
\text{Context} + \text{Mechanism} = \text{Outcome}
\]

So, critical realism employs a generative model of causation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), which means that outcomes of social processes are generated within their context. For instance, an immigrant who recently arrived in a Western country to improve his or her quality of living will find different constraints and opportunities on his path depending on different contextual elements. Integration and employment policies will present opportunities, just like the presence of local support networks. However, institutional racism, stigmatisation of the social group or worsened economic conditions may present constraints and challenges to the individual’s quest and development.

To be clear, the generative aspect does not imply determinism in explanations. As the next paragraph will discuss, the social context structures and influence individual behaviour, but does not determine it. The realist view, which appeals to our common sense, will form the basis for explanation in this work.

1.2.1 Social mechanisms: institutional approach

The ontology of social mechanisms to explain social action in the realist tradition is highly compatible with an institutional approach to social (re)production (Downward et al., 2002). Institutions are central concepts to any social enquiry about policy making and action (Rhodes in Lowndes, 2002). Since the ‘behavioural revolution’ in the 1950s, social and political scientists have been looking to explain why individuals behave in certain manners in certain contexts and environments (Goodin and Klingemann, 1996). However, the formal arrangements and representations that institutionalism was interested in no longer sufficed. Hence, authors from different backgrounds have theorised that behaviour is shaped by systemic power derived from capital/labour relations (Marxist), or by politics as the interplay of self-interests (rational choice theorists, neo-classical economics).

In the 1980s, a new institutionalism emerged which sought to further ‘socialise’ the approach and go beyond assertions that institutions are merely aggregations of individual preferences. March and Olsen (1984) have asserted that institutions have a more autonomous role in shaping social and political outcomes. Collective action is embedded in rules and norms which regulate social action. Through the interpretation of actors, these rules and norms form socially constructed and accepted meanings and practices, which become institutions. Actions of individuals and collectivities occur within these institutions.

However, since the so-called institutional turn and the emergence of new institutionalism, the concept of institutions has taken hold in many disciplines. There are different strands, some of which are mutually exclusive, while others may complement each other. The variations are mostly the result of the particular interests of disciplines and previous research habits and traditions, resulting in various categorisations (in e.g. Hall and Taylor, 1996, Lowndes, 2002, Guy Peters, 1996). Most important in these categorisations is the cleavage between rational choice institutional theory, which relates to the economic discipline, and normative institutional theory, which is more sociological.

To begin with the latter, normative institutionalism stresses the effect of institutions on actors’ beliefs, identities, norms, and values. Hence, these are the main explanatory variables. Rules and structures embody power relations and values, and as such determine
‘appropriate’ behaviour and decisions of political actors within given settings (Lowndes, 2002). This strand is also referred to as sociological institutionalism.

Rational choice institutionalism has its roots in studies of the stable majorities in United States congress over time (see Riker, 1980, Hall and Taylor, 1996). In contrast to normative institutionalism, rational choice institutionalists deny that institutions produce behaviour or preferences. These preferences are seen as originating internally and as relatively stable and predictable: favouring utility maximization or self gain. Institutions provide information about the likely behaviour of others, and about the possible incentives and disincentives for every course of action. Based on this information, actors can make strategic (and rational) choices. While normative institutionalists stress the cultural and temporal embeddedness of institutions, rational choice institutionalists regard them as social constructions that serve to solve collective action problems (Weingast, 1996, Lowndes, 2002).

Jessop (2004) points to several methodological advantages of the use of institutions in social inquiry. It allows overcoming several ontological opposites and contradictions. Firstly, structural determination and social agency is overcome by the structuration approach which sees institutions as recursively reproduced sets of rules and resources that enable and constrain social actions (Giddens, 1984). In very simple terms: actors affect structures and institutions, and structures and institutions condition the life and behaviour of actors. Secondly, as mesolevel phenomena, institutions may provide a bridge between holism and individualism, or between macro- and microphenomena. Furthermore, it allows accounting for authoritative pressure and steering from above such as national policies, as well as for constraining and reinforcing elements such as social movements or grass-root protests. Institutions may be the site for codification and mediation of power relations. Thirdly, institutions are not static formations, but are interpreted and renegotiated. As such, they are not fully determinative of social action, yet they do not allow any actions that are purely wilful and in sociologically and historically amorphous contingency either.

In addition to these and other methodological advantages, institutions may also be regarded as ontological. This means that institutions and institutionalisations are seen as ‘the primary axis of collective life and social order’ and they matter because they constrain, steer, and shape social action and relations (Jessop, 2004).

Jessop (2004), within the frame of his strategic relational approach (SRA), particularly stresses the importance of the relation between structures and actors. This relation is two-way. Firstly, institutions do not exist outside the specific action context, but their relevance lies in their structural tendency to reinforce, or to discourage, selectively specific forms of action, tactics, or strategies. In short, structures select behaviours. In this view we recognise the realist stance (compare Archer, 1995, ch. 5). Actors take strategic action, albeit not always totally rational or informed, based on the institutions in place. However, while institutions may steer and select, they do not determine action. There is always some freedom for actors to choose a course of action. Secondly, actors can also reflexively reconstitute institutions and their resulting matrix. The capacity to do so is dependent on the changing selectivities of institutions and on the actors’ changing opportunities to engage in strategic action.

In sum, Jessop’s take on institutions heuristically employs elements of rational choice institutionalism (e.g. the emphasis on strategic thinking of actors) and of normative institutionalism (e.g. institutionalisation involving not only the agents and conditions for action but also the very constitution of agents, identities, interests, and strategies). By stressing interplay, he desists from prioritizing either structure or behaviour, which is a source of (perhaps unnecessary) debate among academics (Goodin and Klingemann, 1996).
1.2.2 Research aims and question

Both the realist approach and some of the institutionalists (notably Giddens and Jessop), stress the importance of the interplay between the individual, or organisation, and structural forces within a social context in explaining social outcomes. This notion is also found in the realist approach to policy analysis by Pawson and Tilly (1997). They argue that policy should be seen as introducing a new social mechanism within the social context to produce a desired outcome. Whether this outcome is actually reached depends on the strength of the ‘theory of change’ of the policy. Furthermore, they emphasise social reality as complex and stress that any analysis should consider the social context in how policy has achieved social change.

As mentioned, this study is interested in explaining neighbourhood regeneration with the goal of social change in terms of outcome. The main research question is twofold: What is the capacity of neighbourhood regeneration policies for social and societal change, and how does the housing and policy context affect this capacity in Western European cities?

The social practice of neighbourhood regeneration with the explicit aim for social change is the central theme of this study. Policy making is also a social mechanism in itself whose outcomes are contingent on its (housing) context. So, the objective is to explain and understand the practice of neighbourhood regeneration itself within a multi-layered context.

First, this study will focus on the aims and capacity of neighbourhood regeneration for social change. It is important to note that the outcomes are not defined in terms of how the governance, negotiation or implementation process went, but in terms of social change both on a local level and on a societal level.

Second, this study focuses on the context of neighbourhood regeneration policy and practice. As mentioned, context refers to the conditions, constraints and incentives which other social mechanisms impinge upon the process of neighbourhood regeneration policies and practices. In this study the focus of explanation will lie in the housing context. This means a focus on urban and housing policies on the national level and on the housing market characteristics on the urban and local level, including the mediating policymakers, professionals and managers.

1.2.3 Research strategy

As this study is interested in social contexts in explaining neighbourhood regeneration, the assumption is that social practice is embedded by social relations. The importance of social relations implies that there is a spatial dimension to institutions (Granovetter, 1985). Consequently, institutions are, among other things, geographical accomplishments (Philo and Parr, 2000).

So, this study is based on comparative case studies, which allows us to focus on the spatial differences and similarities in the social practice of regeneration and answer our main research question (Gerring, 2007). In addition, the case study research strategy fits the explorative and explanatory propositions of this study’s questions and aims and is best suited to research the main unit of analysis, neighbourhoods and their context. The following paragraphs on selection and the reading guide will reveal how the case study data will link to the propositions (see Yin, 2003).
This study deals with four contexts of neighbourhood regeneration with the exception of chapter 3, which adds 25 cases to the comparison. The cases are the regeneration within urban neighbourhoods in:

1. Sweden
2. the Netherlands
3. UK
4. Catalonia, Spain

The selection of cases was done according to two criteria (cf. Gerring, 2007). First, the cases share a common characteristic in that regeneration involves neighbourhoods from the post war period (see above) that, at least until recently, belong to the most deprived and most stigmatised neighbourhoods in the urban region. The assumption is that regeneration efforts will be most pronounced in their social change objectives in these types of neighbourhoods.

However, the selection was also diverse in housing context. An important starting point for this study is the state. To select the full variation of Western European state and policy frameworks, the welfare state typology of Esping-Andersen provides the categorical values for each case. Based on an analysis of levels of commodification and social welfare state provisions, Esping-Andersen produced his influential welfare state typology, which, after some revision, holds that for advanced capitalist countries there are four types of welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990, Esping-Andersen, 1999):

1. Social democratic welfare state
2. Conservative, or corporatist, welfare state
3. Liberal welfare state
4. Family-based (liberal) welfare state

The four types mirror our case selection. Types 1 and 2 typically have more universal provisions. The social democratic approach to social policy is based on diminishing social division in society, while the conservative approach is based on patronage and maintaining society’s hierarchal structure. Type 3 and 4 typically have more privatised social services and have higher levels of commodification. The approach to social policy relies on the benefits of free market and thus state intervention should limit itself to facilitate the market process. In type 4 familial relations play an important role in the facilitation of care and support.

As the author himself acknowledges, the typology’s strength is also its main weakness: the graceful simplicity. Nevertheless, the assumption for this study is that these differences will have some effect on national housing and urban policies and ultimately on regeneration. Chapter 5 will explore further how housing policies and welfare states are related and in what way this affects housing (renewal) policies.

In addition to the policy and state framework, the four cases are also embedded within four urban regions which display diverse housing market characteristics such as housing market performance, management, regulation and segmentation. These variations are partly attributable to the national policy framework, but are also the

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5 Excluding housing
6 Esping-Andersen actually categorised the Netherlands as social democratic. However, Esping-Andersen’s scores for decommodification in the Dutch case were also high for conservative and even the liberal type, confirming the hybridity. The Dutch case is classified as conservative/ corporatist, based on the development of the Dutch welfare state, which is marked by Christian conservative paternalism, rather than Social Democracy as in Sweden (De Swaan, 1988).
outcome of local and regional housing and political dynamics. For instance, housing market demand is considerably lower in the Birmingham region than it is in the Stockholm, Amsterdam and Barcelona regions, which may have consequences for regeneration efforts.

To explain neighborhood regeneration this study will focus both on the national policy framework and on the mediation at the local urban level. While chapters 3 and 6 will focus on regeneration practices on the local level, chapters 2, 4, and 5 will deal exclusively with policies on national level. The inclusion of the national framework is essential to successfully compare and understand the outcomes of policies and politics at the lower urban levels (Denters and Mossberger, 2006).

1.2.4 Methods and analyses

Within the case study research strategy, this study will employ several research methods of data collection and analysis. First, this study was able to benefit from and build on the findings of the RESTATE research project, which ended in 2005. This research provided a foundation of data and knowledge which provided the starting point for further data gathering and analyses.

For the first part of this study, a large-N quantitative analysis of neighborhoods in the Netherlands and a Comparative Qualitative Analysis (fs-CQA) will be used to gauge the potential for social change of neighborhood regeneration efforts. Chapters 3 and 4 will include a more detailed discussion of these methods.

In both the first and second part, to understand how regeneration policies aim for social change and how the housing context impinges on neighborhood regeneration, the study relies on policy analyses. This includes the policy documents and secondary literature, as well as interviews with stakeholders, managers and policy makers. These interviewees were mostly active within regional, municipal, and local organizations and serve as the intermediates between national levels of policy and politics and the local regeneration efforts or as direct participants in the efforts. The purpose of the interviews was to gain understanding in the common rationales and objectives of the practitioners with regard to problem definitions, objectives of regeneration, the extent and mechanisms of social change on a neighborhood and urban level, and the role of overarching policies. In addition to what the interviewees were able to articulate, the interviews also revealed common understandings and presuppositions among practitioners with regard to the neighborhoods and their regeneration.

The interviews were conducted in English in Sweden and UK and in Dutch in the Netherlands. Shortly after the interviews were concluded an extensive summary was sent to the interviewees to ascertain that the answers and narratives were understood correctly. In most of the interviews in Spain, a research assistant translated answers from Catalan or Castilian to Dutch.

Data from the interviews are explicitly discussed in chapter 6. However, it should be noted that these were used as grounds for understanding in other chapters as well.
1.2.5 Reading guide and sub-questions

The remainder of this work consists of five chapters with a sub-question each and a concluding section that will discuss the main question above. Figure 1 shows how the chapters are related to the overall research design.

Chapter 2 will focus on the outcomes of neighbourhood regeneration efforts by examining four national urban policies that employ area-based initiatives (ABI’s) to address urban social problems. The territorial focus of policy implies that all problems are also territorially bound and related. An important point in this chapter is the differentiation between people-based social economic deprivation and place-based liveability and housing issues. It is argued that within the Western European context policies should indeed make this distinction in order to effectively produce the desired social outcomes, i.e. create liveable neighbourhoods and tackle social economic deprivation in European societies. The main question for this chapter is: Which social problems are urban territorial policies meant to tackle within the Western European context, and how far is the territorial focus applicable and justified in tackling these problems?

Chapter 3 and 4 will expand on the differentiation between types of neighbourhood problems made in chapter 2. Chapter 3 examines the effect of neighbourhood regeneration alongside several other factors on the liveability in 29 post-war neighbourhoods in major European cities. Liveability in this case means the average satisfaction and confidence residents feel about the state and future of their neighbourhood. In cases where there is a positive effect, we can state that regeneration is able to accomplish some social change at a local level. The main question for this chapter...
is: What factors affect neighbourhood satisfaction and dissatisfaction in large-scale post-war housing estates, and second, how do these factors relate to neighbourhood regeneration policies?

Chapter 4 will focus mainly on the possible outcomes of one urban policy programme in the Netherlands, which has a social aim and a territorial focus. Several assumptions underpin the policy ambitions, such as a strong interrelationship between social economic deprivation and liveability; a clear social and spatial divide in Dutch society; and extra negative effects of problem accumulation. In this chapter, these assumptions are tested. The main question is: How well is the actual neighbourhood targeted policy in the Netherlands connected to its stated intentions, particularly those related to social issues?

As we can see in figure 1.1, chapter 5 is further removed from our central theme neighbourhood regeneration, but as will be highlighted in the concluding chapter, quite relevant for the context of neighbourhood regeneration practices. This chapter seeks to highlight the relationship between welfare state politics and housing policy. In doing so, this chapter reveals some institutional tendencies of the national housing context of each of our four cases. The assumption is that the tendencies and changes within the housing policies will reflect upon neighbourhood regeneration practices. The main question for this chapter is: To what degree is housing policy being used as a tool for welfare state reform, and how do these policies relate to the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks and policy regimes?

Chapters 6 will focus on the interplay between housing context and neighbourhood regeneration practices on a local level. More specifically, this chapter focuses on the regeneration practices which seek to achieve social change by changing the area’s population through housing. These so-called social transformation strategies are particularly desired by local managers, administrators and policymakers who wish to improve an area’s manageability, in physical and social terms. An institutional approach, as discussed above, will be used to illuminate how local managers are confronted with their housing context and how this affects social transformation strategies. The housing context includes the housing and urban policy framework, discussed in preceding chapters, and local housing market characteristics. As mentioned, this chapter heavily relies on interview data. The main question will be: How do the housing context institutions constrain and enable social transformation strategies within the regeneration of post-war housing estates in Western European cities?

Lastly, chapter 7 will summarise the arguments in the preceding chapters and will reflect on the research findings and on challenges for further research.
References


Part I

Neighbourhood regeneration’s capacity for social change
2. Disentangling neighbourhood problems; 
Area-based interventions in Western European Cities


Keywords
area-based initiatives, urban policy, urban regeneration, disadvantaged neighbourhoods, neighbourhood effects

Abstract
Urban policies in Western Europe have increasingly taken a territorial focus in addressing social problems through area-based initiatives (ABI’s). Policy discourses emphasise the role of the residential environment in the social economic deprivation. However, a territorial focus which tackles both place-based issues and people-based problems would only make sense either when a ‘critical representation’ of the target population resides in several areas in an already divided city, or when neighbourhood effects take place. In the European context, the existence of either scenario is not a matter of fact. Our overview of four urban policies reveals that even though the rhetoric makes multiple allusions to the existence of the two scenarios, there is no convincing evidence. Moreover, in some cases the evidence refutes policy assumptions. This means that the policies are merely tackling unrelated problems: people-based social economic deprivation and place-based liveability and housing issues. In addition, urban policies stand against a backdrop of social and cultural integration debates. It is unknown what the territorial focus will do for integration, but it is unlikely that ABI’s will be successful in effectively tackling social economic deprivation in European societies.

2.1 Introduction
Since the 1990s, social exclusion and social economic deprivation has become a key urban policy issue in Western Europe (Andersen, 2001, Atkinson, 2000, Atkinson, 2008, Musterd, et al., 2006, Musterd and Ostendorf, 1998). The growing gap between the ‘included’ and ‘excluded’ is believed to be caused by social mechanisms that reinforce social exclusion, limits opportunities and ultimately traps individuals. An essential reinforcing mechanism is the spatial manifestation of social exclusion: segregation. As the excluded become segregated from the included in society, the assumption is that their social exclusion will perpetuate itself through neighbourhood effects associated with socialisation processes or other mechanisms (Massey and Denton, 1993). Hence, over the years, a range of policies have been designed to tackle the ‘wicked problems’ of social exclusion (Atkinson, et al., 2006). Social exclusion policies in Western Europe share several characteristics (Andersen, 2001). First, instead of sector-based policies, policy makers have increasingly favoured strategies that target a limited selection of ‘unliveable’ and ‘most deprived’ urban areas. These strategies are referred to as area-based initiatives (ABI’s) to reduce social exclusion. Secondly, European urban policies aim to integrate different types of policy approaches in order to address a range of social economic deprivation
and liveability problems simultaneously and holistically. While integration may not always have been complete or satisfactory, the intention to integrate has brought social phenomena closer together in urban policy. Thirdly, the policies are typically designed and implemented through local governance structures.

This paper is mainly concerned with the first two points, where a connection is made between social economic deprivation of individuals and the residential environment. This connection is a result of the social exclusion discourse which has widened policy concerns from social economic dimensions such as poverty and unemployment to place-based liveability issues related with vandalism, anti-social behaviour, crime, safety, traffic, pollution and housing. In short, the assumption is that social problems of individuals, i.e. social exclusion, in Western European cities can – to quite some extent – be attributed to place-based characteristics of these individuals’ neighbourhood. Or in other words, neighbourhood problems are assumed to be a source of sustained social economic deprivation. This assumption is a powerful advocate for the use of an area-based strategy to tackle social malaise.

The aim of this paper is to review area-based policies in Western Europe that address urban social problems through a territorial strategy. We will mainly focus on the problem statements and objectives of several ABI’s in Western Europe and confront these with our theoretical assertions on ABI’s and social exclusion. The main questions to be addressed are: Which social problems are urban territorial policies meant to tackle within the Western European context, and how far is the territorial focus applicable and justified in tackling these problems?

The paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we will give a short overview of the literature on area-based initiatives and social exclusion policies. The third section introduces two scenarios which would justify a territorial strategy to fight social exclusion. These scenarios link people-based deprivation-related problems and local-based liveability issues. We will argue that either the existence of neighbourhood effects or severe concentration of target groups truly justifies the choice for a territorial focus. In the fourth section we will give an overview of the problems and objectives of ABI’s in 4 Western European countries. In the fifth section we will try to disentangle the problems ABI’s are meant to tackle. Finally, we will round off with a concluding section.

2.2 Area-based initiatives and social exclusion

To tackle urban social problems, Western European policy makers are increasingly relying on so-called integrated, multi-sector, area-based initiatives (or policies) (Parkinson, 1998). Atkinson (2000) regards the use of ABI’s as part of a wider European urban policy challenge to reduce poverty and social exclusion. The challenge arises from extensive economic, demographic and socio-cultural developments in the recent decades. In Western Europe these interrelated developments refer to changes in the economy and labour market structure, and to immigration, globalisation, and discrimination and racism (Musterd, et al., 2006).

The urban policy trend emerged in Western Europe in the 1980s, when the focus shifted from social welfare issues to a more pro-active stance concerned with economic restructuring. However, the reshaping and the demise of social-democratic welfare state arrangements in favour of neo-liberal ideology affected and altered social structures. The role of the state as a guarantor of social security and a level of equality was deemed economically ineffective and counterproductive. Instead, neo-liberal ideology pressed for the state to take a step back in favour of personal responsibility and to rely on the supposed benefits of the trickle down effect in a free market economy (Hacker, 2006; Harvey, 2005). As wealth does not seem to be trickling down to everyone everywhere,
the issues of social inequality and social polarisation returned to the academic agenda (Andersen, 2001). The political and ideological reaction to the contradiction between economic competitiveness and social wellbeing shifted away from ‘Keynesian’ macro-economic solutions of the past. Instead, governments favoured policies based on the advancement of work and competitiveness to reduce poverty in society (Finn, 2000, Harloe, 2001, Peck, 2002). The demise of social-democratic welfare state ideals has increasingly led to a shift in social policies from universalist and sectoral, towards rudimentary, integrated and spatially targeted (see Cochrane, 2007). The shift in social policy was also from state-dominated policies to a more local approach by employing ABI’s and by emphasising the role of partnerships, local governance, resident participation and community empowerment (Atkinson, 1999, Geddes, 2000, Goodlad, et al., 2005). Cochrane (2007: p.147) argues that these notions of governance offer managers and policymakers hope to deal with the complexities and uncertainties of the urban through incremental negotiations and decentralisation of responsibilities.

While social economic deprivation and poverty feature prominently in the political discourse surrounding urban policies against social exclusion, ABI’s are hardly ever confined to socio-economic issues such as access to work, education, social services and income. Policymakers also tend to take the residential environment into account, thereby also focusing on many other aspects of the locale. In other words, many integrated ABI’s aim to simultaneously achieve people-based results as well as place-based changes (see Lawless, 2007). Typically, the integrated territorial interventions also include initiatives aimed at reducing crime and vandalism, renovating housing, reinventing public space, handling traffic issues, stimulating local community life, etc. Policy actions are often undertaken to improve the market position of a neighbourhood by improving its ‘liveability’, a subjective notion about the amenities, safety and appearance of a particular neighbourhood (Lawless, 2007, Visscher, et al., 2006). The place-based dimension of the social exclusion discourse will be examined further in the next section.

The use of a territorial strategy may be attractive for policy-makers because of several instrumental, managerial and political advantages. The territorial focus can be a starting point from where government and private actors can work to coordinate, integrate and improve their activities. Furthermore, the involvement of residents may benefit local interventions as well. When resources are too scarce for any meaningful domain or sector-based policy territorial re-distribution may be preferred. Although these efforts may improve local conditions, a substantial and satisfying outcome on a societal scale is doubtful, as the amount of resources are likely to be insufficient to target all areas in the country with individuals that suffer from social economic deprivation. This last point will be discussed further in the next paragraph. Furthermore, the use of ABI’s may have political advantages. Politicians and policy makers can demonstrate their decisiveness through improving places and building new structures. The use of physical interventions as a lasting testimony of political greatness is a time-tested method since the Pyramids. However, these interventions may not necessarily yield the desired social change.

Some have criticised the use of ABI’s to fight social exclusion and poverty and argue that the shift towards agency-based, bottom up social planning holds an ever-present risk of the pathologisation of the poverty problem. When local residents are expected to be the agents of regeneration, this could suggest that they are responsible for their own misfortunes, i.e. ‘blaming the victim’ (Alcock, 2004, Chatterton and Bradley, 2000). In addition, the focus on local solutions for local problems ‘can suggest that such problems and solutions are locally based’ (cf. Musterd, et al., 2000). In Sweden, for example, there are instances of city districts that have refused participation in ABI’s out of concern for stigmatisation of the area and its residents (Andersson and Musterd, 2005).
2.3 Justification for ABI's: ‘Critical representations’ and neighbourhood effects

Atkinson et al. (2006) state that it is tempting to see urban policies as a form of ‘sticking plaster’ that deals with ‘wicked problems’ that society as a whole wishes to end, but, nevertheless, remains reluctant to tackle at the roots, i.e. through redistribution of wealth. However, they argue that in the British context the Labour government has displayed a genuine willingness to combat social problems. We propose two possible justifications to choose an integrated territorial strategy over domain or sector-based policies when the objective is not merely to impress voters, to manage the poor, or even to solely increase the liveability of an area but to ultimately reduce poverty. These are the existence of some degree of ‘critical representation’ of the target population, expressed as the dual or divided city (Mollenkopf and Castells, 1991), or the existence of neighbourhood effects.

The first justification relates to the unequal distribution of social problems. The existence of concentrations of social problems in certain areas provides the opportunity to address the needs of a large group of disadvantaged people. In this case, ABI's may be cost effective. Furthermore, it creates the opportunity to implement integrated policies, and new partnerships can be developed to change an area with sufficient political commitment. ABI's speed up the responses of the state and the market to overcome a neighbourhood's problems (Rhodes, et al., 2005). These interventions might be regarded as effective when a clear social divide between neighbourhoods exists; where there are neighbourhoods with an overwhelming share of their population labelled as ‘urban outcasts’, as opposed to neighbourhoods with hardly any ‘urban outcasts’ residing there (cf. Wacquant, 2008). These strategies may also help where a limited number of clearly identifiable poverty neighbourhoods suffer from persistent stigmatisation.

However, the question remains what concentration of social problems justifies such an approach? Not all poor and socially excluded individuals live within targeted concentration areas and this is a fortiori true for most European cities. In addition, not all residents in concentration areas are socially excluded or live in poverty. As a result, some individuals may receive policy attention, while others elsewhere are neglected. Moreover, there is a risk that the focus on an area may result in an ecological fallacy whereby the problems of a number of residents become those of all residents in the area. This relates to the pathologisation argument above. In sum, when there is a substantial share of a target group residing in one area, i.e. a ‘critical representation’, and when there is a very clear social division between neighbourhoods, the use of a territorial strategy might be efficient and socially justified, albeit questionable still.

The second potential justification for ABI's is related to the notion that certain population compositions in an area have additional negative effects on individuals compared to other compositions. In other words, living in an area where a large share of the population is in a disadvantaged position in combination with other place-based conditions will also have negative effects on the life chances of all individuals in the vicinity (see Buck, 2001, Galster and Zobel, 1998). So-called social mixing policies, a type of area-based policy, are based on these assumptions. The idea originated from the US, but is also potently present in Western European policy making (Andersen, 2002, Andersson, 2006, Cole and Goodchild, 2001, Kleinhans, 2004, Musterd, et al., 2003). The neighbourhood effect on individuals is typically attributed to socialisation processes, failing local social networks, or stigmatisation effects. In terms of policymaking, the total amount of social problems of an area exceeds the sum of individual problems. However, both in the US and Western Europe, the idea has met with criticisms and scepticism with regards to the mechanisms of neighbourhood effects and the absence of convincing empirical support (see Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Ellen and Turner, 1997; Galster, 2007;
Musterd and Andersson, 2005; Ostendorf, et al., 2001). However, neighbourhood effects are not unreal and when their presence is confirmed, the use of a territorial focus would be justified.

The next sections will give an overview of urban social policies in Sweden, the Netherlands, England, and Catalonia. We will focus on the social problems the policies aim to tackle and on how these relate to the rationales for employing an area-based strategy which simultaneously addresses people-based deprivation and place-based issues to tackle social exclusion. The problem definition and policy design should have a notion of the two scenarios above and, in light of academic scepticism, should be based on some evidence. In the last two sections we will disentangle the various problems which are being addressed, and reflect on the applicability, efficiency and justification of a territorial focus.

2.4 Urban policies in Western Europe

2.4.1 Sweden: Metropolitan Development Initiative

The Metropolitan Development Initiative (MDI) was introduced by the Swedish central government in 1999, representing the cornerstone of a new policy field in which urban problems were the key focus of attention (Burgers and Vranken, 2004). As such, the MDI signified a shift in housing and urban regeneration policies in Sweden from the physical sphere to the social. During most of the second half of the 20th century, policies were characterised by slum clearance, urban renewal, housing renewal, and ‘cautious regeneration’ (Andersson, 2006, Elander, 1999). However, in the late 1990s, the Social Democratic government shifted the focus towards social issues with the MDI, which was initiated in response to ‘unacceptable social differences’ within urban regions (Andersson, 2006).

The MDI has two objectives: ‘to support development in urban areas towards long-term sustainable economic growth’, and, more importantly, ‘to break down social, ethnic and discriminatory segregation in these areas and work for equal opportunities on both individual and gender level’ (CMA, 2007). Because an area-based strategy is only followed in relation to the second objective, the next paragraphs will primarily focus on the rationale to ‘break segregation’.

The MDI emanates from the influx of immigrants into Sweden since the 1980s. Newly arrived immigrants have typically settled in large-scale housing estates on the urban fringes. In other words, selective migration has led to concentrations of immigrant in those areas where the housing market is most accessible, i.e. areas with a large share of cheap or public housing. Simultaneously, the native middle-class tends to avoid these areas (Bråmå, 2006). It should be noted that from the government standpoint ethnic segregation implies social or class segregation: ‘class society has acquired an ethnic dimension’ (CMA, 2007). The presumption is that immigrants are generally poorly integrated into society and the labour market. Furthermore, limited options on the housing market have led to concentrations of poverty in certain types of neighbourhoods, which suffer from other social problems as well (crime, unemployment, low political participation, etc.). The assumption is that in these areas social problems hinder the prospects of immigrants and socially excluded people (Andersson, 2006). In other words, segregation needs to be broken to include and integrate certain social groups in certain types of neighbourhood.
To ‘break segregation’ and to create equal conditions in the city, the MDI seeks to improve living conditions in these neighbourhoods. This is done by increasing employment, reducing benefit dependency, strengthening the position of the Swedish language, increasing school performance, raising the educational level of the adult population and providing educational opportunities for adults, making city neighbourhoods attractive and safe, and providing sound and healthy living environments, improving public health, and increasing democratic participation (CMA, 2007).

The Commission on Metropolitan Areas was set-up in 1999 to co-ordinate the new policy and represented the state in negotiating contracts (local development agreements (LDA’s)) with the eligible municipalities in the metropolitan areas of Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg. 24 poor and immigrant-dense large housing estates were selected for intervention. While the state regulated the number of areas per municipality, the municipalities were free to make their own spatial selection. Furthermore, municipalities delineated the disadvantaged neighbourhood according to different strategies. Some included rather well-off adjacent neighbourhoods to be part of the supported area while others only selected the ‘worst neighbourhoods’. In terms of indicators, the former strategy results — statistically — in relatively acceptable levels of unemployment, health etc., while the latter results in far worse deprivation scoring. On the other hand, the former type of selection includes rather well-off households which were expected to provide a positive (neighbourhood) effect to the interventions, whereas the latter was not.

The municipalities received about €220 million in funding from the state. However, municipalities were expected to match this figure. Even though physical decay was not high on the central government’s agenda, municipalities tended to emphasise physical improvements in the allocation of their own contribution to the MDI (Burgers and Vranken, 2004). The LDA’s ended as late as 2005, but to continue the strategy some cities have started their own ABI’s.

In sum, the rationales for the area-based approach are related to selective inward migration and subsequent ‘entrapment’ of poor households while middle class households avoid these concentrations of the poor or move away. As result, it is assumed that these poor households suffer from neighbourhood effects in large housing estates. This rationale, however, is an assumption which has not been tested beforehand. A second rationale is the overrepresentation of immigrant and poor households. With respect to the latter, it was found that only 4.7% of all poor households live in the selected areas (Andersson and Musterd, 2005). This means that about 95% of all deprived households live outside the targeted ‘exposed’ or ‘excluded’ areas. We will return to the integration issue below.

2.4.2 England: National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

Since the 1960s, England has developed area-based urban policies. Throughout the years, these policies have been characterised by the emphasis on integrated approaches through multi-sectoral and public-private partnerships. However, over the years some urban policies favoured private actors to cooperate with while others focussed on locally organised residents. During the 1990s, it was realised that the market bypassed poor individuals who tended to live in the same neighbourhoods. The ‘bricks and mortar’ and physically deterministic approach of the 1980s slowly gave way to social considerations. The key policy problem became how to ensure that socially excluded communities benefit from policies. New governance structures and more coherent ABI’s were seen as the answer (Atkinson, et al., 2006, Hall, et al., 2004).

When New Labour came to power in 1997, the emphasis in urban policy moved to the ‘worst’ areas, to those ‘communities’ which were unable to reap the benefits of economic
growth. To tackle the social and economic polarisation in England, the government’s Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) developed the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR). The assumption is that previous efforts failed to focus on people, social capital, employment, the inadequacy of public services in some deprived areas, and failed to transfer best practices and look beyond the neighbourhood. The strategy is designed to overcome these shortcomings in three ways: local interventions to identify linkages and causeways between employment, housing, education, crime and health; rebuilding social capital through capacity-building initiatives; and the encouragement of ‘joined-up’ working such as better regional cooperation, local strategic partnerships and multi-departmental working structures (Hall, et al., 2004). The emphases tend to be more on managerial and process considerations and less on long-term impact (cf. Lawless, 2006).

The NSNR spawned several uncoordinated policy programmes of which the New Deal for Communities is the most significant area-based intervention. Furthermore, the strategy seeks to improve service provision through two mechanisms: Treasury Floor Targets that require departments and local partnerships to be evaluated on performance in most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and a Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, which provides subsidies to the most deprived areas for any activity that fits the NSNR objectives.

The area-based approach was adopted because the strategy’s overall aim is to prevent people from ‘losing out’ due to where they live (on ward level). More specifically, area-based regeneration is based on the notion that in some areas, ‘problems of economic, social and environmental dereliction combine to lock communities into a vicious cycle of exclusion. ABI’s encourage a range of partners to work together, targeting their resources to improve quality of life in these areas’ (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2007). Even if the problem definition is kept somewhat obscure, it is clear that liveability and social economic deprivation are important themes of English ABI’s.

The Multiple Deprivation Index (MDI) reveals some of the importance of the different themes. The MDI is a small area level measure, which contains seven domains of deprivation, which are being used to assess whether a neighbourhood is eligible for funding (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2004). More than half of the domain weights of the indices relates to social economic deprivation (approximately 52%), and health deprivation (about 14%). However, although social economic deprivation is very important, place-based elements make up roughly a third of the MDI. The emphasis on people-based deprivation in the problem definition and the subsequent use of ABI’s further reveals the belief in the negative effects of place-based issues on individuals.

2.4.3 The Netherlands: Big Cities Policy and the 40 Neighbourhoods Programme

The Netherlands has a long tradition of urban policies. Originally, these policies concentrated on improving housing conditions and on physical decay. However, these policies did have a social component as it was emphasised that improvements were mainly carried out for the poor. However, in the 1990s, the government introduced the first edition of the Big Cities Policy (BCP), an area-based programme which focused on (low) ‘income neighbourhoods’. Fear of ghettoisation translated into a policy of restructuring the housing market by replacing low-income housing with more expensive accommodation to attract high-income households. The result would be an improved social mix. In later editions of the BCP the social mix strategy was maintained but the legitimisation for restructuring slowly shifted from attracting high-income households to retaining socially mobile groups within the neighbourhood. Both strategies were pursued to attract a middle class that would function as a role model and bring social capital to the area (Musterd and Ostendorf, 2008).
When a new government came to power in early 2007, it announced its solemn intention to tackle the problem areas of the Netherlands with the 40 Neighbourhood Programme in addition to running the BCP III. According to the government, the increasing gap between the selected neighbourhoods and the rest of the country represents a danger to Dutch society. The argument is that there would be a real risk that the gap will result in parallel societies, as the poor would become ever more disconnected and excluded from mainstream society (Vogelaar, 2007). Hence, the programme exclusively targets the 40 ‘worst’ problem areas and seeks to ‘reinvigorate’ these into so-called ‘powerful’ neighbourhoods.

The area-based strategy is chosen because urban social problems would relate to the accumulation of liveability problems in certain neighbourhoods. More specifically, these liveability problems are supposed to be related to the existence of ‘physical and socio-economic deprivation and problems’ (ibid., 2007). The accumulation of problems would create the increasing gap. The programme is designed to counter the threat of a divide that will disconnect the poor from the rest of society and drive them towards social exclusion. The Programme aims to tackle two issues in the chosen areas; deprivation and liveability issues. The assumption is that there are localised accumulations of mutually reinforcing social processes and physical deterioration that create liveability problems and deprivation, or in the words of the Minister responsible: ‘…the addition of problems increases the gravity and urgency (of the situation in the selected neighbourhoods)? To produce ‘liveable’ neighbourhoods and social inclusion, the Programme employs a range of integrated measures. A significant component will likely continue to be restructuring. Other interventions relate to employment, education, safety, social integration and housing. Thereby, interventions are both place- and people-based, but people-based only as far as they are living in the selected neighbourhoods.

The 40 Neighbourhood Programme selected its neighbourhoods through ‘objective indicators’ which reveal some of the assumptions of the government concerning the type of problems it will address. Even though the rhetoric and justification for the Programme is based on assumptions of neighbourhood effects and social justice, the selection is mostly based on liveability issues and then on housing considerations. Only 13% of the selection is based on shares of low-income households, low education and employment rates (Brouwer and Willems, 2007: 19).

Additional analyses have shown that, in contrast with assumptions that underpin the policies, liveability issues and social economic deprivation are unrelated phenomena in Dutch neighbourhoods (see Van Gent, et al., 2007a, Van Gent, et al., 2007b). In other words, there are neighbourhoods with many poor and low-income households who do not experience liveability issues, and there are affluent areas which do experience liveability issues. However, a relatively small group of neighbourhoods do experience both phenomena. For these areas, there is the possibility that the problems not only stack up but also interrelate. For instance, crime rates could seriously damage economic and educational opportunities, as well as mobility. However, we want to stress that the policy presented no evidence of the existence of neighbourhood effects. Thus, the core assumption of the programme justification was in no way tested, and the actual programme is more concerned with liveability issues than with deprivation. This is further illustrated by the fact that little over 8% of the target population lives within the selected neighbourhoods; 92% of those suffering from social economic deprivation live outside the targeted areas (Van Gent, et al., 2007b).

2.4.4 Catalonia: Neighbourhood Law

The regional government of Catalonia introduced the Neighbourhood Law (Llei de Barris) in 2004. It was one of the first laws issued when the Social Democratic Catalan party was elected to regional government. The law is based on the European Union’s URBAN project and the French Loi Solidarité et Renouvellement Urban (Loi SRV). It meant the creation of a fund for neighbourhood regeneration in Catalonia (see Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006).

The fund is intended to encourage and drive local integrated programmes aimed at renovating and promoting urban areas that require particular attention. The issues that it focuses on are poor quality of housing, lack of public (green) space, overrepresentation of immigrants, demographic decline, and social and economic problems such as unemployment and low education. As such, the Neighbourhood Law is targeted at three types of neighbourhoods: old town centres, housing estates planned in the 1960s, and unplanned marginal housing districts (former shantytowns).

Like its French example, the Catalan ABI has a contract model where local governments have to make a bid according to central guidelines and principles and have to commit to funding half of the expenditures. The selection criteria are urban regression, shortfalls in amenities and services, demographic, social and environmental problems, social and urban deficits, and local development problems. Nevertheless, there is a high degree of flexibility by regional government to decide on the selection of areas. Municipalities are obliged to take action in eight fields:

- Improving public areas and providing green zones
- Communal areas in buildings, renovation and facilities
- Providing amenities for collective use
- Introducing information technologies to the buildings
- Encouraging sustainability in urban development
- Gender equality
- Programmes for social, town planning and economic improvement
- Accessibility

While regional authorities provide a manual with tools and methods for policy actions, municipalities have some discretion in placing emphases and can expand the fields of action. In addition, municipalities have to match regional funding for a period of four years. This serves internal objectives of: improving cooperation between levels of government as well as stimulating municipal action in deprived areas. Bidding was done in four rounds and about 70 projects were awarded funding throughout Catalonia.

The programmes are mainly focused on the neighbourhoods and less on their residents and the majority of the funds are spent on physical interventions. Furthermore, the philosophy of regeneration is strongly tied to the housing market. The funds are regarded by the policymakers as investments to improve market conditions. The expected outcome is that after 4 years of investing in public spaces, civic centres, amenities, buildings, etc., the prices will have risen sufficiently and the neighbourhood will attract new, more affluent residents. This also implies the displacement of poor (often immigrant) households. To take care of this group in terms of housing, the government relies on the budding development of social housing in Catalonia. Nevertheless, the inclusion of a social agenda within the programme is relatively novel for Catalan and Spanish urban regeneration policies. A rationale for the programme is that 50% of the districts chosen have a high percentage of the population facing a risk of social exclusion (personal communication with a policy maker, 2007). This implies that with regards to its social activities, the programme is less concerned with neighbourhood effects than with social justice.
2.5 Disentangling neighbourhood problems

All policies discussed above contain notions of neighbourhood effects and ‘critical’ representation of weak social groups. However, with regard to the notion of neighbourhood effects policies fail to provide any convincing evidence of their existence. Moreover, none of the discussed policies specifically identify the assumed causal mechanism(s). With regard to the second notion we have seen that the Dutch and Swedish target areas comprise less than ten per cent of all the socially deprived, which is hard to regard as a ‘critical representation’. This leads us to be wary of any claims in the British and Catalan cases.

So, if there is no convincing justification for a territorial strategy, the question is what in fact are the objects of the ABI’s? Despite propagating a strong social exclusion agenda, policymakers are in fact more concerned with place-based liveability and housing issues than with tackling people-based social economic deprivation. Table 1 summarises the actual objects of policy of the four cases based on selection criteria or spending pattern.

While the Dutch programme mentions social divides and deprivation, its selection is heavily based on place-based characteristics. Likewise, the Swedish state emphasised social deprivation, but the municipalities chose to focus on place. The place-based problem definition is even more apparent in the Catalan policy, which aims to influence the housing market. However, the problem definition in the English Multiple Deprivation Index has the most emphasis on social economic deprivation. This implies a great deal

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The table is based on problem emphases in policy documents (CMA, 2007), the Multiple Deprivation Index (see Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2004, for exact domain weights), on the indicator weights in the 40 Neighbourhood selection in Brouwer and Willems (2007), and on expenditures after three bidding rounds for Llei de Barris funds, reflecting the discretion of the Generalitat. For the last three cases, a black circle (●) represents 10% and half a circle (○) 5% of total domain weight or total expenditure. For the Swedish case ten ● were distributed based on policy documents and mentioned secondary literature.
of faith in its area-based strategy which also focuses on place-based issues. It is doubtful whether this has led to the desired social change. An evaluation of the effect of New Deal for Communities has shown that placed-based change was more evident than people-based outcomes such as improved health and more jobs (Lawless, 2007).

Finally, besides deprivation, housing markets and liveability, there is another ‘problem’ which ABI’s are concerned with, which is the social and cultural integration of an immigrant or minority population into mainstream society. Indeed, the ethnic or racial component has been important in triggering area-based urban policies in both the US and in several Western European Countries (see De Decker, et al., 2003). Although only the Swedish policy mentions this explicitly, all policies should be seen as part of wider integration debates. This is even true for Catalonia, where Spain’s new status as an immigrant-receiving country has resulted in some spatial concentrations of non-Western immigrant communities in poor urban neighbourhoods (Fullaondo, 2003). Despite the long history of immigration, the English have recently been warned of their ‘sleepwalking to segregation’ (Philips, 2005). The synthesis of integration debates and neighbourhood regeneration is perhaps best illustrated by the new Dutch ministerial post of Housing, Neighbourhoods, and Integration. The rationale for ABI’s could then also be the mere existence of deprived and/ or immigrant neighbourhoods (cf. Andersson and Musterd, 2005). High concentrations make poverty more visible and concentrations of immigrants are seen by some as a result of failing integration policies. Many ABI’s aim to increase civic and labour participation of immigrant communities and individuals in poor neighbourhoods either directly through social participatory activities (see Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2008), or by exposing them to a middle class presence within the neighbourhood. Thus, the assumption is that integration will come through employment and positive role models, which ABI’s will supply. Hence, poor urban neighbourhoods have become ‘battlegrounds’ of integration.

2.6 Conclusion

Even though plenty of lip service is being paid to addressing social economic deprivation and poverty through neighbourhood targeting, there is no evidence that the territorial focus is more efficient than domain or sector-based policies. To be sure, an area-based intervention could be a logical and efficient way to solve local-specific problems and issues or to boost the market position of unpopular neighbourhoods in high-demand regions. However, to fight social economic deprivation and poverty, the focus on neighbourhood makes little sense (see also Andersson, 2006) unless the city is already divided and a critical representation of the target population is present, or neighbourhood effects are found. When this is not the case, the unnecessary entanglement creates a risk that policies become self-defeating (cf. Sieber, 1981). Social economic deprivation is better tackled at higher scales of intervention. What is more, the insistence on place as both concentrations and causes of poverty runs the risk of unjustly stigmatising residents and pathologising the poverty problem (cf. Alcock, 2004). As for integration, it is unsure what an area-based focus can accomplish. Studies have shown that social contacts between middle-class and lower-class households in the same neighbourhood tend to be limited (Cole and Goodchild, 2001). Furthermore, area-based programmes may even produce social conflict rather than social integration when there is increased competition between various population-categories within the neighbourhood for the resources, support and funds. The risk of social ‘disintegration’ would be particularly high when residents grow resentful because they feel that their own category is not treated as fairly as others. In addition, a similar reaction may come from the population in low-income neighbourhoods that are not selected by area-based programmes and are denied access to additional
resources. In these cases, the feeling of not being treated equally would be even more obvious. For instance in the Netherlands, as indicated above, 92% of those suffering from social economic deprivation live outside the targeted areas (Van Gent, et al., 2007b). The result may be feelings of being neglected or even discriminated against, and of resentment towards social and ethnic groups that are perceived to be overly favoured.

So, we conclude that urban social policies in Western Europe are questionable with regard to their capacity for social improvement. The question then remains why these policies continue to be implemented. Possible explanations would have to mention political interests and hegemonies, welfare state change, the potential gains for developers, housing associations and home occupiers through housing market restructuring and modernisation, coping strategies of managers, and the sincere wish for social change (see e.g. Cochrane, 2007, Sieber, 1981). We are unable to discuss these points in this article. However, we would like to offer one other explanation.

To fight poverty in the developing world, the World Bank has been relying on large capital investments in the form of aid and foreign direct investments. Trillions of US dollars have been spent to give countries the ‘big push’ out of the poverty trap. However, the economic theory behind the ‘big push’ is fundamentally flawed and the investments only bring about transient rather than sustainable growth and poverty remains rampant. Despite the evidence the World Bank has not changed its strategy. The reluctance to change and shift away from the glaring mistakes has been attributed to the ‘Something Is Being Done’ (SIBD) syndrome. The World Bank only needs to maintain good publicity and fulfil the desire of the general public that something is being done. The World Bank does something by throwing money at it (Vira, 2007).

Western European urban social policies seem to be affected by the SIBD syndrome as well. The policies claim to abolish social exclusion and put an end to (urban) poverty. The policies contain multiple assertions and allusions to the existence of neighbourhood effects or of ‘critical’ representations of the socially excluded. However, these main theoretical assumptions are untested or questionable.

Furthermore, other problems are at stake which are not necessarily related to poverty. The discourse of social exclusion, as opposed to social inequality, has shifted problem definitions from structural social economic causes of poverty to locally specific causes. This has opened the door to physical and housing, i.e. place-based, interventions as means to tackle social problems. While ABI’s which engage in social mixing may achieve a social change at the neighbourhood level and increase manageability there, it remains unsure whether they reduce poverty or when and where in the city the social problems will reappear. In addition to the social exclusion discourse, the integration dimension in ABI’s is the product of the societal context and debates, which policy-makers and politicians are expected to act upon. Also, to meet the public demand for action, liveability and housing interventions are more attractive to politicians because people-based outcomes tend to emerge slowly, while environmental change may come more quickly (cf. Lawless, 2007).

Lastly, despite our critical attitude we remain confident in the accountability of government in Western European societies, especially compared to the World Bank. However, to help hold policy-makers accountable, we wish to stress that the research agenda should remain focused on deprivation and the deprived neighbourhood questions in the interest of improving policy and tackling poverty in European cities.

Acknowledgements
The authors would like to thank Brooke Sykes, Roger Andersson, and others who reviewed earlier versions of this paper. This research was co-funded by the Corpovenista/Habiforum Research Programme.
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3. Estates of content: Regeneration and neighbourhood satisfaction


3.1 Introduction

To tackle urban social problems, policy makers in several European countries are increasingly relying on so-called integrated, multi-sector, area-based initiatives (or policies) (Parkinson, 1998). Policies, like the Dutch Big Cities Policies and the British New Deal for Communities, focus on tackling urban social problems at the neighbourhood level and strive to regenerate a selection of ‘worst’ neighbourhoods. Often the objectives of neighbourhood regeneration efforts are to tackle social economic deprivation as well as to improve ‘liveability’ in the targeted areas. Liveability is a subjective notion among residents that refers to place-based elements which are related to the daily living environment. These elements may include the quality of the housing stock, urban design, physical appearances, cleanliness, quality of public space, safety, and perhaps some degree of social interaction among neighbours. Likewise, a great deal of interventions are aimed at improving the liveability of the environment by improving and renovating public space and apartment blocks, by improving access to services, preventing the senses from drowning in odours, and by dealing with crime. The expectation is that regeneration will have a positive influence on the residents’ perception of their neighbourhood. This is reflected in the importance of the perception, or satisfaction, of residents in regeneration policy evaluations (e.g., Leidelmeijer and Van Kamp, 2003, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2005). Thus, resident perceptions of the situation and direction of the neighbourhood is an important outcome of neighbourhood policies that aim to increase liveability.

Instinctively one may think that neighbourhood regeneration, in the end, will positively affect neighbourhood satisfaction. However, satisfaction as a key predictor of liveability and as a measure to judge the success of neighbourhood regeneration efforts in the public and private sector, is not as straightforward as it may seem. Feelings of satisfaction are very much related to the type of neighbourhood that residents are living in and to residents’ own expectations and socio-economic status (Pan Ké Shon, 2007). In other words, it depends on the context of the estate.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the relation between neighbourhood regeneration and perception among residents concerning the neighbourhood. More specifically, the aim is to illuminate the causal relation of neighbourhood regeneration together with other possible determinants on satisfaction with the neighbourhood. To account for the other determinants, the research strategy includes a causal analysis based on logic. This relatively novel type of analyses makes it possible to use both quantitative and qualitative case study data. Furthermore, it allows the assessment of the effects of neighbourhood regeneration on neighbourhood satisfaction while controlling for other possible determinants. The analyses were conducted on 29 European post-war housing estates that have been subject to some form of neighbourhood regeneration. The main questions to be addressed are: first, what factors affect neighbourhood satisfaction and dissatisfaction in large-scale post-war housing estates, and second, how do these factors relate to neighbourhood regeneration policies?
3.2 Studying satisfaction

There have been a number of studies into residents’ perceptions and satisfaction in recent years (e.g. Kearns and Parkes, 2003, Pan Ké Shon, 2007, Parkes et al., 2002, Shields and Wooden, 2003, Sirgy and Cornwell, 2002). But also in the past, many studies have sought out which residential perceptions are associated with satisfaction and dissatisfaction (e.g. Baldassare, 1982, Cook, 1988, Davis and Fine-Davis, 1981, Fried, 1984, Herting and Guest, 1985, Michelson, 1977, Miller et al., 1980). Despite these studies, a solid theoretical explanation of the causality of satisfaction and discontent is often lacking (Priemus in Leidelmeijer and Van Kamp, 2003). Studies usually employ indicators that relate to a set of residential and neighbourhood characteristics, such as demographic composition, ethnicity, income and employment, social cohesion, access to facilities and services, safety and the (built) environment.

Apart from neighbourhood characteristics, satisfaction is also dependent on personal dispositions. Demographic indicators reveal some regularity in feelings of satisfaction. Younger people are generally more dissatisfied with their neighbourhood than the elderly (Davis and Fine-Davis, 1981, Miller et al., 1980). Cook (1988) found a negative relationship between neighbourhood satisfaction and expected changes in standard of living, which might explain why certain young people are generally less satisfied, since they feel a large discrepancy between expectations and current situation (Davis and Fine-Davis, 1981, Parkes et al., 2002).

US evidence indicates that when residents in disadvantaged areas do not expect any change in their personal situation, they may reduce their aspirations and adapt their expectations of their living environment, which would limit dissatisfaction levels and may even produce a modicum of satisfaction (Galster, 1985). This phenomenon is referred to as cognitive dissonance reduction in social psychology. However, cognitive dissonance theory is only one of multiple theories in social psychology emphasising that people try to achieve consistency among conditions (see Shultz and Lepper, 1996). Consistency may also be achieved through free choice. So the amount of choice on the housing market affects the reliability of neighbourhood satisfaction. Although choice of type of dwelling and neighbourhood will always be constrained by income and personal wealth (the ‘iron law’ of the housing market, Priemus, 1978), it is unclear what degree of ‘residential entrapment’ will impinge upon resident perceptions and opinions. Kearns and Parkes (2003) found that residents in ‘distressed’ areas in the UK are not more immune or accustomed to negative conditions; nor were they more sensitive to negative influences than the general population. However, the type of neighbourhood does seem to matter for the overall satisfaction levels. A French study shows that perception of the neighbourhood is the result of the interplay between various factors (Pan Ké Shon, 2007). These factors include both personal inclinations as well as characteristics of the neighbourhood. The importance of these characteristics differs per type of neighbourhood. Working class and poor neighbourhoods appear to have a negative effect on the expectations and perceptions of individuals in all socio-occupational classes. In other words, there seems to be one or more conditions in these neighbourhoods that affect the perception of all residents. The study points to age structure, ethnic composition and its meaning in French society, lack of access and segregation as possible explanations and to the need for place-based policy interventions in poor and working class neighbourhoods to improve liveability and satisfaction.
3.3 Three mechanisms that affect neighbourhood satisfaction

Drawing on Buck (2001), who has distinguished several causal pathways of neighbourhood effects on adult residents, I propose that residents’ perceptions can originate through social, physical, and institutional mechanisms. These mechanisms will provide us with the variables for analysis.

**Physical mechanism: quality and design**

Some have argued a direct relation between design and criminal or anti-social behaviour as poor design give opportunities for criminal behaviour and obstructed lines of sight forestall social control (e.g., Newman, 1972). The assumption is that the impersonal and dreary architecture as well as unsafe design negatively affect the residents and their perception. However, there does not appear to be a singular causal relation between the built environment and neighbourhood satisfaction. The social functioning of a neighbourhood seems to depend largely on the residents, and thus on social mechanisms, and not on design and management (Van Kempen and Musterd, 1991). Van Kempen (1994) argues that the relation between residential attitudes and design is complex and is also determined by the housing market, building type and especially location. Other authors draw a link between the neighbourhood’s physique and its reputation, which affects identity and perception (Dickens, 1994). Another argument is that residents experience distress and possibly dissatisfaction, when they lack social and environmental control (control over place to dwell and over who they meet and live next to), which is often the case in more densely populated areas (Baldassare, 1982).

To be clear, extremities such as severe dilapidation of buildings, neglect of public spaces, and unsafety, do reflect on people’s perception of their neighbourhood and their satisfaction with it. Herting and Guest (1985) found that static appearances matter more than more mobile variables such as noise, air pollution and traffic. Parkes et al. (2002) state that satisfaction with housing and the general appearance of the area are most strongly related to neighbourhood satisfaction. Sirgy and Cornwell (2002) found that satisfaction with the neighbourhood physical features such as upkeep of buildings and yards, landscapes, etc. are important for life satisfaction and thus affect decisions to move. Furthermore, housing satisfaction plays a determining role for the perception of the neighbourhood (Lu, 1999). Davis and Fine-Davis (1981) also found a relation between the prevailing conditions of property in the vicinity and neighbourhood satisfaction. Furthermore, the perception of the environment’s safety has a lasting impact on a neighbourhood’s reputation and on the mindset of residents (Cook, 1988, Davis and Fine-Davis, 1981).

**Social mechanism: social cohesion, and social mixing**

There seems to be a consensus that social relations and community life positively affect life satisfaction (e.g. Baldassare, 1982, Prezza and Constantini, 1998, Sirgy and Cornwell, 2002). This also seems to be true on a neighbourhood scale. Various studies have found that residents appreciate social contacts and good relations with their neighbours (Davis and Fine-Davis, 1981, Herting and Guest, 1985, Sirgy and Cornwell, 2002). Social contacts with friends and family also positively affect residents’ perception of the neighbourhood (Drukker and Van Os, 2003, Pan Ké Shon, 2007). The assumption is that social behaviour prevents isolation and encourages the acquisition of social capital in the neighbourhood (see e.g. Forrest and Kearns, 2001). Furthermore, it was found that dissatisfaction over a lack of social cohesion could be a reason for moving (Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2006). In addition to social contacts, social cohesion is also shaped by factors such as the degree to which residents feel involved in decision-
making for the entire neighbourhood, membership of local associations, attachment to the
eighbourhood. The assumption is that these factors positively affect the residents’
perception of the neighbourhood. However, the residents may not necessarily constitute
a single group, but may divided along social or ethnic lines (see Dekker and Rowlands,
2005).

In light of our interest in neighbourhood regeneration, the social mix of a
neighbourhood has to be mentioned here as well. Social mixing policies refer to the
practice of attracting more affluent households with the (implicit) goal of improving
liveability, alongside other objectives, such as reducing poverty, increasingly manageability
and stimulating economic growth. The assumption then is that the presence of middle
class residents positively affects the lower classes (Ostendorf et al., 2001). The effects of
social mixing would play out through various social mechanisms, such as the role model
function, socialisation and political leadership of the middle class, quality of housing,
self-government of homeowners, increased area reputation, increased social interactions
and social capital networks (Kleinhans, 2004, Marcuse, 1994). Although the empirical
evidence supporting these assumptions is ambivalent (Galster, 2007), social mixing
strategies have been widely employed in the regeneration of post-war housing estates,
especially in Western European estates.

There has been little research on the effect of social mixing on neighbourhood
satisfaction. Views on the effects of social mixing range from the possibility of social
harmony to potential powder keg. Parkes et al. (2002) found a weak relationship
between social renters’ satisfaction and a low share of social rental dwellings in the
neighbourhood. However, the precise causality is unclear. In the literature social mix
is generally related to socio economic differences between residents. However, there
may also be a cultural component to the concept. Especially in Western European
policy, social mixing relates to ‘desegregating’ migrant communities. A German
study found that an ethnic presence matters for life satisfaction. Immigrants living in
ethnic neighbourhoods are less satisfied with their standard of living and with their
neighbourhood than immigrants in non-ethnic neighbourhoods. On the other hand,
immigrants in neighbourhoods were no more likely to feel isolated from goods and
services, to be concerned with crime, or to be living in buildings that are to be renovated
than immigrants in non-ethnic neighbourhoods (Drever, 2004).

**Institutional mechanism: access to services and amenities**

The institutional model suggests that the importance of the availability of public
services (Buck, 2001). A common institutional context may affect the perception of the
neighbourhood either directly or indirectly. Good delivery of public service benefits the
status and reputation of the neighbourhood, public health and equal opportunities. Basic
public services usually include sufficient schools, welfare and health care. In addition,
the availability of facilities such as shops, entertainment, financial and postal services are
important as well. Besides their convenience, their mere presence signifies a thriving area,
while absence could damage reputation like vacancies. Access to services also relates to
wider access to financial (employment), cognitive (knowledge and information), political
(to defend formal rights and fight discrimination) and social (social networks, leisure)
resources. Access to public transport may prevent residents from feeling trapped in the
neighbourhood (Murie et al., 2003), which could create dissatisfaction.

Davis and Fine-Davis (1981) found that perception of public transport attributes
to neighbourhood satisfaction, especially in low density areas. Along with safety, the
availability of education is a an important condition for neighbourhood satisfaction for
single-parent women (Cook, 1988). Other studies found that access to services, work
and amenities only play a minor role in feelings of satisfaction (Herting and Guest, 1985).
Parkes et al. (2002) argue that the importance of access to facilities and amenities to satisfaction plays indirectly, through opportunities for social interaction.

### 3.4 Comparing neighbourhoods

To gauge the effect of neighbourhood regeneration on neighbourhood satisfaction, a relatively new method of analysis was chosen. This method is used to compare case studies of post-war housing estates. These case studies come from the RESTATE (2005) project, which focused on the situation in 29 large-scale post-war housing estates, and on actions to counteract negative trends and problems in these housing estates. These estates were subjected to neighbourhood regeneration efforts at the time of research.

To be clear, the aim of the analysis is to distil several key or decisive causal factors across the estates. The strategy and method irrevocably mean that much of the complexity, specificity and richness of the original case studies will be lost in favour of generalisation across Europe. The models should be seen as abstract-simple, allowing us to think about and reflect on regeneration.

While the selection of cases was quite diverse, there are some similarities. Most of the estates were built on the urban fringe with a similar layout: large multiple storey multi-family dwellings with large green public spaces. The dwellings are usually relatively spacious and bright. Common negative points include (Musterd and Van Kempen, 2005):

- Physical decay of dwellings
- Lack of access to essential services
- Architecture and urban design support anonymity
- High unemployment rates
- Separation of functions leads to multiple problematic effects, such as unsafe spots, conflicts over maintenance of public spaces and little employment opportunities.
- Traffic and parking problems
- Safety problems, vacancies, drug use, youngsters, and anti-social behaviour
- Stigmatisation

As noted above, these characteristics are not all true for all estates, especially for those in Central and Eastern Europe. However, it is clear that the large-scale post-war estates belong to a specific ‘population’ of European neighbourhoods.

This analysis incorporates qualitative data on neighbourhood regeneration in order to examine its direct effect on residents’ perception of the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood regeneration efforts can either directly influence the opinion of residents or indirectly. Residents may not always be fully aware of the regeneration efforts, but their perception of the neighbourhood can still be influenced positively or negatively by the regeneration’s effects. For instance, not all residents may be aware of youth programmes that aim to reduce anti-social behaviour, but a subsequent decrease in anti-social behaviour may positively influence the perception of the neighbourhood.

The decision to introduce qualitative data means that neighbourhood satisfaction levels are aggregated to the neighbourhood level as well. This is slightly problematic since this means that some of the richness of the individual data is lost. Furthermore, the composition of population in terms of demography and socio-occupational status is not equally distributed per case. However, I believe that the benefit of incorporating qualitative data outweighs the loss of information in aggregated data. Furthermore, to control for some compositional differences, the economic situation of the estate has been included in the analysis. As noted above, residents’ perceptions depend on the overall socio-economic status of a neighbourhood (Pan Ké Shon, 2007). As for age, there are
differences between the age groups of the respondents per estate. However, primary analyses found no statistical or logical relationship between satisfaction and age category on an aggregate level.

3.4.1 Qualitative Comparative Analysis: explanation

This chapter employs the fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fs-QCA) method, developed by Charles Ragin (1987, 2000). Fs-QCA has three major advantages. First, it is very suitable to handle small-N research designs (5-50 cases) and thus it allows to compare the 29 estates. Second, the method is equipped to handle both quantitative and qualitative data. Third, it allows us to discern multiple causal combinations to reflect the diversity of the estates.

Unfortunately, the space available does not permit a full explanation of the method (see Ragin, 2003, Rihoux and Ragin, 2004, Shalev, 2006, Skaaning, 2005), but it is based on logic. Essential is that there are two types of causality in logic; necessary causality and sufficient causality.

**Necessary causality** can be explained by the following example: the ability to breathe is necessary for a human to survive. There can be no outcome without the cause, that is, there are no living humans that do not have the ability to breathe. In more technical terms: the necessity for breathing for surviving is colloquially equivalent to ‘whenever breathing occurs or is true, so is surviving’. However, to survive humans may need other things as well.

**Sufficient causality** can be explained as follows: a knock-out punch in a boxing match will automatically mean a win for the last man standing, regardless of any points scored in preceding rounds. So a knock-out is sufficient for a win, but a boxing match can also be won by points. The cause will always produce the outcome, but the outcome may be produced by other causes as well. So all knock-outs are wins but not all wins are knockouts.

To establish full causation, the requirements for both types have to be met. Only then can we assert that the outcome is true or present if and only if the causal conditions are true or present. The fs-QCA is a method for making inferences about both the necessary and sufficient conditions for a particular outcome to happen or a phenomenon to be present (Ragin, 2000). To give an example, to open a door, it is necessary that is unlocked, because, obviously, a locked door cannot be opened. However, unlocking alone is not sufficient to open it. It will either have to be opened manually or, in other cases, mechanically. These statements would lead to a necessary and sufficient model for opening a door with two causal combinations, or scenarios:

1) Unlock and Manual
2) Unlock and Mechanical

The analytical strategy of the method requires two steps to be taken; first, the analysis of necessity and second, the analysis of sufficiency. To determine necessity of a single condition means establishing whether all instances of the outcome share an antecedent condition (e.g. doors were unlocked). Instances of the relevant outcome without the suspected cause undermine necessity (e.g. any instances of locked doors that were opened). The second step is establishing the sufficiency of the cause. The question here is: Is the suspected cause by itself capable of producing the outcome? The cause should always produce the outcome in question Evidence of instances, where the cause is present but not followed by the outcome, undermines sufficiency (e.g. instances were a door was unlocked and it was operated either manually or mechanically, but did not open).
The result of these two steps is a model with one or more combinations of causal variables which predict the outcome (neighbourhood satisfaction). For the reader’s convenience these causal combinations are termed scenarios below.

### 3.4.2 Data and variables

The two steps above are carried out by simple arithmetic operations on a dataset. However, the fs-QCA method acknowledges the ambiguities and diversity of social reality and hence the two tests to establish causality are probabilistic. The use of probabilistic criteria such as significance, allows the tests to be more flexible in case of small abnormalities in the data that are the result of inherit messiness of social processes. To further allow for this messiness, fuzzy-set logic is used instead of Boolean logic which handles concepts as either true or false, 1 or 0. Fuzzy-set logic allows for a degree of truth through membership scores between 0 and 1, and subsequent method to perform the two tests. To be clear, fuzzy-set logic is not any less precise than any other form of logic: it is an organized and mathematical method of handling inherently imprecise concepts, such as social cohesion and environmental quality.

Thus, the dataset features membership scores for all variables. Membership scores express the presence or absence of a variable. Different degrees of property are expressed in scores between 0 and 1, whereby the maximum membership score of 1 implies that a case is ‘fully in’ a category, while 0 means ‘fully out’. The score 0.5 indicates a qualitative breakpoint and means ‘neither in nor out’. The membership scores can be based on either qualitative or quantitative data.

The qualitative data consists of the assessments of the RESTATE researchers made in a series of standardised research reports written by researchers. These reports were mainly used to compose the membership scores for the ‘appropriate neighbourhood regeneration’ variable. The scores for this variable were assigned based on assessments made by the RESTATE researchers on physical restructuring and various socio-economic interventions. However, because restructuring is often more costly, the physical dimension has been weighed equally to the combined socio-economic interventions.

The quantitative data comes from a survey, which was conducted in all the estates in the first half of 2004. The questionnaire focused on aspects of liveability, which resulted in questions on various forms of satisfaction, social contacts, attachment, reputation and participation. Questions were also asked about the development and policies in the estate. The membership scores for the remaining variables are based on this survey, including neighbourhood satisfaction.

In most cases the variables are composed of multiple survey questions and/or qualitative data from the research reports. Thirty-eight arithmetic and logical operations were done to construct a dataset with membership scores between 0 and 1 per variable for each estate (dataset not shown). For instance, the outcome variable, neighbourhood satisfaction, is composed by using 2 survey questions. The first asked for a more general feeling of neighbourhood satisfaction, while the second question inquired whether the respondent felt positive or negative about the future of the neighbourhood. Data from these two questions were converted to membership scores between 0 and 1 and subsequently averaged to create one variable where full membership would mean completely satisfied with the neighbourhood and optimistic about future developments. Low membership, on the other hand, means completely dissatisfied and pessimistic.

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The term ‘appropriate’ is used here instead of ‘successful’ because the RESTATE project was not set up to perform strict ex post evaluations. However, its setup did examine developments and problems in the estates and the way policies and practices connected with them. Thus, the term ‘appropriate’ is in this case more suitable.
The combination of these two questions means that the meaning of neighbourhood satisfaction relates to the perception of the neighbourhood and its direction. Table 1 lists all the variables used and their empirical source. The causal variables used in the analyses are ‘appropriate neighbourhood regeneration’, which is based on the research reports, and seven other causal variables based on the literature above. The physical mechanism includes dwelling satisfaction and a variable which expresses environmental quality. The social mechanism includes one social cohesion variable and two variables on social mix. The institutional dimension is operationalised as access to services and public transport. Finally, the dataset includes a ‘prosperity’ variable to compensate for any differences in overall socio-economic status of the estates.

Table 1. Variables used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causal Category</th>
<th>Fs-QCA Variable</th>
<th>Empirical Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>dwelling satisfaction</td>
<td>Survey question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environmental quality</td>
<td>Written assessments by researchers on dilapidation, pollution or traffic problems and two survey questions on reasons to move and how future could look brighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>social cohesion</td>
<td>4 survey questions: attachment to the neighbourhood, amount of social contacts within neighbourhood, quality of social contacts, participation in associations to improve neighbourhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>perceived social mix</td>
<td>Survey question: degree of social mix in neighbourhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ethnic mix</td>
<td>Census data on demographic composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>access</td>
<td>9 survey questions on access to health care, public, schools, employment, parks, transport and shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>neighbourhood prosperity</td>
<td>Survey data on employment and income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘appropriate’ neighbourhood regeneration</td>
<td>The assessments in reports on ‘appropriateness’ of physical (housing, public space and infrastructure) and social economic regeneration (economic development, health, safety, education, social initiatives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>neighbourhood satisfaction</td>
<td>2 survey questions: rating of neighbourhood satisfaction and feelings on future development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Results

Below are presented the two best models to explain neighbourhood satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The models have been calculated with the fs/QCA 1.1 software (Ragin et al., 2003). The models are the result of the tests of necessity and sufficiency and consist of multiple scenarios that explain neighbourhood satisfaction.

3.5.1 Causes for neighbourhood satisfaction

The best model to explain neighbourhood satisfaction tested six conditions: perceived social mix, environmental quality, social cohesion, appropriate neighbourhood regeneration, dwelling satisfaction, and neighbourhood prosperity. The two probabilistic tests of necessity and sufficiency\(^\text{10}\) resulted in three possible ‘scenarios’ of neighbourhood satisfaction:\(^\text{11}\)

1. dwelling satisfaction and social cohesion
2. dwelling satisfaction and environmental quality
3. dwelling satisfaction and appropriate neighbourhood regeneration\(^\text{12}\)

Dwelling satisfaction is mentioned in all three scenarios because it is the only variable that was found to be ‘almost always’ necessary for neighbourhood satisfaction\(^\text{13}\). In other words, without a degree of dwelling satisfaction there can be no neighbourhood satisfaction. However, to achieve neighbourhood satisfaction other variables come into play. It was found that three other factors together with dwelling satisfaction explain the degree of satisfaction: neighbourhood regeneration, environmental quality, and social cohesion. In some estates, the combination of social cohesion and dwelling satisfaction explains and causes neighbourhood satisfaction, while in other estates it is appropriate neighbourhood regeneration or environmental quality combined with dwelling satisfaction.

Table 2 displays the results of the fs-CQA for each estate as membership scores for the three scenarios. The most relevant scenario for each estate is determined by the highest membership scores (bold in the table). However, when the difference between the highest scenario score and satisfaction is too high, the model is not able to explain the degree of satisfaction in that estate. Thus, neighbourhood satisfaction in four estates remains unexplained.

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\(^\text{10}\) Benchmark proportion is ‘almost always’ (minimum 75% of cases display causal relation) and .05 significance level for all tests.

\(^\text{11}\) Containment rules, or minimization, allow the elimination of expressions which are logically redundant. Because I strive for a degree of generalisation, containment was done by means of a Quine-McCluskey algorithm.

\(^\text{12}\) The coverage, i.e., the percentage of the outcome explained by the causal condition (Ragin, 2003), of this model is .73. The coverage measure is comparable to the level of explained variances, such as R\(^2\) in statistics (Skaaning, 2005).

\(^\text{13}\) Observed proportion of cases where cause \(\geq\) outcome is 0.9. Significance is .046
Table 2. Membership scores per scenario and neighbourhood satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estate</th>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
<th>Scenario 3</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bijlmermeer</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Garden Cities</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sant Roc</td>
<td>(0.81)</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>-0.47*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinitat Nova</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maerkische Viertel</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marzahn/Hellersdorf</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The central estates</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodge Hill</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havanna</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxnahahapa</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralstt</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zusterna</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>(0.29)</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nove Fuzine</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poplar HARCA</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>(0.63)</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>-0.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tower Hamlets HAT</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Minguettes</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rillieux-la-Pape</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orcasitas in Usera</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Blas</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comasina</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Siro</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sant’Ambrogio</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josavaros</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>(0.30)</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kista</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensta</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanaleneiland</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nieuw-Hoograven</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrzeciono</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursynow</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Difference too great for model to explain the outcome

It is interesting to see that neighbourhood regeneration, in combination with dwelling satisfaction, explains the degree of satisfaction in about half of the estates and causes high neighbourhood satisfaction in six cases. It may very well be that in the third scenario estates where satisfaction is low, more or better-targeted investments will increase satisfaction and liveability. Of course, these investments would eventually also lead to better environmental quality and better housing. However, considering that regeneration was attempted in all cases, it should not be forgotten that in other estates good environmental quality or social cohesion proved to be more decisive. Furthermore, the table shows that some cases also have high membership scores for other scenarios. Maerkische Viertel in Berlin, for instance, belongs to scenario 3 but its membership
score for scenario 2 is almost as high. This means that environmental quality along with dwelling satisfaction and the effectiveness of regeneration seems to play a role in that estate.

Satisfaction with dwelling has already been identified in previous studies as important indicator or predictor for neighbourhood satisfaction. However, the fuzzy-set analysis of necessity indicates that satisfaction with dwelling is not a mere indicator but a necessary condition for satisfaction in the housing estates. This finding underlines that importance for individuals of private living space over neighbourhood characteristics. In other words, good housing seems to be a \textit{sine qua non} for neighbourhood satisfaction. Efforts to increase liveability in a neighbourhood should pay attention to this.

The effect of social cohesion on satisfaction in a neighbourhood has been theorised and assumed before (Sirgy and Cornwell, 2002). However, social cohesion (in combination with dwelling satisfaction) is not the sole determinant of satisfaction. The scenario mainly explains neighbourhood satisfaction in estates in Southern Europe, where it seems the neighbours appreciate the social environment even when environmental quality is low and neighbourhood regeneration insufficient. Especially the Spanish estates stand out. This may explained by the prevalent social ownership tenure structure. Because assets in social ownership housing are not released until after a certain period, families have been bound to the estates for longer periods and have had more opportunities for social contacts and more stakes in collective civic action (see Pareja Eastaway et al., 2004).

The second scenario indicates the importance of the physical environment in combination with dwelling satisfaction. These findings also correspond with previous findings, which point to the quality of the physical environment as a condition for satisfaction. This scenario includes cases that have not (yet) experienced the ‘appropriate’ regeneration, but still have a good environmental quality, keeping residents satisfied about their estate. It is noteworthy that the ‘satisfied’ estates are all in Southern and Eastern Europe.

The third scenario may include cases that also experience a high degree of social cohesion and environmental quality (see table 2). However, appropriate neighbourhood regeneration, in combination with dwelling satisfaction, was found to be the common denominator. The ‘satisfied’ estates are Swedish, British and Dutch. As mentioned above, this scenario explains satisfaction in half of the cases, which means appropriate neighbourhood regeneration together with dwelling satisfaction, is a convincing cause for neighbourhood satisfaction. In other words, success in addressing the issues at hand and making sure that individual housing is in good quality seem to go a long way in making people overall satisfied about their neighbourhood and its liveability.

In sum, we have seen that dwelling satisfaction is relevant in all cases and other variables in some situations. The different scenarios reflect the diversity of estates from different parts of Europe. However, the differences are also visible between estates within the same national or metropolitan context. The English estates are a clear example of this. Furthermore, it is striking that social mix and neighbourhood prosperity are not conditions for neighbourhood satisfaction. Social mix, in particular, is a policy and development strategy which is being pursued to increase the liveability and social economic conditions in several estates. However, the perceived social mix does not seem to affect neighbourhood satisfaction. Social mix will be discussed further below. Finally, the importance of dwelling satisfaction and neighbourhood regeneration suggests that satisfaction about the neighbourhood can be achieved with the ‘appropriate’ interventions. This implies that policy makers, who are successful in addressing the relevant issues and problems, will be successful in creating liveable neighbourhoods.
3.5.2 Causes for neighbourhood dissatisfaction

Despite being related, ‘neighbourhood dissatisfaction’ is considered a different phenomenon than ‘neighbourhood satisfaction. Hence, it was found that the best model for dissatisfaction has a different set of variables: social cohesion, access, environmental quality, dwelling satisfaction, neighbourhood prosperity, appropriate neighbourhood regeneration and ethnic mix. Ethnic mix was included to substitute perceived social mix, because it improved the model’s coverage.

It is already noteworthy that ‘appropriate neighbourhood regeneration’ variable is absent in the found dissatisfaction model. So, while regeneration plays an important role in neighbourhood satisfaction, it does not do so for dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, the results below do have consequences for it. Besides the regeneration variables, the environmental quality variable is missing as well.

The two probabilistic tests of necessity and sufficiency resulted in three possible ‘scenarios’ of neighbourhood dissatisfaction:

1) no social cohesion and no dwelling satisfaction
2) no social cohesion and ethnic mix
3) no social cohesion and no access and neighbourhood prosperity

All three scenarios share a necessary cause. The absence of social cohesion seems to ‘almost always’ be necessary for neighbourhood dissatisfaction. In other words, a high degree of social cohesion will ‘almost never’ be found in ‘unsatisfied neighbourhoods’. From the literature, this result seems logical, although we should be cautious since the fuzzy-set featured only a few estates with high social cohesion membership scores.

In addition to an absence of social cohesion, neighbourhood dissatisfaction is caused by a lack of dwelling satisfaction, or an ethnically mixed population, or prosperity in combination with a lack of access to services and amenities. Table 3 displays the results of the fs-CQA for each estate as membership scores for the three scenarios. Again, the most relevant scenario for each estate is determined by the highest membership scores (highlighted in the table). The difference between the highest scenario score and dissatisfaction was found too high for nine estates, which means that dissatisfaction in these estates remains unexplained.

---

14 Benchmark proportion is ‘almost always’ (minimum 75% of cases display causal relation) and .05 significance level for all tests.
15 The model’s coverage measure is .69
16 Observed proportion of cases where cause ≥ outcome is 0.93. Significance is .013
Table 3. Membership scores per scenario and neighbourhood dissatisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estate</th>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
<th>Scenario 3</th>
<th>Dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bijlmermeer</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>(0.79)</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>-0.60 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Garden Cities</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>(0.64)</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>-0.25 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sant Roc</td>
<td>(0.18)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>(0.18)</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.48 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinitat Nova</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maerkische Viertel</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.35 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marzahn/Hellersdorf</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The central estates</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodge Hill</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havanna</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxnahaga</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raslatt</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>(0.46)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>-0.22 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zusterna</td>
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<td>0.18</td>
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* Difference too great for model to explain the outcome

It appears that most of the ‘dissatisfied estates’ belong to the second scenario. Most of the cases with low dissatisfaction, i.e. cases with relatively high satisfaction, belong to the third scenario. The model seems to have been successful in covering most of the high dissatisfaction estates, which are all located in Western European countries. In our dataset, dissatisfaction in Eastern European estates is low to moderate.

Thus, the analysis indicates three different scenarios where, in combination with lack of social cohesion, variables create dissatisfaction. The first is a low degree of satisfaction with the dwelling, which is in line with the satisfaction analysis and findings in other studies. Only one ‘dissatisfied’ estate fits this scenario. Apparently, the residents regard
the quality of housing in the other ‘dissatisfied’ Western European estates as acceptable, or other issues take precedence.

The second scenario includes the presence of non-native residents (non-native to the host country). This result is very interesting, but we should be careful in asserting that the behaviour of ethnic groups in those estates is the source of dissatisfaction. This explanation would be too narrow and negligent of wider social processes. It is important to remember that the absence of social cohesion is the co-determinant in this scenario. Low social cohesion implies a lack of social contact which can make a common understanding between groups difficult and may result in distrust. In addition to distrust between residents, there may be a second explanation for this model. The large-scale presence of non-native residents may translate into a negative neighbourhood reputation among outsiders, which in turn may breed dissatisfaction about the neighbourhood among residents who feel isolated, excluded or stigmatised. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this analysis to test whether this is the case. However, the Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam has a large ethnic mix and low social cohesion, yet still has a high level of neighbourhood satisfaction (see table 4). This may be because the (long-term) dominance of ethnic groups and low amount of native residents result in less misunderstanding within the area between native and non-native residents, between newcomers and long-term residents. In other words, there are no conflicts about who ‘belongs’ in the neighbourhood. In addition, the neighbourhood regeneration efforts may have improved the neighbourhood’s reputation (see Aalbers et al., 2004). Nevertheless, the result highlights the importance of social and ethnic mix in Western European housing estates.

As mentioned, the third scenario, which emphasizes the lack of access in combination with prosperity, mostly accounts for ‘satisfied’ estates (see table 3). However, one ‘dissatisfied’ estate, Marzahn/Hellersdorf in East Berlin, fits the expression. The high dissatisfaction score of this estate is mostly determined by a pessimistic view of the future. The important issues are lack of environmental quality, regional unemployment and the vastness of the urban design which impedes quick access to facilities and amenities (Knorr-Siedow and Droste, 2005). This last point is arguably the most relevant determinant for the Marzahn/ Hellersdorf case. As previous studies have shown, lack of access to amenities, transport and services is in some cases a determinant of dissatisfaction. A low degree of access to services and public transport may deprive the neighbourhood of vital and necessary amenities and may induce feelings of isolation and exclusion in the area. As the lack of access in Marzahn/ Hellersdorf is linked to the urban design, it is no surprise that residents link the lack of access to their perception of the neighbourhood.

In sum, while the dissatisfaction model was less powerful than the satisfaction model in terms of coverage, there are some very interesting findings. The necessity of low social cohesion for dissatisfaction underlines the importance of a degree of local social interaction, participation and attachment. In most cases, a high degree of social cohesion prevents neighbourhood dissatisfaction, unless there are problems with the housing units, a degree of ethnic mix, or a lack of access. Although neighbourhood regeneration is absent in the model, the results show that neighbourhood regeneration may be relevant as the answer to some of the causes of dissatisfaction. While social cohesion may be hard to stimulate and foster top-down, quality of housing and problems with access can be improved with regeneration interventions. When the causal relation between the presence of ethnic groups and dissatisfaction, points to problems with cultural integration and distrust between immigrants and natives, neighbourhood regeneration may be able to contribute to the solution. However, an area-based focus will ultimately fall short when the issues are societal. When the negative reputation is the issue, neighbourhood regeneration can help to improve the face and image of the neighbourhood.
3.6 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the causation of neighbourhood satisfaction in general; and in the role of neighbourhood regeneration in particular. It appears that social, institutional and physical mechanisms all appear to matter in various combinations. More importantly, it was found that the degree of neighbourhood regeneration positively affects the overall perceptions about the quality and direction of the neighbourhood in half of the cases. In the other half, in the absence of regeneration other factors such as social cohesion proved to be decisive. Nevertheless, the analyses underline the importance of the right neighbourhood regeneration in improving the residents’ estimation of the liveability of their neighbourhood. In addition, we have seen that neighbourhood regeneration can play an important part in relation to some of the causes of neighbourhood dissatisfaction. Social economic and physical regeneration interventions can address place-based issues such as lack of access to amenities, housing quality and, to some degree, a lack of social cohesion. Some causes, however, seem to be connected to wider social processes such as cultural integration, stigmatisation, and perhaps social economic deprivation, which would be harder to tackle with neighbourhood regeneration interventions alone as their territorial focus tends to be limited.

Another important finding is the great amount of diversity among our ‘population’ of estates. Even though this chapter strived for generalisation, the diversity between the estates becomes immediately apparent in the different constellations of membership scores for each scenario (see tables 2 and 3 above). While some estates have high membership scores for only one scenario, others display high scores for other scenarios as well, indicating the presence of other social processes. Consequently, this means that any neighbourhood regeneration effort would have to pay attention to this diversity and adapt accordingly. In other words, a feeling for the diversity of estates, irrespective of whether this is in an international, national, or regional context, will help to make neighbourhood regeneration interventions more ‘appropriate’ and will ultimately yield better results in creating a liveable environments.

The right neighbourhood regeneration policies, however, will only positively influence neighbourhood satisfaction when residents are also satisfied with their dwellings. The analyses showed that to achieve neighbourhood satisfaction, dwelling satisfaction is ‘almost always’ necessary. Furthermore, we already know that households tend to prioritise internal conditions (homes) to external conditions (those in the neighbourhood) for improvement regardless of satisfaction rates with these features (Galster, 1985). This should be taken into account when using dissatisfaction as an indicator for policy. The quality of individual housing units is crucial for any regeneration to have a positive effect on the perceptions of the residents.

In relation to neighbourhood regeneration, the analyses reveal some interesting points that are relevant to the debate about social mixing. It appears that the perceived social mix is irrelevant for the causality of satisfaction. However, ethnic presence, a social mix indicator, in combination with a low degree of social cohesion seems to be a condition for dissatisfaction in some Western European estates. In these estates the presence of ethnic groups seems to have a negative influence on the residents’ perceptions rather than a positive. However, the Bijlmermeer case shows that it is unclear where the balance lies and whether there is perhaps some sort of tipping point when an ethnic presence is of no consequence to satisfaction. The findings are interesting since social mixing policies which strive for, among other things, liveability, are often a part of the regeneration interventions, at least in Western Europe. The negative relation between social mixing and satisfaction helps to nuance the arguments surrounding the assumed positive effect of living in socially and ethnically diverse areas on people. However, it is clear that the effect of social mixing on neighbourhood satisfaction deserves more attention.
Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Wim Ostendorf, Sako Musterd, Rob Rowlands, Ronald van Kempen, and to all who commented on earlier drafts of this chapter. This research was carried out within the framework of the Corpovenista/Habiforum Research Programme.

References


4. Bridging the social divide? Reflections on current Dutch neighbourhood policy


Abstract
Current Dutch urban policy has opted for a focused approach to solve urban social problems. The Minister of ‘Housing, Neighbourhoods and Integration’ aims at tackling social deprivation and liveability problems in a limited number of neighbourhoods. Several assumptions underpin the policy ambitions: e.g., a strong interrelationship between social deprivation and liveability; a clear social and spatial divide in Dutch society; and extra negative effects of problem accumulation. In this paper, these assumptions are tested. It is concluded that the two types of problems are in fact unrelated; targeting a limited number of neighbourhoods does not effectively address social deprivation. Furthermore, there is yet insufficient research to support the idea that there would be extra negative effects associated with an accumulation of social deprivation and liveability problems.

Keywords
40 Neighbourhoods Programme; area-based initiatives; evidence-based policies; neighbourhood regeneration; the Netherlands; urban policy

4.1 Introduction

The Netherlands is a ‘policy-dense’ country, and this is particularly true for the field of urban policies. In the last decade Dutch urban policy, in three editions of the Big City Policy (BCP), has set out to deal with the economic, social and physical issues in an integrated and area-based way. Simultaneously, the policy aims to bring resources and responsibilities to decentralized levels of government. The underlying objective was initially to create ‘the comprehensive city’ and in later editions to create a ‘powerful city’ or a ‘safe’ and ‘liveable’ city. All BCP policies were aimed at reducing the number of persons with inadequate education levels, intended to reduce integration problems, diminish crime and unsafe environments, tackle high unemployment rates, reduce out-migration of the dwindling middle class, and support economic vitality (Musterd and Ostendorf, 2008). In these respects, Dutch urban policies connect to a common social exclusion policy discourse in Western Europe (see Atkinson, 2000, Andersen, 2003, De Decker et al., 2003). Furthermore, the BCP intended to remove dilapidated housing and commercial buildings, and to overcome inadequate infrastructures and poor accessibility. The notion behind such approaches was that problems accumulate and become concentrated in specific districts and that these issues are all related to each other. Indeed, the interconnectedness of several urban issues was a main driver behind the launching of large-scale, integrated area-based interventions to urban problems. Like other area-based initiatives in Western Europe, Dutch interventions often include extensive urban renewal at the neighbourhood level to restructure the housing market (Belmessous et al., 2005; Cole & Etherington, 2005).

The recent 40 Neighbourhoods Programme is an extension of earlier programmes which sought to accelerate the process of urban renewal and housing market restructuring in a number of problem neighbourhoods. However, because of its pronounced social agenda, the 40 Neighbourhoods Programme can be characterised as
an addition to the running Big City Policy. The Programme is named after its strategy to target the 40 worst problem areas, which were selected on grounds of empirical evidence.

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the choices in and the operationalisation of the 40 Neighbourhoods Programme and to confront the stated intentions with empirical findings. The main question of this paper is: How well is the actual neighbourhood-targeted policy in the Netherlands connected to its stated intentions, particularly those related to social issues? Our analysis is based on the first steps of the policy cycle: the conception of the problems and the social phenomena that need to be altered. Please note, we do not evaluate the Programme ex post. Instead, by critically examining the envisioned stated social ambitions and intentions, the assumptions based on that, and the selection of neighbourhoods to be targeted, we will gauge its effectiveness and limitations a priori.

To analyse any policy programme with a social agenda, it is important to examine the underlying conceptualisation of where, when and how the programme seeks to intervene in the social systems and what the expected outcomes will be (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Unfortunately, these conceptualisations are not always made explicit in urban policies (Rhodes et al., 2005). Statements and policy documents may reveal some intentions. However, in addition to statements, the intention and objectives of intervention are also reflected in the conceptualisation of evidence. Ideally, in the case of an area-based programme such as the 40 Neighbourhoods Programme, the selection indicators should reflect the objectives of the programme, as they determine which neighbourhoods will be subjected to intervention. The conceptualisation of evidence should reflect the agendas and goals of the policy, and ultimately affect the actions taken (Solesbury, 2002). However, we should also note that evidence is not neutral but connected to issues of power, participation and inequality (Parsons, 2002, Davoudi, 2006). The notion that policy orientation is contextual and influenced by politics is certainly not new (Laswell in Parsons, 2002). Nonetheless, the use of evidence in the form of ‘objective indicators’ in the 40 Neighbourhoods Programme seems to be an attempt to defy political haggling.

### 4.2 40 Neighbourhoods Programme: urban policy with social ambitions

In 2007, the Dutch centre-left coalition government created a new ministerial post within the Ministry of Housing and Spatial Planning to oversee the political project to transform ‘problem neighbourhoods’ into ‘vigorous’ and ‘socially strong’ neighbourhoods. According to official correspondence between the minister and Parliament17, there is a severe social problem in Dutch society which relates to the accumulation of ‘severe liveability problems’ in certain neighbourhoods. More specifically, these liveability problems are related to the existence of ‘physical and socio-economic deprivation and problems’. The nature of these problems will be explored below. However, it is clear that the accumulation of problems in certain areas is assumed to create an increasing gap between the poor neighbourhoods and the rest of society. The policy programme is designed to counter the threat of a divide that will disconnect the poor from the rest of society and drive them towards social exclusion. So, the strategic issue at hand is the danger of the development of ‘parallel societies’.

Although urban policies originally involve the transformation of places, the 40 Neighbourhoods Programme strongly emphasises the social issues of its residents and its social approach alongside physical interventions. As the responsible minister commented, ‘[it is] an approach which heavily invests in people who live in the neighbourhood, because people define the neighbourhood’ (Vogelaar, 2008, July 10).

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17 Letters from the Ministry to Parliament on 22 March and 24 April 2007
So, the Programme seems to tackle two issues: social-economic deprivation among individuals and liveability issues. As said, liveability issues include forms of anti-social behaviour, but also traffic nuisance, safety, pollution, and housing and neighbourhood satisfaction. The assumption seems to be that there are localised accumulations of mutually reinforcing social processes and physical deterioration that create liveability problems and social deprivation. These accumulations can be identified in a clear selection of Dutch neighbourhoods. To produce ‘liveable’ neighbourhoods and social inclusion, the Programme employs a range of integrated measures. A significant component will likely be physical restructuring and urban renewal. Other interventions relate to employment, education, safety, social integration and housing. Thereby, interventions are both locale- and people-based.

The neighbourhoods within the 40 chosen problem areas will be regenerated by integrated actions involving the state, municipalities, social welfare organisations, residents and – mainly – local housing associations. Although housing associations have been active in urban renewal for many decades, housing associations are a relatively new actor in social activities and objectives of urban policies (see Boelhouwer, 2007). The associations will contribute to a fund from which most of the investments needed will be drawn. Local governments also are expected to invest substantial amounts of money in these neighbourhoods. Although most of the fund is expected to be used for physical purposes, parts of it may and actually are expected to be used for social purposes as well. Social activities include integration programmes, education programmes, and intensive monitoring and support of poor ‘multi-problem families’. In addition, in the 2008 government budget new funds have been allocated to avoid displacement effects. This underlines the importance of people alongside place.

4.3 Problems and indicators

Atkinson et al. (2002) state that social indicators should reflect the essence of the problem and have a clear and generally accepted normative meaning. The policymakers of the 40 Neighbourhoods Programme pride themselves on the selection of the 40 ‘worst’ neighbourhoods based on 18 ‘objective indicators’. However, the selection was also based on consultations with municipalities. This political component seems to contradict the former claim of ‘objective’ selection. We pay further attention to this contradiction below.

In the official selection, the Ministry defined two types of indicators: deprivation indicators, which reflect situations of ‘lagging behind’; and problem indicators, which reflect the opinions of the residents. Furthermore, the holistic and integrated character of the Programme is reflected in a second distinction in the indicators: social (economic) and physical. Also, all indicators are static and fail to represent any change of the neighbourhoods.

The socio-economic indicators consist of income, education, and employment. In addition, the social dimension is complemented by the opinions of the residents on liveability issues. However, while the socio-economic indicators seem to connect reasonably well to the wish for social inclusion and liveable neighbourhoods, the physical indicators are less straightforward.

Even though physical issues are mentioned in the official communications, the exact nature of these issues remains unclear. Because of the liveability objective, we assume that these issues refer to physical deterioration of buildings or individual dwellings. However, the technical quality of the Dutch housing stock is generally good and there is hardly any physical deterioration (Van der Schaar, 2006). When examining the ‘physical deprivation’ indicators it is clear that the concern is not technical in nature. The three
indicators that were used are the share of old (pre-1970) dwellings, of small dwellings, and of cheap dwellings. None of these refer directly to the quality of the housing. There is no obvious relation between small and cheap housing and physical deterioration or substandard housing; in fact, substantial parts of the most affluent housing are pre-1970. Moreover, small housing may serve specific housing needs (the elderly, students) or may be highly desired at certain attractive locations (in or around city centres). Furthermore, good-quality inexpensive housing serves the needs and demand of the less well off, who are not necessarily in need of any social assistance. In sum, these indicators are unclear concerning the problems and the need for policy intervention they represent.

Moreover, the data used for the ‘cheap housing’ indicator concern the share of social rented dwellings per area. This suggests that there is a relationship between deterioration or deprivation and social rented housing. While there are indications that the share of low-income households within the social rented sector is increasing (Van Kempen and Priemus, 2002), the current size and quality of the social rented sector in the Netherlands (about 35% of the total housing stock, and around 50% in cities) does not (yet) warrant any claims of ‘residualisation’ of the kind that was experienced in the UK since the 1980s (cf. Forrest and Murie, 1990). Size and quality mean that there is a substantial share of the middle class in the social rented sector, which ‘muffles’ the relationship between income and tenure. Hence, the share of social housing does not necessarily indicate a source or cause of deprivation, deterioration or problems, and is not valid in this respect. We may speculate that the use of the indicator is perhaps best explained by the involvement of the housing associations in the Programme. As the housing associations are the owners and managers of social-rented housing, a logical prerequisite for their local involvement is a substantial presence of social-rented housing in a targeted area. However, this is at variance with the ‘objective selection’ of neighbourhoods.

4.4 Testing three fundamental assumptions

The stated intentions and used indicators seem to indicate that the Programme has three fundamental assumptions that form the basis for the rationale of changing two social processes in select neighbourhoods:

a) liveability issues and social-economic deprivation are related phenomena,
b) which accumulate in 40 neighbourhoods,
c) and which create a social division in Dutch society that manifests itself in a division of neighbourhoods.

To test these policy assumptions, we have attempted to reconstruct the dataset used by the Ministry. However, we have remained critical of the variables and only included indicators that reflect the socio-economic situation and liveability of neighbourhoods. Consequently, we have done away with all the indicators that we deem invalid or unreliable to test. The invalid variables are the ‘physical deprivation’ indicators discussed above (old, small dwellings, and cheap dwellings). In addition, we have also excluded the Programme indicator ‘propensity to move’. Although moving may be related to the social situation in the neighbourhood, it may also reflect the phase in the housing career. For example, young households tend to move more than elderly ones; therefore, neighbourhoods with relatively many young households will show high residential mobility; usually this is not an indication of problems. The fifth excluded indicator is level of education. Although this is a valid indicator for deprivation, the data was based on a telephone survey, which asked respondents to gauge the average level of education of
their street. This requires respondents to know their neighbours, objectively assess an average level and relate this to national averages. Because such an assessment will most likely be heavily biased, we deem this data unreliable (see Van Gent et al., 2007).

So, we are left with a set of indicators that reflect social deprivation and liveability issues on a neighbourhood level. The six (composed) indicators are:

**Social deprivation**
- Average disposable income per household
- Employment rates,

**Liveability**
- Physical Nuisance Index based on 4 indicators (noise nuisance, pollution, traffic nuisance, traffic safety),
- Social Nuisance Index based on 5 indicators (2x vandalism, 2x social nuisance, insecurity),
- Dwelling dissatisfaction,
- Environment dissatisfaction.

In order to test whether these variables all correlate strongly and to be able to test the assumption that they are part of one single dimension, we performed a principal components analysis (PCA). Basically, this is a data reduction tool aimed to discover the smallest number of dimensions that are covered by the variables included in the analysis.

The PCA resulted in two independent components that together account for 64% of the variance. The rotated component matrix is shown in Table 1. The PCA’s first component clearly represents the liveability indicators, while the second component represents the social deprivation indicators. This means that, based on the indicators used by the Ministry, the level of liveability issues and the level of social deprivation in a neighbourhood are essentially unrelated phenomena in the Netherlands. Hence, the first policy assumption appears to be false. Yet, social economic deprivation and liveability issues can both be present in selected areas.

**Table 1. Rotated Component Matrix (Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization)**

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<tr>
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<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average disposable income per household</td>
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<td>.835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rates</td>
<td>-.301</td>
<td>.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Nuisance Index</td>
<td>.850</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Nuisance Index</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td>-.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling dissatisfaction</td>
<td>.585</td>
<td>-.423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment dissatisfaction</td>
<td>.685</td>
<td>-.383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 The Programme selection used data on a 4-digit postcode level. The neighbourhoods of our analysis, however, are neighbourhood-based areal units based on municipal and CBS delineation. Like the Programme, individual data from WoON survey was aggregated to a 4-digit postcode level. In our analysis this data was projected on the geographically smaller CBS areas.

19 Although valid, we have excluded the education indicator due to reliability issues (see Van Gent et al., 2007)). Source of data is CBS 2004.

20 Source of data is WoON 2006.
Like British evidence-based urban policies, the Programme operationalises the threshold of issues and problems as neighbourhood scores that are twice the standard deviation below the national average. The aim is to reduce the distance between the scores of the selected ‘most deprived’ neighbourhoods and the national average.

Figure 1 shows the scores of the two components of our PCA set out against each other in a scatter plot. Like the 40 Neighbourhoods Programme, we define ‘problematic’ neighbourhoods as cases with component scores that deviate at least two standard deviations from the national average.

When examining Figure 1, it becomes immediately clear that liveability issues and social deprivation are generally unrelated; that is to say, based on the indicators used for the selection of the neighbourhoods. Moreover, based on the indicators used, there is no reason to suggest that there is a division in Dutch society which manifests itself spatially. Rather, we see that there is a group of neighbourhoods with a large share of unemployed and low-income households and a group of neighbourhoods with liveability problems. A small number of neighbourhoods (28) fall in both categories, showing serious social deprivation as well as serious liveability problems. All of these neighbourhoods fall within the boundaries of 15 of the 40 Programme neighbourhoods (the Ministry is using larger areas). However, even though almost all of the selected neighbourhoods score below average, the official selection does not seem to form a clearly distinguishable group of neighbourhoods that are separated from the rest of society. Moreover, there is no rationale for the government's selection of the remaining 25 neighbourhoods; these are not essentially different from a large number of other neighbourhoods that are not selected. These findings support our statement that also the second and third assumption appear to be false.

The differences between our analysis and the official selection are most likely due to the policymakers’ use of indicators that do not seem suitable to detect accumulations of social-economic or liveability problems or are due, perhaps, to the political component in the selection.

Thus, we can find no evidence for the three policy assumptions mentioned above. The stated ambitions have the clear notion that in order to create liveable neighbourhoods and to combat social deprivation, the Programme should target a group of ‘worst’ neighbourhoods. As we have seen, the official programme selection does not justify the claim of a group of ‘worst’ neighbourhoods. The majority of the selected areas do not stand out.

Furthermore, as social deprivation and liveability are found to be unrelated, it would be better for any national policy response to treat the phenomena as two separate issues. The question then is whether it is prudent or effective to tackle both issues in one area-based programme. One important argument for issuing one programme is the ‘accumulation of problems’ argument. This implies that separate problems and issues within one area not only stack up, but also reinforce each other. This connects to the idea of neighbourhood effects, for which, however, the existence and causal pathways are not undisputed in the literature (see Galster, 2007).

Another possible rationale for giving the neighbourhoods in the lower-right quadrant of Figure 1 extra policy attention is that in some cases liveability issues related to crime and safety threaten the effective delivery of sectoral public services. While the withdrawal of the state in any type of neighbourhood can have catastrophic results, those areas with a high share of socially excluded persons may be extra vulnerable as there is a lower degree of self-sufficiency. For the Dutch case, both the authors of this paper and the Ministry have no evidence that such a tipping point has been reached in the ‘worst’ neighbourhoods. However, these scores do warrant closer inspection and further research.
However, referring back to the strategic objective of the Programme – to prevent social division in Dutch society – we contend that this objective is more relevant to social deprivation issues than it is to the unrelated liveability issues. Many of the ‘unliveable’ neighbourhoods (cases with extreme scores on the liveability component) are in fact populated by affluent households. Moreover, some of the most affluent neighbourhoods in the Netherlands are labelled ‘unliveable’ largely due to residents’ complaints about traffic nuisance.

*Figure 1. Component Scores Plot*
4.5 Discussion: liveability in neighbourhoods and social exclusion in society

To be clear, we are not arguing that liveability issues should be disregarded by policies like the 40 Neighbourhoods Programme. On the contrary, there is merit in tackling liveability issues through area-based initiatives on a neighbourhood level (Lawless, 2007). In many cases, liveability issues are unique local phenomena that require environmental approaches that are specific to the locale. Social deprivation could be related to local liveability issues, but to test this supposition the used liveability indicators seem to fall short in two ways. First, the used indicators were often related to external factors such as traffic and visitor nuisances. To test relations between social deprivation and liveability, the liveability indicators should have been related to the residents. Second, the liveability indicators are subjective and depend on expectations of residents. Higher-income households generally have higher expectations, as exemplified by the very affluent, yet ‘unliveable’, neighbourhoods in figure 1 (see Parkes et al., 2002). Any future research or policy selection endeavour would do well to overcome these limitations.

Nevertheless, as we can find no relation between liveability issues and social deprivation on a neighbourhood level, it is hard to maintain that liveability issues are related to social division in society on the same level as social deprivation and exclusion. Thus, when tackling social division, the social phenomenon that it should primarily address is social deprivation beyond the neighbourhood scale. The question then is whether the area-based Programme is suitable for closing the ‘growing gap’ in Dutch society. Before discussing this point, it may be useful to briefly ‘illuminate’ the gap with some empirical evidence in order to appreciate its width and depth.

In a European study on social exclusion, the Netherlands has one of the lowest rates of cumulative disadvantage and also one of the lowest probabilities of social exclusion (Tsakloglou and Papadopoulos, 2002). Furthermore, both in social and ethnic terms, segregation levels are moderate compared to other European cities (Musterd, 2005) and are not increasing (Musterd and Ostendorf, 2007). Moreover, there always seems to be some social mix in Dutch neighbourhoods. Even in the poorest neighbourhoods of each of the three largest cities, the share of middle-income households turns out to be larger than the share of poor households (Pinkster, 2006). This implies that the poor are not spatially cut off from middle-class contact, not even in the poorest neighbourhoods. In sum, research findings do not support the notion of a dual society (Musterd and Ostendorf, 2007).

Even though the Dutch gap is no abyss, there is social deprivation and exclusion in the Netherlands. So it may be a legitimate aim to intervene in specific areas to deal with social inequalities. However, Table 2 shows the share of low-income workers and people on benefits who live in the selected 40 neighbourhoods compared to the national total. In a best-case scenario the area-based Programme will only reach 8.1% of people who run the risk of being excluded – a relatively low percentage, which is probably due to the social mix of Dutch neighbourhoods. In Sweden, Andersson also found that only 4.7% of all poor households were reached in an area-based social exclusion programme (Andersson and Musterd, 2005). This inefficiency raises questions about the use of territorial strategies which aim to fight social deprivation through area targeting.
Table 2. Deprivation in the 40 Programme Neighbourhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Low-income workers</th>
<th>Persons (aged 15-64) on benefits</th>
<th>Persons (aged 15-64) on unemployment benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total NL</td>
<td>16,257,390</td>
<td>7,049,280</td>
<td>4,278,151</td>
<td>1,768,874</td>
<td>311,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 selected</td>
<td>808,090</td>
<td>408,900</td>
<td>203,939</td>
<td>143,407</td>
<td>21,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbourhoods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% selected</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CBS 2004

4.6 Conclusion

Dutch policymakers, despite the use of ‘objective indicators’, are unable to construct a policy which connects to its main objective – reducing the social division in Dutch society and creating liveable neighbourhoods. This is partly due to the Programme’s unclear problem definition, a common error in policymaking (Sanderson, 2002). For instance, the Programme does not clarify the object of intervention: places or people. Furthermore, the goal of creating liveable neighbourhoods may be at odds with the goal of fighting social deprivation. While neighbourhoods may be improved, the residents may not benefit from the improvement. Moreover, physical restructuring may result in the involuntarily reallocation of households. This means that residents may move away from their network of friends and relatives. By doing so they also move away from those who provide emotional and material support (cf. Goetz, 2003). Furthermore, the goals of improving liveability and reducing social-economic deprivation proved to be incompatible in terms of policy strategy. As liveability problems are connected to specific local situations, there is merit in tackling liveability issues in an area-based fashion, but social exclusion and deprivation should be addressed primarily in a sectoral or people-based way. These ambiguities are reflected in the indicators and in our analyses. In our case, some of these ambiguities can be explained by three factors: the history of urban policies; the institutional embeddedness; and current European trends.

First, urban policies in the Netherlands in the last 15 years have strongly favoured restructuring of the housing stock as a means to solve physical as well as social problems. This has led to a policy discourse that intertwines social exclusion, area-based initiatives, liveability, restructuring, integration, manageability and social mixing (see Uitermark, 2003). This eclectic discourse, which to some extent connects to Western European urban policies in general, has unmistakably affected the Programme’s design. In addition, the Programme is a continuation of previous policies that were designed to stimulate physical restructuring in several neighbourhoods. Hence, it inherited a legacy that was focused on physical restructuring rather than on social-economic deprivation and exclusion (Musterd and Ostendorf, 2008).
Secondly, the history of restructuring policies also created the institutional embeddedness of the Programme. As mentioned, the Programme is the responsibility of the Ministry of Housing and Spatial Planning, which together with municipalities and housing associations formed the triumvirate of Dutch urban renewal policies for 35 years (Schuiling, 2007). However, we can only speculate that the involvement of housing associations may be reflected in the use of a social-rented housing indicator in the selection. Nevertheless, it appears that, despite the emphasis on social division, the Programme and its actors are very much affected by the Dutch tradition of physical restructuring and urban renewal.

Lastly, the Programme connects to Western European policy trends as it focuses on issues of social exclusion and integration on the neighbourhood level and less on social inequalities. This seems to reflect the change in social welfare priorities since the rise of neo-liberalism in the 1980s.

However, the observation that any policy is irrevocably affected by its history, by political arguments and institutional embeddedness does not mean that we should cease to strive for interventions that effectively alter social mechanisms and produce sound indicators based on social scientific insight. As Andrew Sayer argues:

If social scientific accounts differ from those of actors then they cannot help but be critical of lay thought and action. Furthermore, (...) to identify understandings in society as false (...) is to imply that (...) those beliefs and actions ought to be changed. (Sayer, 2000, p. 19)

In case of the 40 Neighbourhoods Programme, policymakers should separate the objectives and choose one to focus on. This will increase efficiency and the chances of successfully tackling the city’s ‘wicked problems’.

When liveability issues are the most urgent problems, the Programme will have to improve its indicators and indexation methods. Furthermore, policymakers will have to accept that serious liveability issues do not necessarily appear in neighbourhoods with social deprivation or a high share of social housing.

Alternatively, when social exclusion and deprivation are the dominant issue at hand, the Programme should be overhauled. Socio-economic deprivation is a phenomenon at the individual level, and, as we have seen, poor individuals are too scattered in the Netherlands to warrant an area-based approach.

To conclude, we want to stress that policymakers should invest more in social theory and research when it comes to planning strategies that seek to alter social mechanisms.

Acknowledgements
The authors would like to thank Brooke Sykes and everyone who provided comments on earlier drafts. This research was co-funded by the Corpovenista / Habiforum Research Programme.
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Part II

The context of neighbourhood regeneration
5. Housing policy as a lever for change?
The politics of housing, tenure and welfare state reform

W.P.C. van Gent, manuscript submitted for review

Abstract
The housing tenure structure has long been associated with the form of welfare state capitalism in Western European countries. However, with the rise of owner occupancy in Europe, this association lost its straightforwardness. An alternative view is to view housing policies that promote owner occupancy for citizens to acquire assets, as an attempt by the state to reform social welfare provisions. The neo-liberal politics of welfare state reform are closely related with discourses of choice, personal responsibility and asset-building which are being associated with owner occupancy, or home ownership. This view is mostly based on the British experience and this paper seeks to broaden it by examining housing tenure policies and politics in the Netherlands and Spanish Catalonia. It appears that while ownership rationales are similar, historically grown national housing systems offer different opportunities for welfare state change.

Key words
Housing, Welfare State Reform, Housing Policy, the Netherlands, Spain

5.1 Introduction
The relationship between housing and the welfare state has been topic of academic interest for quite some time (e.g. Torgersen, 1987, Kleinman, 1996, Kemeny, 1981, Bengtsson, 2001, Malpass, 2003). Although explanations differ, some consensus was reached that there was some connection between type of welfare state and housing tenure, particularly the share of social rental housing against private forms of tenure such as owner occupancy (e.g. Kemeny, 1992). A large share of public and social housing has been associated with expanded and universal welfare states like the Netherlands and Sweden. On the other hand, the relative demise of social housing and increase in owner occupancy in the UK in the last two decades has been explained as causing the formation of a homeowner society with a liberal welfare state. The most widely quoted example in this respect is the British Right-to-Buy legislation, which privatised social housing stock on a large scale, and has led some to proclaim the sell-out of welfare state (see Jones and Murie, 2006, Forrest and Murie, 1990).

However, the rise of owner occupancy in other Western European countries may have put a strain on the relationship between type of welfare state and housing tenure. The growth of owner occupancy in these countries is related to top-down government policy (Atterhog, 2006). Despite the presence of neo-liberal politics, it would be an oversimplification to argue that these European welfare states are now all converging towards one liberal type (see typology in Esping-Andersen, 1990). Rather, neo-liberal restructuring projects tend to play out embedded within ‘national, regional, and local contexts defined by the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices, and political struggles’ (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). In that vein, it can be argued that housing, and more specifically the promotion of owner occupancy, may be related to the politics of welfare state reform, not because owner occupancy is responsible for causing retrenchment, but because it allows governments to pursue restructuring programmes that downsize other welfare services, notably social care and
pensions, or allocate them to a local level (Malpass, 2008b). Housing then serves as a tool or as a lever for governments to institute welfare state reform. The assumption in government is that individual financial profits from property ownership through rising housing market prices of their property will give people sufficient financial independence to augment their pensions themselves and purchase their own care. Furthermore, they may feel less inclined to support universal welfare provisions. So, the existence of substantial amounts of housing wealth in unmortgaged equity seems to offer the chance to secure political acceptance of changes in universal service provision.

Whether housing market gains are indeed sufficient to freely choose welfare services or whether people are actually willing to trade down their homes for extra income is a separate debate in housing literature (see Saunders, 1990, Boelhouwer et al., 2005, Hamnett, 1999, Doling and Elsinga, 2006, Elsinga et al., 2007). It should be noted though that housing market gains are more likely to (re)produce social inequality rather than lead to social equality, as the affluent tend to benefit more from rising housing prices (Hamnett, 1999). The goal of this paper, however, is to explore whether the claim that governments view housing as a complement or even substitute for social spending and therefore promote owner occupancy can be made outside the British institutional context. The notion described above is mostly based on British evidence and debates (before the 2008 financial and housing crises). Within the Western European context, Britain is a typical case for its relatively high rate of owner occupancy and its active programme to ‘modernise’ and reform public services. Furthermore, in the last twenty-five years, Britain has experienced a rapid change in its housing system, especially in terms of tenure composition. The aforementioned Right to Buy legislation of the 1980s has boosted the share of owner occupancy significantly. Nevertheless, it begs the questions whether these trends are visible elsewhere in Western Europe, and what the relationships between politics of housing and welfare state reform are (cf. Doling and Elsinga, 2006, Malpass, 2008a). Data from Sweden, for example, show that changes in housing tenure cannot be tied to decline in welfare provisions, and that a discourse of home ownership like that in Britain is missing (Kemeny, 2005). However, because of its strong social democratic welfare state tradition and public housing system, Sweden is perhaps too distinct from Britain to make any general claims about housing and politics of welfare state reform in Europe.

So, this paper seeks to expand the comparison by looking at the Netherlands and Catalonia, Spain. The Netherlands roughly follow the built-up, crises and retrenchment scenario of the post-WWII welfare state in North Western Europe. However, the different political structure and the development of housing and tenure structure in the Netherlands may lead to different outcomes. The second case looks at the Catalan government’s housing policy within the context of the asset-based Spanish welfare state. Here owner occupancy traditionally has played an important role in the Spanish ‘family welfare state’ and much of the family solidarity and support is based on housing wealth. However, the problem of affordability of housing seems to undermine this basis, which may force government to pursue a different type of restructuring. The main questions for these cases is: to what degree is housing policy being used as a tool for welfare state reform, and how do these policies relate to the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks and policy regimes?
5.2 Housing theory: tenure and the welfare state

The relationship between housing and welfare state has been well researched and debated as a causal relationship between tenure and the level of social service provision. Through international comparative study, Kemeny came to the conclusion that there is an inverse relationship between welfare spending and share of owner occupancy (see Kemeny 1981, 1992, 1995, 2001). His thesis relates pre-dominant housing tenure among individual households to state action in housing and welfare provisions. In societies, where owner occupancy was the norm, the high costs of purchasing a house, especially during young adulthood, led to voter resistance to the levels of taxation which were required to fund extensive welfare provisions. In addition, owner occupancy encourages households ‘to attempt to manipulate their lifetime budgets to accommodate their skewed housing costs’ (Kemeny, 1981: 60). The strategy minimizes non-housing expenditures during the early years when housing costs are high, but in later life housing costs would become minimal and be less of a burden on pensions. Furthermore, the consumption of housing capital at a later age could be a source of additional income to help to pay for health and social care expenses.

In these societies the ‘vested interests’ in owner occupancy would result in an ideological bias, which in a symbiotic relationship with the power to determine policy would further strengthen housing privatisation in society through subsidies and privatisation of stock. So, privatisation in non-housing areas such as health care, education and pensions would increase the demand in privatised housing because households need a source of income to be able to pay for these privatised social services. Consequently, with more households able to pay for their own social service needs and pensions, further privatization in non-housing areas would be demanded to lower taxation associated with state provisions (Kemeny, 1981). The vicious circle may obscure causality, but in Kemeny’s view housing has a determining role in shaping the welfare state (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Kemeny’s thesis (interpretation by the author)

Regardless of causality, the notion of the importance of tenure within the welfare state framework has been very influential. Indeed, convincing claims have been made about the relationship between housing and welfare state in Europe, at least based on the situation until the mid 1990s (e.g. Arbaci, 2007, Domburg- de Rooij, 2005, Balchin,
Arbaci (2007), for instance, is able to specify four welfare state clusters based on predominant tenure, the conception of society and the system of redistribution and benefits until the mid-1990s. These clusters are similar to Esping-Andersen’s (revised) welfare state typology: social democratic, corporatist, liberal and Latin rim (see Esping-Andersen, 1990, Esping-Andersen, 1999). So, social democratic and corporatist welfare states like Sweden and the Netherlands, where the state seeks to ensure a degree of societal wellbeing of social groups and tend to be more universal in their social service provision, are more prone to increase competition between profit and non-profit rental housing by providing public and social housing. Conversely, the UK and Spain, as typical liberal (and Latin) welfare states which emphasizes individual’s wellbeing and are generally more selective in benefits, would favour private property and owner occupancy. Likewise, residualisation of social rental housing is seen as typical for liberal welfare state regimes. Residualisation refers to a process within the social housing sector, while initially built for the ‘respectable’ working class and segments of the middle class, of increasing concentrations of low income and benefit-dependent households (see Van Kempen and Priemus, 2002, Forrest and Murie, 1990).

5.3 The need for revision

While Kemeny’s thesis has been influential in theorizing housing and society, there are some issues with it. First, and most important for the argument here, there is the point of the contemporary relevance. Even though housing systems differ, the general trend in European countries has been a decrease in social-rented housing, both absolutely and proportionally, and a matching increase in individual owner occupancy. Owner occupied housing accounts for more than fifty percent of tenure in most Western European countries (Whitehead and Scanlon, 2007). However, the share of public and social housing still exceeds one fifth of the housing in the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, and Sweden. However, in general, as owner occupancy has been increasing in Europe, claims about the relationship between tenure and welfare state are increasingly harder to sustain. Although welfare state reform and liberalizations have taken place in social democratic states, it is currently a bridge too far to proclaim them as liberal on the basis of shifting housing tenures alone.

Second, the assertion that socio-cultural factors associated with the concept of ‘ownership society’ determine the shape of housing provision and consumption, more than economic conditions, may be debatable. An alternative view is the tenure modernisation thesis, which points to structural economic factors instead of socio-cultural factors to explain the dominant housing tenure (Malpass and Murie, 1999). While private rent was a suitable provision for wage labourers in the 19th century, the economic and social conditions of the 20th century have favoured owner occupancy. The long term nature of investments in private rented housing and the decreasing returns on investments have made owner occupancy the more effective form of tenure for large scale capital investment (Harloe, 1985: 311-319), especially in consumerist societies. Non-residual social housing should be seen as a result of a situation of market disruption in the unusual era after WWII (Harloe, 1995). So, housing and tenure may also be affected by the dominant modes, patterns and methods of consumption and production, which are moderated by political actors and result in state action.

Third, detailed and systematic empirical evidence is absent, while some research undermines the thesis (Castles, 1998, 2002). In addition, the causality of the relationship between welfare state and tenure form is questioned (Castles, 2002).
Kemeny (2005) acknowledges the issue of causal direction and argues that his research was primarily interested in establishing the relationship itself. More important, Kemeny suggests a reformulation of his thesis by looking at those societies which still have well-developed welfare systems and possess integrated rental markets. Irrespective of the characteristics of the rental market, these societies may begin to experience a shift in tenure towards owner occupancy. The reductions in welfare provisions may contribute to the demise of the integrated rental market because home ownership may very well be a strategy for elderly to reduce costs and release funds for care. The reformulated thesis proposes that electoral pressure of homeowners looking to balance the (future) books may result in cutbacks in welfare state provisions, which will reinforce owner occupancy.

However, although voter resistance against the expansion of the welfare state is plausible, the assertion that a majority of voters easily accepts cuts in expanded public services and provisions may be overstretched. There is evidence of the unpopularity among voters of policies that cut back and redistribute social programmes' benefits (Pierson, 1998). Even in the UK during the 1980s, the neo-liberal Thatcher government was unable to cut back on welfare provisions such as health care, social services and pensions, because of (upper) middle class resistance (Harvey, 2005: 61). Paul Pierson argues that the process of retrenchment is slow and incremental mainly because it is such a ‘delicate effort either to transform programmatic change into an electorally attractive proposition, or at least, to minimize the political costs involved’ (Pierson, 1996: 145). As a result, most changes have low visibility or affect only a small portion of the populace like cuts in specific programmes and stricter eligibility rules. In this respect, the large-scale sale of public housing under the Right-to-Buy legislation in the UK has been exceptional rather than normal in the practice and politics of reform (cf. Pierson, 1996).

5.4 Reform through top down emphases on choices and assets

Malpass (2006, 2008b) seeks a new relationship between housing and welfare state by proposing to view housing as a means for government to achieve their welfare state reform objectives incrementally and delicately. His argument also involves the discourses attached to housing policies. Indeed, coherent discourses can play a decisive role in the success or failure of welfare state reform (Schmidt, 2002). Drawing on the British experience, Malpass argues that welfare state restructuring is pursued by emphasising individual choice and responsibility. Choice, in general, refers to a greater reliance on market mechanisms which are supposed to provide more choice against competitive prices. In terms of housing policy, choice means a great emphasis on private market. Owner occupancy gives people a degree of choice of where they want to live. Furthermore, it gives people the prospect of wealth accumulation, which may be used for future social service and health care costs and for augmenting pensions.

The British New Labour government since 1997 has shown signs of a shift from the post-war welfare state emphasis on collective provisions for individual need to an emphasis on personal provision through savings and asset accumulation. Along with job chances, higher incomes and enhanced public services, individual assets are a cornerstone of the government’s welfare policy. In this respect, asset accumulation, or asset-based welfare (Sherraden, 1991), is viewed as a route out or away from poverty. As a result, British citizens are increasingly, and officially, being made aware of their properties as more than places to live, but also as assets. Consequently, the British government has launched an initiative in 2005 to promote owner occupancy among lower-income households, whereby the advantages of benefits from increases in housing asset values are highlighted. While these advantages have been put forward by earlier British governments, the context now is less on collective welfare states and more on individual
responsibility and personal well-being.

Furthermore, official communication is emphasising the purpose of saving, i.e. providing for oneself in a later stage of life, instead of promoting it for its own sake. The shift from collective responsibility to personal responsibility becomes apparent by the British government’s concern for the ‘wealth gap’, i.e. poverty, and the use of housing as a means to reduce it. The third term Labour Minister of Housing encourages savings through property ownership for “when the rainy day comes” (quoted in Malpass, 2008b).

In addition to the ownership, choice and responsibility ideologies, Malpass (2008) also cites a more practical incentive for British policy makers and politicians to pursue owner occupancy and privatisation of social rental housing. Since a decade or so, housing has become a sizeable source of state revenue in the UK. The lowered costs for social rental housing is due to three decisions: the shift from output subsidies to income-related assistance with housing costs, the sale of housing to tenants, and the transfer of social rental stock from municipal ownership to private housing associations. Furthermore, with lower levels of investment in the last 30 years social landlords in the UK have been reducing overall indebtedness which means a lower burden of loan charges. In addition, the disappearance of the mortgage interest tax relief in 2000 meant that housing has become a source of income through inheritance tax and stamp duty on purchases.

In sum, the promotion of owner occupancy is presented by government as a strategy to tackle social economic disparities, even though income disparities will likely remain or perhaps even be exacerbated. Furthermore, it is presented as a strategy to provide security of care and pensions and get income from housing. Since the 1990s the British government has increasingly investigated the possibility of using assets as a means for individuals to purchase services which were previously provided for by the state. Perhaps too many parts of the government have seen owner occupancy as a means to offload financing problems by pointing to the release of unmortgaged housing equity. This trend means that owner occupied housing would not only become more important in the provision of shelter and in intergenerational transfer of wealth, but also more important in underpinning the provision of social services (Groves et al., 2007).

In this sense, housing is used as a ‘possible tool or lever of change, rather than a driver of it’ (Malpass, 2008b). In this perspective, housing plays a centre-stage role in the change in welfare state politics among other factors such as slower economic growth, problems associated with rising service sector employment, the expansion of governmental commitments, the fiscal demands of ageing populations in states with advanced pension and health programmes, and the restructuring of households (cf. Pierson, 1996). The purpose of the use of housing for non-housing objectives would be a cautious retrenchment or readjustment. The readjustment is not so much related to quantitative changes as in terms of less welfare spending, but to changing more qualitative, or institutional, factors which structure debates, political preferences, policies and political choices (cf. Palier, 2003). This (neo-)liberal strategy of state restructuring by emphasising choice and personal responsibility and by building a parallel private system of care and insurance in order to incrementally hollow out state provisions bears similarities to the liberal conservatives’ strategy of welfare restructuring in the US since the late 1970s (Hacker, 2006).
5.5 Comparison

As mentioned in the introduction, this paper seeks to expand the enquiry into the relationship between housing policy and welfare state reform. The UK provides a typical example where the liberal heritage of individual gains within the housing market may serve as a means to make welfare services less universal, more restrictive, more local, and ‘recommodified’ (see figure 2). Furthermore, in the UK the advent of owner occupancy and the demise of social rental housing has become a source of revenue for the state in recent years, at least until the 2008 financial debt crisis.

The comparison will be expanded with the Netherlands and Spain which are akin to the two typical housing-welfare cases, Sweden and UK respectively. Like Sweden, the Dutch welfare state has often been characterised as a social democratic welfare state with a unitary rental market (Kemeny, 1995, Esping-Andersen, 1990), although some would characterise the Netherlands as Christian Democratic (e.g. De Swaan, 1988). However, the Netherlands has seen two decades of liberal reform in both housing and social services and benefits (see figure 1), which may classify it as less social democratic. Furthermore, although social housing still is prominent, the share of owner occupancy is increasing according to government policy. So, while home ownership in Sweden is currently not being promoted in light of more individual choice and to augment or replace social and care provisions (Kemeny, 2005), the Netherlands with its more pronounced reform agenda may have become more like the UK.

Spain has been classified as a typical family-based welfare state, where assets from owner occupancy underpin family strategies to provide additional services and care. So, in a sense, Spain is a type of ‘homeowner society’. Although it is not an ‘English-speaking’ as discussed by Kemeny, this makes the case particularly interesting for comparison. However, it is also fundamentally different in terms of welfare state development. It never had its post war welfare state build-up and still has liberal and rudimentary welfare state provisions with social spending increasing steadily since the 1980s under the Socialist party. However, it now approaches the amount of spending in the UK and the Netherlands, as shown in Figure 3.
The Spanish case will focus on the policies of the Catalan region specifically which is the most autonomous within the federal system and has far-reaching discretionary powers in the fields of housing and land use.

*Figure 3. Public Social Expenditure in Sweden, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Spain 1980-2003 (OECD, 2004)*

The remainder of this paper will be focused on several housing policies that affect tenure in the Netherlands and Catalonia, and see whether there is merit in the claim that housing is being used to attain non-housing goals related to the reform of the welfare state. So, whether owner occupancy is being promoted as a complement or even substitution of welfare services. The two case studies are based on data from secondary sources, policy documents and several interviews with policy makers.
5.5.1 The Netherlands

The built up of the Dutch welfare state has been characterised by leftist and conservative paternalism under the aegis of Christian Democratic party (De Swaan, 1988). However, after 25 years of reforms leftist Paternalism has been washed down. Nevertheless, the Dutch Welfare System can not be labelled as (neo-)liberal. While the welfare system is being liberalized, it is still characterised by ‘institutional inertia’ of social democratic and paternalist, or corporatist, assumptions that were dominant in the past (Becker, 2000). Furthermore, the Christian Democratic notion of subsidiarity has introduced some communitarian elements into the system, whereby civic society, community and family are seen as alternatives for social order as opposed to market or state power (Van Staveren, 2007, Delanty, 2003). In this respect, the recent Law on Social Support (Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning) is exemplary, which means a localisation of social welfare and health services to the municipal and neighbourhood level with a large emphasis on voluntary familial and community care.

The mix of welfare regimes in the Netherlands is also reflected in the Dutch housing system, which has distinct social democratic and corporatist characteristics (Hoekstra, 2003). In addition, liberal elements have emerged recently as well (see below). A distinctive feature of the Dutch housing system is the dominance of social housing, which is owned by about 500 housing associations. Even though they are privatised, housing associations are required by law to invest their proceeds in the quality of housing and new development. While the amount of social housing units has remained relatively stable, the share of social housing has decreased from 39 percent in 1995 to 35 percent in 2005. The decrease is mainly due to the increase in owner occupancy, which stood at 54 percent in 2005 (Elsinga and Wassenberg, 2007).

So even though social housing plays a significant role, the promotion of owner occupancy has been on the political agenda for a long time and consequently has been part of housing policies (see Elsinga, 2003). While there have been owner occupancy policies since the early 20th century, the emphasis since the 1980s shifted from construction of new stock to the conversion of the existing rental stock and from housing related subsidies to occupant-related subsidies. The most recent national housing policy memorandum on housing, Mensen, Wensen, Wonen (English title: What People Want, Where People Live) dates from 2001, and was drawn up under auspices of a Social Democratic - Liberal Third Way government. It specifies the ‘housing mission’ for the period 2000-2010. Overall, it is characterised by its strong (neo-)liberal tendencies. The memorandum emphasises greater individual choice on the housing market by reducing the social rental sector through demolition and sales, and by encouraging owner occupancy through new construction. Furthermore, means-tested subsidies were introduced to further increase ownership among low-income groups.

The preference for owner occupancy seems to be rooted in the belief that home ownership constitutes better citizenship: ‘...when a citizen is an owner of a to be built dwelling (...) or an existing dwelling (...), he will be more aware of his rights’ (VROM, 2001: 68), and: ‘generally, authority over and responsibility for [the state of] the dwelling are greatest in case of owner occupancy (p.74)’ Furthermore, the memorandum acknowledges the possible advantages of housing wealth and assets, which are not only an individual advantage but apparently also yields wider benefits: ‘owner occupancy can contribute to enhancement of quality of living as well as to desirable societal goals like the increase of property values and wealth (p. 74)’. The benefit from an increased share of owner occupancy to society as a whole lies in the macro economic role of owner occupancy through increased consumer spending financed by the surplus value of owner occupied dwellings.
In addition, the Dutch housing memorandum explicitly mentions neighbourhood regeneration as a measure to lower risk on the housing market: ‘the development of capital risk at neighbourhood level can be avoided by pro-active transformation measures within the neighbourhood, for instance by upgrading public space’ (p. 79-80). Furthermore, the pro-active transformation of neighbourhoods involves owner occupancy because: ‘owning a dwelling breeds more control and responsibility. The influence (of owner occupancy) is great and often extends to the way the residential environment is judged and the participation of social activities within the neighbourhood’ (p. 81). So, neighbourhood regeneration policies are framed as a tool for individuals to advance socially and economically (see also VROM Raad, 2006).

So, although the Housing Memorandum shows liberal tendencies and favours a larger share of owner occupancy to increase asset accumulation of individual homeowners, there is no clear rationale that links asset gains from owner occupancy to a ‘rainy day’.

The ageing population is a major political issue in the Netherlands, yet solutions to increasing health care costs are sought elsewhere, like the mentioned Law on Social Support. This law may yet be significant to housing because it will allocate care services to a local level, which means more differentiation of welfare provision per neighbourhood. Good quality services may influence local housing prices and consequently the housing market becomes a mediator for welfare provision. However, it remains to be seen whether differences in quality will grow substantially. Furthermore, the absence of serious political pressure on pensions may be explained by the current robust pension system, which was performing comparatively well (Haverland, 2001). However, with the 2008 financial crises, the major pension funds have taken major losses. This has put new pressure on the affordability of pensions which has ignited new political debates on how to cover these losses. Housing has not been mentioned in these debates yet.

Rather than the purpose of augmenting welfare provisions, policy rationales have moral connotations that are in line with ‘traditional’ Dutch paternalism. Nevertheless, housing tenure may also play a role in the welfare state change in the Netherlands through different institutional mechanisms. The dominant social housing sector seems to offer several opportunities for government to reform social services or generate income. The Housing Memorandum also included several reforms in the social rented sector including the new possibility of selling to renters. These reforms have put a strain on the tenure form, but may not necessarily lead to residualisation yet (Van Kempen and Priemus, 2002). Three recent government actions show that the social rented sector is providing income for the state and opportunities for change.

First, besides maintaining their stock and providing housing, the Social Rented Sector Management Order states that housing associations have to provide housing (but not care) for the elderly and disabled. Moreover, while they have also been obligated to work on liveable neighbourhoods since 1997, housing associations are increasingly forced into a new role with regard to urban social policies (see Boelhouwer, 2007). Consequently, housing association are increasingly expected and required to contribute to local service provisions such as elderly and health care, employment, and safety issues, in the form of ‘social real estate’ (e.g.. care facilities, community centres) or subsidising local regeneration interventions within the framework of urban policy.

Second, while housing associations have long been exempt from corporation taxes, new taxation regulations will start to collect these from 2008, providing the state with an extra income of about € 600 million. In addition, there are also legal issues over the institution of the corporation tax. These taxes were instituted during a period of strong public and political discourse directed against housing associations which were accused of inaction in disadvantaged neighbourhoods despite having tremendous wealth, mainly in property assets. Despite these rationales, the corporation is not earmarked for
neighbourhood regeneration. In essence, the taxation and required ‘social investments’
may be viewed as extracting assets from the ‘unmortgaged’ housing wealth of the social
rental sector. In a political atmosphere where the future affordability of social and health
care costs remain unresolved and debated, the extra tax income is more than welcome.

Third, in addition to taxation and their role in local welfare provisioning, housing
associations are cast as the tools for new construction and conversion of owner occupied
housing for the middle and low income groups. As such they are expected to take the risk
in the regeneration of poor or unpopular areas with low housing market demand.

So, the social rental sector may have become a source of income as well as a way
to outsource some elements of social welfare provisions. This also means that there is
an interest in sustaining the tenure form along with its institutional context. Housing
associations, however, have been less enthusiastic with their new role. In 2008, a housing
association even took legal action to see whether it is possible to become a fully privatised
organisation outside the Social Rented Sector Management Order. If this is made possible,
the Dutch social rental system may implode. So, it is questionable whether the situation is
indeed sustainable.

In sum, there are indications that housing is being used by Dutch government to
change some aspects of the welfare state through localisation of some health care
services and through increased home-ownership as a means for (low-income) households
to increase assets and become more responsible citizens. However, there is no evidence of
a direct connection in policy rationales between these aims and social and health care and
pension provisions.

Furthermore, the system of mortgage interest tax deduction is the most unrestrictive
system in Western Europe, which is essentially regressive distribution of wealth as the tax
reductions increase with level of income. Although it is not considered a tax expenditure
by government, the owner occupied tax regime reduced income tax base by € 17.9 billion
in 2005 (Van der Hoek and Radloff, 2007), which does not weigh up against income
from owner occupation. So, claims about owner occupancy as a means to balance the
government budget like in the UK, cannot be made either. Furthermore, while there is
pressure on the social rented sector, the continued existence and fostering of the sector
may be partly explained by the income and opportunities it offers.

5.5.2 Catalonia, Spain

The previous cases have suggested that housing is used for at least some level of welfare
retrenchment and liberal reform. The Spanish Catalan case, however, indicates that
housing may also be used to institute welfare change in a different direction when the
limits of asset-based welfare are reached.

Due to the authoritarian regime until the late 1970s, Spain never developed a social
welfare state in the immediate post-war era, but saw a relatively late build-up. Before
this, intra-family transfers of wealth and charity by voluntary associations were the
most important sources of welfare provision. Nevertheless, despite increases in social
expenditure and benefit schemes, these institutions still characterise the family-based
welfare state (Moreno, 2000).

In terms of housing, policies in Spain have been traditionally focused on the
promotion of home ownership through tax benefits and supply-side development
subsidies (Pareja Eastaway and San Martin, 1999). Consequently, the Spanish tenure
structure is dominated by owner occupied housing (81% in 2001). While 11% of the
housing stock is rented, this is mainly private sector rental. The remaining 8% is classified
as ‘other’ (Van Boxmeer and Van Beckhoven, 2005). A public or social rented sector is
virtually non-existent. However, to aid weaker households in their housing needs, Spanish housing policy has developed an instrument: Officially Protected Dwellings (VPO, *Vivienda de Protección Oficial*). It features subsidies for demand (households) as well as supply (in the form of 'bricks and mortar' subsidies for developers). The dwellings under the VPO regime are publicly owned dwellings with a postponed ownership for the occupant after about 25 to 30 years. VPO is not necessarily confined to (postponed) owner occupancy, but the overwhelming majority of dwellings under the regime were designated as owner occupied (Pareja Eastaway et al., 2004, Pareja Eastaway and San Martín, 1999). As we shall see further down below, there is an upcoming shift in this trend in Catalonia.

What’s more, housing plays a vital role within the Spanish welfare state. Housing transfers and welfare resources tend to favour the elderly at the expense of the young. In order to retain their constituencies of employees in so-called ‘guaranteed’ sectors of the economy, which receive more generous pensions than employees in non-guaranteed sectors, the political Left does not prioritize universal welfare provisions. The only exception is the expansion of health care, but this tends to benefit the elderly as well.

This age-skewed social welfare system together with age-skewed home ownership creates a dualistic self-perpetuating system which mirrors the labour market, as only those in guaranteed sectors have full access. This dualistic system creates intergenerational tensions, which are eased by the familial solidarity and extended kinship networks.

Contacts and assets from family are a major source to fill the gaps of the welfare system. The availability of assets is dependent on housing wealth, but also on one family member being employed within a guaranteed sector. When employed in the guaranteed sector there is no need for consumption of housing wealth for additional income alongside the pension. As a result, the family will be able to reproduce assets for the next generation. The purchase of a house by a young couple typically involves the mobilisation of assets by the two families (Allen et al., 2004).

So, the Spanish welfare system may be characterised as an asset-based welfare system in which housing is a crucial source of family income. However, the affordability of housing has become more problematic in the recent decade. The financial deregulation of the mortgage market and favourable lending conditions have contributed to the rapid growth of mortgage credit in Spain. The surge in housing prices, especially in the cities, has resulted in the exclusion of young and low-income groups from ownership (Barrios García and Rodríguez Hernández, 2008). In addition, while the rental market has been liberalised in 1985, the private rental sector has not become an affordable alternative for low-income families and young people unable to purchase, and the social rented sector is too marginal (Pareja Eastaway and San Martín, 2002). Increased labour market volatility and societal changes (immigration, expansion of university students, and new household structures) have increased demand for social and rental units (Arbaci, 2008).

Although the central government has implemented some policies to assuage the situation, housing has increasingly fallen under the responsibility of Spain’s autonomous regions (Pareja Eastaway et al., 2004). Nowadays, the regional government of Catalonia, *Generalitat de Catalunya*, has ascertained a large degree of independence and responsibility in several welfare state fields.

After the instalment of the socialist Catalan government in 2004, affordable housing has been made a policy priority. As a result, several new housing policies initiatives have been shifting away from the sole emphasis on owner occupancy.

First, the 2007 National Agreement on Housing 21 was set up to provide more affordable housing. Through five thematic guidelines, the Agreement aims at improving access to housing, particularly for young people; improving the quality of the housing stock;

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improving the housing accessibility of disabled people; preventing social exclusion and guaranteeing adequate housing for homeless persons. In order to achieve these goals, the regional Catalan government plans to build 160,000 housing units under the protected (owner occupancy) housing regime (Vivienda de Protección Oficial), which is roughly double the amount built in Catalonia since 1980. In addition, the aim is to improve the housing accessibility and mobility of 35,000 disabled people and build 15,000 units for “social inclusion” and 8,000 “emergency” units for homeless people. The new housing can be both owner occupied in a social regime and social rental.

Second, the legislation on the Right to Adequate Housing (Llei del Dret a l’Habitatge), passed in December 2007, punishes acts such as leaving properties vacant, overcrowding and real estate mobbing. The law also entails new regulations that guarantee good quality housing and environmentally friendly construction. More importantly, the Law prescribes the steady expansion of social rental housing in Catalonia agreed upon in the National Agreement. A share of the newly built protected housing will go to municipalities who have to let them to socially excluded groups to avoid concentrations of these groups. The exact share depends on negotiations between the Generalitat and the municipalities. This will not impact the housing market immediately but will have an effect in a decade or so when municipalities will have obtained a substantial stock. The stock will further increase because the new law also prescribes that 30% of the dwellings in all new public developments must fall under the protected housing regime. Private developments are obliged to offer 30% of the new dwellings at affordable rent. These dwellings will be distributed by lottery. Another measure is the institutionalisation of subsidies as they are changed from limited short-term projects to more permanent provisions.

Third, the Neighbourhoods Law (Llei de Barris) is an urban policy that targets marginalised or deteriorated neighbourhoods. Even though social issues are central in the selection, most of the activities and interventions involve renovation and renewal.

The recent policies above seem to indicate the creation of a Catalan housing system with an expanded social sector. Arbaci (2008) argues that affordability issues and social marginalization within the rental sector cannot be addressed with emergency social housing policies alone, but these issues require a rethinking of social welfare as well as social and political programmes that address the overall housing tenure system and social inclusion. The question is whether the Catalan policies and programmes will prove to be sufficiently comprehensive to institute change.

Allen et al. (2004) argue that the nature of family strategies and formal housing policies are equally important aspects of the Spanish housing system. In that spirit, it can be argued that the housing policies above are also the result of the Catalan (urban) housing system’s inability to continue functioning as a cornerstone of the (family) asset-based welfare state for a next generation. This is related to the changes in labour market, but also to the limits of the housing market as a steady source of extra income. In that sense, the Catalan case is illustrative of the unsuitability of housing-based assets to function as the cornerstone of the welfare state in a post-industrial era. Furthermore, it also shows that the state in an ‘ownership society’ does not necessarily push for more owner occupancy.
5.6 Discussion and conclusion

The explorations here and elsewhere imply not to take housing policy at face value but to regard it as an element within government strategies and intentions with regard to the welfare state, economic development and social justice. This interpretation helps to understand housing policies and the development of the housing system. This paper sought to explore the relation between housing and the welfare state with a particular interest in housing policies for non-housing objectives and with a focus on policies designed to change tenure and its meaning. Despite differences between each of the cases, it seems that housing can play an important role within the Western European welfare state as a lever of change. To that end, housing policies can take multiple forms such as fiscal measures, supply-side subsidies, tenure transfers, privatisations, etc. The importance of asset gains from housing market is not only reflected in domain and sector-based policies such as health care and pensions but also in housing policies that focus on place-based interventions such as housing renewal and neighbourhood regeneration.

However, the type and direction of change is different depending on each case’s institutional and political mechanisms (cf. Kleinman, 1996). The promotion of owner occupancy in Britain may be regarded as a clear step towards an asset-based welfare system, but this is not as evident in the Netherlands and Spanish Catalonia.

In the Dutch housing system, owner occupancy is being promoted under the guise of asset gains for individuals, but no connection is made to pensions and self-provision of care in the policy and political discourses. Furthermore, owner occupancy is a cost rather than a source of income on the government budget with the very generous mortgage interest tax deduction. In a sense, the deduction redistributes wealth and assets, yet favours the affluent. However, we have seen that the Dutch housing system offers other opportunities for government to extract unmortgaged wealth. Especially, the capital within the social rental stock is utilised for extra tax income or diverted to social programmes at the neighbourhood level and to aid in the provision of local welfare services.

The limits of an asset-based welfare state based on owner occupancy and housing market gains have become apparent in Spain. The issue of affordability in combination with changes in the labour market and societal changes have put a strain on the familial welfare state structure. It is yet uncertain whether the changes in housing policies are indeed part of a wider welfare state reform within the autonomous region of Catalonia and Spain or are merely an attempt to maintain the old situation. Nevertheless, it is best to view the new housing policies as part of changes within the traditional labour-family-housing nexus of the Spanish welfare state.

Concerning the direction of change and the use of housing tenure, it is hard to make the general claims of owner occupancy being used to diminish the size and scope of the European social welfare state as implied in the British case. This is mainly, because politics are by definition opportunistic. The Catalan case has shown that social housing is being used to sustain or reform the Spanish liberal ‘home owner society’. The Dutch case shows that the social rented sector offers its own opportunities and income, while owner occupancy remains costly. Even in the UK, the unfolding 2008 financial and housing crises have forced government to intervene in the housing system and market in characteristically illiberal ways. This may be because long term social and economic interests realise the risk when asset accumulation is tied to housing markets creating a giant pyramid scheme.

So, despite similar tendencies towards more owner occupancy, the direction and mechanisms of change and reform are dependent on national institutional and political frameworks. In other words, the purpose as well as the choice of levers to pull are highly
dependent on national frameworks. This means that it will be difficult to draw up any general causal model that explains the relationship between housing and the welfare state (cf. Somerville, 2005), that is not without taking into account the institutional path dependent context. So, even without another new housing-welfare state typology, the relationship between housing and the welfare state may still be very relevant to explain and understand how neo-liberal ideology plays out within the development of national housing systems and, as such, affects the social geographies of our cities.

Acknowledgements
The author would like to thank Peter Malpass, Willem Boterman, Fenne Pinkster, Brooke Sykes, the participants of the ENHR working group conference ‘Building on Home Ownership: Housing Policies and Social Strategies’, OTB Research Institute at Delft University (November 13th and 14th, 2008), as well as Wim Ostendorf and Sako Musterd for providing extremely useful comments.
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6. Housing context and social transformation strategies in neighbourhood regeneration in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Birmingham and Stockholm

W.P.C. van Gent, manuscript submitted for review

Abstract

Neighbourhood regeneration efforts in Western European cities often rely on social transformation strategies that use urban renewal to institute social change in deprived and stigmatised areas. While altering the social mix is usually the policy objective, local managers and policy makers also favour social transformation as a means to make an area more manageable, both socially and physically. Generally, there are two types of social transformation strategies: large-scale tenure restructuring and upgrading. The first type of strategy relies on radically changing the housing stock through renewal to directly change social composition; this gives local managers a lot of control. The second strategy relies on physical interventions and new amenities to upgrade the area’s housing market position to attract middle-class households. The transformation through upgrading the market position gives managers less control. This paper argues that while local managers favour transformation with control, the type of strategy they are able to adopt depends on the housing context. A comparative analysis of four cases of regeneration shows that the opportunities and constraints of national policy framework and regional housing market characteristics explain the type of social transformation strategies adopted.

6.1 Introduction

In dealing with deprived urban areas, regeneration practices in Western European cities have shown surprisingly similar themes. Apart from improving the state of housing and the built environment, regeneration efforts also include social transformation strategies. These strategies use housing and urban renewal to change the composition of an area’s population with respect to class or ethnicity. The transformation strategy is related to the social mix objective, which implies increasing the proportion of native or middle-class households. The altered social mix is meant to reduce negative neighbourhood effects on individuals that are attributed to negative socialisation processes, failing local social networks, or stigmatisation effects (see Andersson and Musterd, 2005b, Sarkissian, 1976, Andersson, 2006, Musterd et al., 2003). As a policy idea, social mix has been questioned with respect to the mechanisms of neighbourhood effects and with respect to the absence of convincing empirical support in Western Europe to justify these socially intrusive policies (Galster, 2007, Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001). Furthermore, transformation strategies may lead to conflict when residents do no want to make way. This tension may become a source of conflict between some resident groups and the renewal actors (Cameron, 2006, Aalbers, 2003). This contradiction shows that transformation strategies are ‘visions’ of governing elites and managers rather than those of residents (Hall and Rowlands, 2005). In addition to a belief in neighbourhood effects, social transformation strategies may be pursued by managers and policy elites to address problems of social disorder. Concentrations of disadvantaged social groups may put an administrative burden on local managers. For this reason, local managers, policy makers and administrators may
strive for social transformation to increase the manageability of an area and its population (Uitermark et al., 2007, Uitermark, 2003).

The role of local managers within policy networks in mediating and shaping renewal, development and housing has been noted before (see Le Galès, 2002, Pahl, 1977, Lipsky, 1980). Nevertheless, local managers have limited room to manoeuvre and may not always have full control over the change they seek. We can distinguish between two types of social transformation strategies, which vary in the level of control. The first type relies on changing housing tenure through renewal to transform social composition. So, tenure restructuring gives local managers a high level of control over the degree and spatial planning of the transformation and the resulting amount of housing for middle and lower class households. The second strategy mostly relies on physical interventions and new amenities to attract middle-class households to the area. So, a process of upgrading is set in motion to gradually change an area’s population, much like a process of gentrification. In contrast to the first strategy, tenure composition remains relatively stable and direct displacement through demolition is limited. More importantly, this strategy implies less control over the spatial planning and degree of neighbourhood transformation.

A manager’s room to manoeuvre and degree of control over social change is likely related to the housing context. This paper is concerned with how different housing context elements impinge upon the type of social transformation strategy adopted. The aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between housing context and social transformation strategies in regeneration and to explain variation in strategies. The main question this paper will address is: How do housing context institutions restrict and enable social transformation strategies within the regeneration of post-war housing estates in Western European cities?

To identify the interrelationships between the housing context and social transformation strategies, this paper will follow an institutional approach. Furthermore, the question will be answered by a comparison of regeneration practices in four large housing estates in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Birmingham and Stockholm, which were built during the post-WWII decades and are currently undergoing regeneration. These estates, like many post-WWII neighbourhoods, suffered from rapid decline and at one point were regarded as the most problematic, stigmatised and deprived areas of their cities.

6.2 Actors and institutional frameworks

The configuration of social transformation strategy in regeneration is essentially the result of several strategic choices by various types of local managers within the state, housing associations, resident groups and voluntary and private organisations. However, these managers do not operate in a social vacuum, but are embedded in social systems (Pahl, 1977). Managers, who strive for social transformation, are confronted with a wider housing (policy) context. The relevant elements of this context shall receive further attention in the next paragraph after discussing the interaction between actors (i.e. managers) and institutions (i.e. housing context).

Institutions are central concepts to any social enquiry into policy action (Rhodes in Lowndes, 2002). Institutions are the norms, values and formal rules that guide social action and, as such, structure it (see March and Olsen, 1984, Hall and Taylor, 1996). Drawing on Giddens (1984) and regulation theory, Jessop (2004) stresses the importance of the relationship between structures and actors within the institutional approach. This relationship is two-way. Firstly, institutions do not exist outside the specific action context, but their relevance lies in their structural tendency to reinforce, or to discourage, selectively specific forms of action, tactics or strategies. In short, structures select behaviours. This means that actors take strategic action, albeit not always totally rational
or informed, based on the institutions in place. However, while institutions may steer and select, they do not necessarily determine action. There may well be a measure of freedom to choose a course of action. Secondly, actors can also reflexively reconstitute institutions. The capacity to do so depends on the changing selectivities of institutions and on the actors’ changing opportunities to engage in strategic action.

This analysis will transcend discourse analysis, to also include ‘concrete objects, experiences and constraints of the world around us’ (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003, p. 20). In other words, it will focus on how different types of structure, i.e. policy frameworks and housing market characteristics, enable or restrict action.

6.3 Housing context

For the institutions that may affect transformation strategies, we will look at the housing context. The housing context may play a role in shaping discourses among policy actors, as well as function as concrete objects, experiences and constraints, or provide opportunities for collective action. It can be seen as the constellation of actors, formal rules of regimes, social rules and belief systems that shape institutional thought, reflection and strategic action (cf. Salet, 2000). More concretely, the housing context structures the actor framework, the distribution of power among actors, the formal rules and regulations, (shared) meanings with respect to the problems and objectives of regeneration and housing in general, but also practical considerations such as financial constraints, investment risks or bureaucratic rationales.

We discern two different institutional elements within the housing context: housing market characteristics and policy framework. In concrete terms, these two elements may either restrict or offer local managers opportunities regarding strategic action: shaping social transformation strategies (see figure 1). As such, they also determine the amount of control that local managers have over the social transformation and regeneration of ‘their’ deprived neighbourhoods. The two elements will be explored briefly below based on some literature and will serve as the basis for our comparison. It should be mentioned that even though they are presented separately, the two elements are not independent. For instance, housing policy regulates ownership structures and thereby the functioning of the housing market.

Figure 1. Housing context of social transformation strategies
6.3.1 Housing market characteristics

Neighbourhood regeneration involves the renewal of housing space to make an area more attractive. However, as discussed above, these renewal efforts to improve the housing space may also focus on changing the social space through social transformation strategies. This means that the type of social transformation strategy chosen will likely be affected by housing space, or housing market characteristics, on a local and regional level. These housing market characteristics are related to the tenure structure and performance of the housing market (cf. Robson, 1975).

Tenure structure is important because it also structures ownership, which structures responsibility for managing housing units. In the case of rental units, ownership is typically consolidated through a public or private housing association. Owner occupancy implies that residents have to manage their dwelling themselves. This may have consequences for transformation strategies.

The housing market may be relevant for the possibilities to attract new middle-class residents. Area-based regeneration generally targets areas that rank low in market status. However, the actual demand and turnover rates, as well as the potential for transformation, is very much dependent on the quantitative and qualitative supply of housing within the region (cf. Dekker et al., 2005). A regional market with low demand and a quantitative oversupply will increase the chance of vacancies in unattractive neighbourhoods. Conversely, when the quantitative demand in the regional housing market cannot be solved in neighbourhoods with high qualitative demand (i.e. traditional middle-class neighbourhood), a ‘spillover demand’ process or ‘transplantation’ may take place whereby it is easier to sell or let in the least popular neighbourhoods. Furthermore, a regional high-demand situation generally gives low demand neighbourhoods a higher ‘investment potential’ for developers and homeowners. However, local segments within a low-demand regional housing market may still have ‘investment potential’ when an emerging demand is not met elsewhere (Aalbers, 2003). So, the situation in the regional housing market has implications for regeneration in low-demand neighbourhoods, because it determines the potential and profitability of investments.

6.3.2 Policy framework

National policies that address housing and urban living are likely an important framework for neighbourhood regeneration. For social transformation strategies in particular, two types of policy seem important: general housing policies and area-based urban policies.

Firstly, housing policies shape the form, management and position of assisted housing (public or social housing), as well as tenure composition, land use, and ownership (see Malpass and Murie, 1999, Murie et al., 1976, Balchin, 1996). Moreover, the objectives and philosophies of national housing policies shape the methods and means of renewal and regeneration, albeit not always in a universal way. The differences per country with respect to how housing renewal is pursued are related to the particular context (Skifter Andersen, 1999). So, national housing policies set the stage for social transformation strategies and may as such structure the possibilities, opportunities and rules for housing interventions. For instance, housing policies in several European countries seek a shift from publicly-owned housing to owner-occupied housing (Whitehead and Scanlon, 2007). When managers are encouraged or bound by policy to do so, they will be more likely to employ large-scale tenure restructuring strategies in neighbourhood regeneration.

Secondly, urban policies may impact social transformation strategies, as they provide many regeneration efforts with support, funding or directives. Like housing policies,
urban policies are context-dependent and diverse (Cochrane, 2007). Nevertheless, they typically involve an area-based strategy that targets deprived areas by deploying a range of social-economic initiatives and physical renewal. The rationale for the territorial focus is to help individuals by relieving them of the supposed negative effects of their residential environment. Consequently, urban policies tend to promote social mix, which results in social transformation strategies (Andersson and Musterd, 2005a, Van Gent et al., 2009).

6.4 Four case studies

To understand how housing context impinges on social transformation strategies, this paper will present some empirical evidence gathered in case studies of regeneration efforts in four post-WWII neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods are located in Stockholm, Birmingham, Amsterdam and Barcelona. Table 1 summarizes several social and physical characteristics of the particular neighbourhoods. Before regeneration, the neighbourhoods were quite similar in their reputation, urban form and social configuration. Branded as ‘ethnic ghettos’, they were considered among the ‘most deprived’ and least desirable areas in the urban region. Indeed, the areas featured high concentrations of non-native residents. Only in the British case was the percentage of native inhabitants above city averages. In addition to ethnic concentrations, the four neighbourhoods were characterised by poverty, relatively young populations, lower skill and education levels and higher levels of crime, drug-related incidents and nuisances. In addition, the built form is dominated by high-rise multi-family blocks arranged in green fields according to modernist design principles. In the case of Sant Roc, buildings were placed seemingly randomly without much public space in between.

While the four neighbourhoods were similar in their predicaments, their housing contexts have been quite different; they are located in different housing markets and in different Western European states. In other words, regeneration efforts are embedded in different housing policy structures and housing markets. Consequently, managers who are seeking social transformation have to deal with different institutions. The most relevant institutional differences are likely related to housing policy frameworks, housing ownership and market demand.

The analyses use secondary literature and research reports, census data, policy documents and 51 interviews with policy makers, managers and administrators in local, municipal and regional state and non-state organisations (i.e. ‘managers’) who have been active in the regeneration of neighbourhoods or in policy making (see Van Gent, 2008). The interviews with key informants were particularly helpful in uncovering the role of policy frameworks and housing market characteristics in the realisation and institutional logic of transformation. The four neighbourhoods will be discussed in terms of social transformation strategy and their housing context.
Table 1. Neighbourhood characteristics (Van Gent, 2008, RESTATE, 2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central Estates</th>
<th>Bijlmermeer (East)</th>
<th>Tensta</th>
<th>Sant Roc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban region</strong></td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>Barcelona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Peripheral</td>
<td>Peripheral</td>
<td>Between two regional centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dwellings</strong></td>
<td>3,298</td>
<td>12,764</td>
<td>5,931</td>
<td>3,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predominant tenure before</strong></td>
<td>Social rental</td>
<td>Social rental</td>
<td>Social rental</td>
<td>Owner-occupied housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regeneration</td>
<td>housing (83% in 1991)</td>
<td>housing (92.6% in 1992)</td>
<td>housing (61% in 2004)</td>
<td>(nearly all dwellings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>6,582</td>
<td>25,496</td>
<td>16,834</td>
<td>15,404 (+ an estimated 2,000 unregistered residents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment</strong></td>
<td>17% (among tenants)</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>30.5% (1997 sample)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>39.0% Black and ethnic minority groups</td>
<td>70.2% Non-native</td>
<td>85% foreign born</td>
<td>40% Gitanos 36.2% Foreign born</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4.1 Central Estates, Birmingham

The Central Estates are five neighbourhoods adjacent to the centre of Birmingham. The focal point of the regeneration in this city was the centrally located area of Lee Bank. Besides regeneration being triggered by a physical deterioration in the high-rise housing, it was also triggered by the public spaces deteriorating and become increasingly unsafe (see Hall et al., 2003).

**Social transformation strategy**

After receiving demands for intervention from residents, Birmingham Council’s Planning Office placed a regeneration bid to the central state’s Estate Renewal Challenge funds in 1998. The application was successful and a grant of £47 million was awarded on the condition that ownership would be transferred from Birmingham Council to a new private association, which would also manage the regeneration. Consequently, Optima Community Housing Association was created for this purpose (see also Hall et al., 2004).

The aim of the regeneration is a radical transformation of the area through tenure restructuring. It features three key points: the refurbishment of dwellings that are assessed to be in demand; rationalisation of the stock and reconfiguration of the neighbourhood layout to make the area more attractive and create higher density housing; and tenure
diversification to provide for middle-class households. An extensive programme focused on the demolition of 900 rental units and the construction of 450 new social rented units. Furthermore, the addition of 1200 new private houses and flats will mean higher density housing.

Optima also manages a social economic programme. Apart from tackling social issues, the philosophy is that it will help to ‘protect the investments’. Hence, the programme focuses mainly on liveability, youth, safety and social participation to prevent backsliding.

The regeneration has brought about a radical transformation through tenure restructuring, which has changed the area’s social composition in a relatively short time. The size of the social housing stock has decreased, which means that the area can accommodate fewer lower class households. When asked whether the regeneration has displaced people, the Optima chief executive argued:

Frankly, I don’t see what is wrong with moving people and creating a mix to raise aspirations. Providing lower income households with high quality surroundings is a good thing. (…) it’s quality for all.

This answer indicates that the focus of social transformation is the area and its remaining lower income residents, and that there is little concern for those who have to move way.

**Housing market characteristics**

The radical social transformation through tenure restructuring was made possible by two aspects of the area’s housing market characteristics. Firstly, the amount of control of managers was very high due the consolidated ownership of land and housing before regeneration. The majority of housing in the area was owned and managed by the municipality. Consequently, the Planning Office could act as the leading actor in the initiation of the regeneration.

Secondly, the housing market situation offered some opportunities to tap into a spillover demand and socially transform the area. Before regeneration, the housing market situation of the neighbourhood had been problematic for some time. By the 1990s, the area had become stigmatised as a slum. As a result, the area had a high turnover rate and functioned as a stepping-stone for newcomers. It could not benefit from spillover demand as region-wide demand has generally been low in recent decades. However, the area’s proximity to a revived city centre has opened up opportunities to accommodate the new housing demand of middle-class professionals. Indeed, the regeneration of the Central Estates is tied to the economic restructuring agenda towards a more business and service oriented city economy (see below).

**Policy Framework**

In addition to housing market characteristics, the housing policy framework proved to be very accommodating in pursuing a radical social transformation strategy with tenure restructuring. In recent decades, British housing and urban policies had several dominant themes. This includes the privatisation of local authority housing in favour of owner occupancy housing for lower income households (see Jones and Murie, 2006). The drive towards owner occupancy has resulted in the characterisation of the UK as an ownership society (see Kemeny, 1981), and has indeed made owner occupancy the accepted norm for policy makers (Kintrea, 2007). So, it is no surprise that Estate Renewal Challenge funds were awarded on the condition that social rental housing would be transferred. Furthermore, the regeneration’s plan for fewer rental units in favour of owner occupancy was not considered an issue by the state.
It was also not an issue because there had been a focus in urban policies on balanced communities, i.e. socially mixed. This balance is seen as a means to advance social mobility, to raise ‘aspirations’ among the poor and improve the liveability of the neighbourhood and city (see Raco, 2008, Cole and Goodchild, 2001). In adhering to this community philosophy, Optima managers were able to bring in additional funds to support social economic programmes and the beautification of public space.

Lastly, local policies have focused on the revitalization of Birmingham’s city centre to expand commercial services. Providing housing for middle-class professionals has been part of the planning vision (Barber, 2007).

6.3.2 Bijlmermeer, Amsterdam

Bijlmermeer was constructed as part of an extension plan for the southeast of Amsterdam. Although its social rental housing was originally intended for the middle-class, the area was occupied by low-income and immigrant households. In the 1980s, the Bijlmermeer was considered to be one of the most distressed and deprived areas in the Netherlands (see Aalbers et al., 2003).

Social transformation strategy

Within just ten years of completion, regeneration programmes were started to deal with issues related to drugs, social isolation, youth, and crime. Efforts intensified in 1992. The municipality and the area’s housing association planned extensive regeneration efforts in order to improve area management, and to create a ‘socially varied population living in an attractive and varied housing stock’ (see Aalbers et al., 2004, Project Bureau Bijlmermeer, 2002). So, the aim of an altered social mix was central to the regeneration. It was felt that the social sector housing and low desirability concentrated marginal groups. A manager commented, “The Bijlmermeer had become a repository for all sorts of losers”.

The area was to be made more attractive by erasing the modernist design and adding amenities and shopping facilities. Moreover, the regeneration entailed the renovation of about half of the 12,500 high-rise dwellings and the demolition of the other half. The new housing is either terraced housing or mid-rise apartment blocks. The plan aims to have 45% owner-occupied housing in the area by 2015.

So, even more than the Central Estates case the regeneration is characterized by a social transformation strategy through tenure restructuring. The new owner-occupied housing is explicitly meant to accommodate middle-class households, to lower the influx of marginal groups and adjust housing supply to the region’s qualitative demand. For local managers, the increased social manageability of the area was equally important. The manager’s view is perhaps best summarised by a municipal policy maker in housing:

It’s simple. We are diluting problems and by doing so making them more manageable. (…) This means that if you have 80% immigrants (in a neighbourhood) and you lower it to 60% or 40%, the problem will be better to manage. (…) Problems are related to individuals, but I have a spatial problem. When too many of these individuals live together, then they hinder the social development of these individuals. If you are in trouble and your neighbour has a great social network, you can make use of that, but if everyone is in trouble then you don’t get the chance to work yourself out of it. Diluting gives some opportunities to that underclass.
Housing market characteristics
The radical social transformation strategy was made possible by the consolidated ownership of housing and land by one housing association and municipality. This ownership structure meant fewer stakeholders and more opportunities for effective action, giving ample opportunities for tenure restructuring.

Secondly, the demand for middle-class housing in the Amsterdam region was also cited as an opportunity within the regeneration. The demand for housing in the Bijlmermeer had always been marginal. The heavy stigma of the area meant that most residents were eager to move away (Wassenberg, 2004). However, the pressure on the Amsterdam housing market in the recent decade has created some spillover demand, which could be tapped. Furthermore, there are indications that housing is in demand with middle-class households of Surinamese and African descent who value living in close proximity to friends and family and to amenities such as markets, churches and cultural venues.

Policy framework
Indeed, the Dutch housing policy framework also gave local managers opportunities to follow a radical transformation strategy. Recently, general housing policies in the Netherlands have focused on the promotion of owner occupation among lower income groups, for which neighbourhood regeneration has been cited as a means in the last Housing Memorandum (VROM, 2001). Furthermore, housing renewal and urban policies see altering social mix as a means of social mobility and stability. As such, regeneration policies have become social policy and owner occupancy gained favour over social rental housing. From a Dutch perspective this is remarkable, because tenure restructuring was still inconceivable in the mid-1980s when Dutch housing policies provided generous subsidies for the expansion of the social rental sector.

In addition to general housing policies, Dutch urban policies also provided opportunities to obtain funding for regeneration programmes. Most importantly, urban policies and the call for policy integration linked physical renewal to social aims such as social participation and ‘empowerment’ of ethnic groups by emphasising the need for middle-class presence (Musterd and Ostendorf, 2008).

The change in housing policies coincided with the start of the regeneration of the Bijlmermeer. Its regeneration served as a forerunner and as an example for the development of housing policies that seek social transformation. By 1998, the policy and political environment allowed the area’s transformation to be expanded in scope and scale.

6.3.3 Tensta, Stockholm

Tensta was built as part of an expansion plan that sought to build several large housing estates in green fields ten kilometres northwest of central Stockholm. Like many similar such developments, Tensta quickly became a stigmatised area.

Social transformation strategy
The regeneration of Tensta is significantly less persuasive in physical terms. There was no tenure restructuring as there was in Bijlmermeer or Central Estates. Nevertheless, this regeneration did aim to effect a social transformation through housing market upgrading. More specifically, one of the important aims was to make the area more attractive for native Swedes and for middle-class households. To accomplish this, regeneration involved the refurbishment of housing and public space, and some new housing developments.
Middle-class households are attracted to both owner-occupied housing and public rental housing, which makes the transformation strategy relatively ‘tenure neutral’.

The assumption is that newly arrived immigrants will benefit from native middle-class households in their search for work and in their cultural integration in terms of civic engagement, language skills and participation in social activities. To help this process unfold, regeneration also spawned short-term social economic projects. In addition, managers also believe that an altered social mix will make movement in the area more stable, which will increase manageability for them. These managers express their frustration with ‘integrated’ households moving away and getting replaced by new ‘problem households’. They lament the absence of large-scale restructuring or privatization of public housing to radically transform the area. This was evident in the following remarks made by the veteran head of the local district administration:

[Social economic programmes] do little for the development [of the neighbourhood]. If you want to change the character of the area, you have to take larger steps. You have to [literally] rebuild the area. I think [the programmes] are rather useless. (...) we are more segregated today than 10 years ago.

These remarks suggest a wish for more control over the social transformation than the current upgrading strategy allows. However, the housing context does not offer sufficient opportunities for a more radical transformation strategy.

Housing market characteristics

The housing market characteristics of Tensta do, in fact, offer some opportunities for tenure restructuring. Ownership, tenure and the regional housing market are similar to the Amsterdam case. About two-thirds of the dwellings are public rental apartments and mostly owned by one municipal housing company. The rest of the housing stock is mostly cooperative housing apartment blocks with some owner-occupied semi-detached housing.

Tensta has suffered from low demand and has had a rather high turnover rate. However, housing shortages in the Stockholm region since the late 1990s have resulted in spillover demand and have stabilised turnover rates. Tensta is now the main entry point to the Stockholm housing market, particularly for less affluent households (Andersson et al., 2003).

Based on housing market characteristics, it would have been possible to adopt a tenure restructuring strategy. Consolidated ownership over a large number of rental units together with a spillover demand to tap into offer opportunities for comprehensive action. However, the housing policy framework does not support large-scale tenure restructuring.

Policy framework

Urban policies in Sweden are similar to those in the Netherlands and the UK. They are characterised by their aim to increase civic participation, social interaction and employment and improve education levels. These aims are also tied into the main policy theme of the integration of immigrants into Swedish society (Öresjö et al., 2004). Social economic projects are seen as the most logical means to achieve this. Likewise, the regeneration of Tensta involved numerous social economic projects which fall within the framework of area-based programmes such as ‘City District Regeneration’ and ‘Metropolitan Development Initiative’ (see Andersson, 2006). Physical interventions, however, consumed much of the regeneration budget, but these budgets were insufficient to cover large-scale tenure restructuring. The policy framework did just not cover the demolishing of thirty-year-old housing. For the municipal housing company, it
didn’t make any financial sense to restructure.

There have been attempts, however, to improve social mix and make ‘housing careers’ possible during a wave of privatization in the public housing sector (Turner and Whitehead, 2002), but this did not bring middle-class households to Tensta. A tenure diversification programme by Stockholm City gave households in public housing apartments the possibility to form cooperatives and buy the dwellings. To be clear, this programme only covered the sale of rental housing and did not cover any restructuring projects. However, the economic incentives to buy were much greater in popular areas in the centre and less in the peripheral estates where the gap between buy-out price and value was much smaller. Consequently, the public housing stock became concentrated in the least-popular areas like Tensta, which became even more stigmatised. So, the programme did more to downgrade Tensta than to upgrade it.

6.3.4 Sant Roc, Barcelona-region

Sant Roc was created to house rural immigrants and squatters during the 1950s and 1960s. Its population has since consisted of ‘disadvantaged’ groups (Pareja Eastaway et al., 2003). Minimal investments in maintenance have left the buildings in a dismal state. Recently, concrete disease was found in 56 of the 154 high-rise blocks.

Social transformation strategy

The regeneration of Sant Roc was initiated by the regional authorities due to the poor technical quality of the apartment blocks. An agreement between resident associations, the regional management agency and the Regeneration Office formed the guidelines of the process (Pareja Eastaway et al., 2004). The centrepiece of the regeneration was the renewal of 918 of the 3395 dwellings. About 1,000 new dwellings were to be constructed within the renewal zone, where public space would be renovated to increase social control.

The renewal would have a minor direct impact on the social composition of the area under regeneration. The resident associations have made sure that residents are entitled to stay, which the majority wishes to do. So, most new dwellings will not be available on the housing market. However, the market outside the renewal zone remains open. This is where the social transformation strategy is present. Sant Roc is located between two high-demand areas within the region, offering opportunities to tap into spillover demand. Managers are well aware of this and hope that the renewal together with social economic projects, new amenities and small renovations, will upgrade the neighbourhood’s position and standing and lead to a middle-class influx.

Managers favour attracting social transformation for more stability and increased manageability. However, policy makers have a distinct ethnic idea about the social composition. This is apparent in their concerns about Pakistani households, who have recently come to the neighbourhood. The relatively low cost of housing has attracted Pakistani immigrant workers. Local managers are worried that this will result in ‘ghettoisation’, which is counter to their aim of improving the market situation. A regional policy maker involved in regeneration comments:

Problems of immigration are related to the density of homogenous groups in parts of the city. (...)The problem of concentrations of immigrants in a difficult economic situation and unpopular social groups, like Gypsies, is that they lower housing prices. People cannot sell their house. Lower prices also create a dynamic of overcrowding of apartments by groups of poor people.
The reference to housing market dynamics by a social policy maker is significant to the Barcelona case, where managers have less control over social transformation and have to rely on upgrading processes.

**Housing market characteristics**
The reliance on market dynamics is related to the housing market characteristics. In Sant Roc, the dwellings were built as public houses, which are fully owned by the occupant when about 70% is paid off. The vast majority of housing in Sant Roc is owner occupied. Moreover, the entire regional market is dominated by owner occupancy. As a consequence, there are simply no rental dwellings in Sant Roc to restructure. In addition, the social rental system is currently too insignificant to function as a temporary repository to move residents to. The ownership structure also restricted the social transformation strategy in another way. As ownership of housing and land was fragmented among the residents, residents had more bargaining power than their tenant counterparts in other cases. As a result, residents were able to negotiate to be relocated to a new dwelling in Sant Roc before their old dwelling was demolished. Nevertheless, as mentioned, managers are not undaunted by these constraints, as they estimate that the high-pressure housing market of the region means sufficient spillover demand to achieve social transformation through gentrification.

**Policy framework**
The upgrading strategy is fully supported by the policy framework of the Catalan regional government. The Catalan government set up a Neighbourhood Remodelling Programme in the 1990s, which sought to ‘remodel’ post-war neighbourhoods. Remodelling entails the renovation of an area, whereby the existing buildings are demolished and replaced. In addition, the Programme seeks to physically integrate the peripheral neighbourhoods with the rest of the city by improving infrastructure, public transport, social services and amenities and by altering the urban landscape. At the same time, housing policies aim to tackle the issue of affordable housing for lower middle-class households. Consequently, new housing which are not taken up by the residents are appointed to ‘social categories’, which include young households. In some cases, these apartments are rented under a new social regime.

The regeneration of Sant Roc was also awarded funds and directives from the regional *Llei de Barris* urban policy. The programme implies further investments in the physical environment to make it more attractive on the housing market and to ‘normalise’ it.

### 6.4 Comparing strategies and contexts
In all cases, local managers almost unanimously sought to socially transform the areas and aimed to incorporate this goal in the regeneration efforts. However, the amount of control that local managers could exercise over the transformation varied. Managers in Bijlmermeer and Central Estates were able to employ tenure restructuring, which is a strategy that offers them a lot of control over the transformation. Alternatively, managers in Tensta and Sant Roc aimed to gradually change the social composition by making the area more attractive for middle-class households. However, this strategy gives little control over the speed and comprehensiveness of the transformation. Gentrification could strike overnight and transform an area beyond recognition, or nothing could happen at all.

In the interviews, managers in Sant Roc and Tensta have expressed their envy of the

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22 In terms of housing and regeneration the Catalan government has more responsibilities and power than the Spanish central state.
amount of control and the radical transformations achieved in the Netherlands and the UK. Just as their Dutch and British colleagues do, they have to deal with the opportunities and constraints that the housing market characteristics and policy framework offer them, such that this shape the social transformation strategy. It is hard to ascribe predominance to any of the institutions discussed, more so because they are intrinsically interrelated forming multi-level housing systems. Furthermore, each case presents us with a variation of experiences, interpretations and implementation of social transformation. However, for the sake of generalisation, we can draw a simple scheme of how the housing context influences the social transformation strategy (see table 2).

Table 2. The constraining and enabling elements of the housing context to pursue ‘controlled’ social transformation (‘+’ means enabling, ‘-’ constraining).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central Estates (UK)</th>
<th>Bijlmermeer (NL)</th>
<th>Tensta (Sw)</th>
<th>Sant Roc (Spain)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARKET</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership structure</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>Demand Potential</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>POLICY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Policies</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Reform Agenda</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRATEGY</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tenure Restructuring</td>
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<td>Upgrading</td>
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**Housing market characteristics**

In all cases, managers had to deal with the ownership issues as well as the housing market. Firstly, it is substantially easier to achieve transformation through tenure restructuring in social rental housing neighbourhoods. Of course, the availability of rental units to renew or sell is a *sine qua non* for tenure restructuring. Furthermore, consolidated ownership among the municipality and housing associations already implies a high degree of control over an area. However, the Tensta case shows that a rental tenure structure is not sufficient for a restructuring strategy to be adopted (see below). Furthermore, tenure restructuring was and would not be possible in Sant Roc where managers had less control over the owner-occupied dwellings. Consequently, the bargaining position of the owners was relatively strong such that they were able to stay. Residential pressure was present in all cases, yet only in Sant Roc did the residents hinder transformation.

Secondly, sufficient demand in the regional housing market is also fundamental to attracting middle-class households. The regeneration of the Bijlmermeer was done with region-wide demand for owner-occupied dwellings, which meant that spillover ensured
sufficient demand. Similarly, managers in Sant Roc and Tensta intended to profit from the regional, high, qualitative demand. In the Central Estates, the local demand associated with its proximity to the centre created at least some initial demand. However, the absence of demand in the outskirts of Birmingham meant that similar regeneration efforts would not materialise (see Hall et al., 2004, Van Gent, 2008).

Policy framework
The choice to restructure tenure is influenced by many considerations, especially financial considerations. Urban and housing policies may offer opportunities for funding. Regeneration in Central Estates was accomplished with the prospect of generous funds from the central state. In the case of the Bijlmermeer, the municipality and a national housing association fund covered costs. As bankruptcy loomed, the housing association was quite willing to agree to restructuring. The Sant Roc renewal was funded and managed directly by the state. Alternatively, the absence of any funds to cover any losses in land use, clearings, construction, etc. will hinder action. A senior housing association policy maker in Tensta indicated that there were no funds or subsidies available to cover the cost of large-scale restructuring. So, demolishing the 40-year old blocks made no sense to him. It is no surprise then that managers repeat many of the discourses and statements and terminology relating to the problems found in policies if these provide opportunities for funding.

Firstly, urban policies provided funds and directives in the regeneration in all four cases. The significance of urban policies lies in their focus on a local level. In doing so, they tend to neglect wider social processes which underlie many of the social issues in distressed areas. In addition, they narrow the focus to a local social transformation rather than a substantial transformation without narrow territorial restrictions (see Van Gent et al., 2009). So, the area-based focus of urban policies agrees with the managers’ wish for social transformation and they provide opportunities for funds for social economic programmes and physical renewal.

Secondly, while urban policies may provide funds for renewal, they are not sufficient for a radical strategy such as tenure restructuring. General housing policies are also important, as they dictate the preferred housing system. Owner occupancy has been the dominant tenure in Spain for a while, but British and Dutch housing policies actively promote home-ownership for low-income households. As public financing for the social rental sector declined, the focus in Dutch housing policies has been shifting towards owner occupancy since the early 1990s. Tenure restructuring in the Bijlmermeer was an early manifestation of this shift. The influence of national housing policy on restructuring strategies is even clearer in the Central Estates, which was allowed subject to observing a condition of central state policy to transfer the housing from the Council to a private social landlord.

In the Swedish housing system, however, the promotion of home ownership is lower on the political agenda. This may explain why the regeneration involves constructing a number of new public rental apartments, which meet the qualitative demands of the middle class without large-scale tenure restructuring.

Catalan housing policies are focused on providing affordable housing for the young. Consequently, excess housing units which will not be taken up by residents in regeneration projects such as Sant Roc are meant to house young couples who cannot afford owner-occupied dwellings in the private market. So, regeneration is seen as an opportunity to alleviate the pressure on the urban housing markets. Moreover, housing renewal policies in post-war neighbourhoods are the result of public outrage over deterioration due to the faulty construction techniques.
6.5 Conclusion

The quest for social transformation is not necessarily the most effective solution for urban malaise, yet, as we have seen, this does not deter managers from pursuing it. To be sure, not all managers are merely interested in sweeping social problems from their doorstep. While some certainly display a taste for Machiavellianism, the majority of the interviewed managers showed themselves to be genuinely concerned individuals. For them, the wish for transformation is related to their frustration with a seemingly never-ending influx of households with social problems. They feel that it is unfair that they and the neighbourhood, which they have come to identify with, should be so burdened and stigmatised. They see transformation as an opportunity for the residents and for themselves to feel proud again. At higher levels, managers point to negative neighbourhood effects and regard social transformation as a socially just remedy.

Regardless of their motivation, this paper set out to illuminate the relationships between housing context and neighbourhood regeneration with a social transformation strategy. With the focus on housing context, this paper may have downplayed other relevant institutional frameworks such as the internal logic of bureaucracies, party politics, public pressure, and the intricacies of global capitalism. Nevertheless, the enabling and constraining conditions of the housing context pose relevant considerations for local managers, which explain social transformation strategies in different contexts. For a controlled transformation strategy to materialise, local managers need sufficient spillover demand, consolidated ownership over rental housing, supportive housing and urban policy philosophies with funds to match. The market conditions depend on the position and location within the urban region and on the regional housing market. As such, every regeneration effort in any European city has its own characteristics. The policy framework, however, is tied to the state level. Urban policies are uniformly supportive of social transformation strategies in the regeneration of neighbourhoods. This means that national housing policies are decisive in determining whether the sale of publicly funded housing can be realised. This multi-level approach to the institutional context of managers offers opportunities for further comparative policy research, which may add to our understanding of how our cities evolve and take form.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Fenne Pinkster, Willem Boterman, Edith de Meester, Wim Ostendorf and Sako Musterd.
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Part III

Context and outcomes
7. Conclusions

Generalisations are like brooms, not to be left in the corner, but sweeping.  
– John Lukacs

This study was concerned with neighbourhood regeneration with the aim for social change, and sought to specifically answer two interrelated questions:

What is the capacity of neighbourhood regeneration policies for social and societal change, and how does the housing and policy context affect this capacity in Western European cities?

This chapter will answer the two questions conjointly and reflect on some of the overall findings.

7.1 The capacity of regeneration for social change

The state employs neighbourhood regeneration to achieve social change at a local and societal level simultaneously. Typically, regeneration involves renewal of housing and public space as well as an array of social economic programmes. The aims of these interventions are related to improving place as well as improving the cultural and social economic predicament of individuals. The four cases in this study display differences in emphases through their stated objectives and the selection of target areas. Nevertheless, the policies were surprisingly similar in their rationales for a territorial focus and in their wish to tackle social problems at different scales. In general, there are three stated ambitions for social change; liveability issues, social economic deprivation and integration.

First, the policies aimed at social change at a local level in relation to the satisfaction of the residents with their dwelling and their neighbourhood. For policy this comes down to the liveability of an area. Liveability is an important issue in neighbourhood regeneration. The quality and safety of public space and housing have been long been important pillars of urban policies and neighbourhood regeneration. Indeed, place-based issues which are specific to some areas or perhaps even to a certain type of neighbourhood, may require a targeted approach. For instance, deterioration of a type of housing from a certain age, environmental pollution, or traffic nuisances may need area-based interventions. Moreover, this study confirms that intensive neighbourhood regeneration efforts, and good housing, may indeed produce a higher overall level of satisfaction and a positive outlook among residents concerning their neighbourhood. However, a focus on place rather than individual residents means that in some cases the regeneration forces residents to move (see below). So, the objective of liveability does not necessarily imply a better residential environment for all long-term residents.

Second, neighbourhood regeneration also strives for social change beyond the local level. The issue of social economic deprivation, or social exclusion and poverty, is an important theme in neighbourhood regeneration, particularly in the problem statements and objectives of regeneration. A lot of political, symbolic and financial capital is spent on these issues. Indeed, targeted neighbourhoods typically do have concentrations of poor, unemployed, or lower educated households. While it is understood that local residents will reap the benefits, the rationale for the state to be so selective in its social assistance is related to the aim of mending social divisions in society. These divisions are assumed to
be spatially expressed in a set of neighbourhoods. Also, the societal division is supposed to be reproduced in these neighbourhoods through negative neighbourhood effects. However, these assumptions are highly questionable.

In general, policies fail to specify the mechanisms, or neighbourhood effects, which they attempt to alter. Moreover, the nature and extent of neighbourhood effects in Western European context are subject to an ongoing academic debate. This means that the existence of negative effects of deprived neighbourhoods on life chances is not a foregone conclusion. So, there is insufficient evidence for the reproduction of social economic deprivation through place on a large enough scale to warrant a territorial focus.

In addition, there are no ‘critical representations’ of socially and economically deprived households in the selected areas in the Netherlands or in Sweden. Less than ten per cent of those in need of social assistance live in neighbourhoods that were targeted by nationally setup area-based interventions (see Andersson and Musterd, 2005, Van Gent, 2009). It is likely that this is also the case for the UK or Spain. As a consequence, the dreaded societal divide cannot be corrected in a limited set of neighbourhoods because the large majority of those who need assistance do not live in these neighbourhoods.

So, there are no reasons to assume that place-based phenomena and people-based social economic deprivation are related on a neighbourhood level. This is particularly striking as actual interventions are also designed and meant to instill some sort of social transformation, which involves a change in population composition through housing-related mechanisms. However, when ‘social mixing’ is not effective, the aim of tackling social economic deprivation with a territorial focus will not go further than helping a few residents that participate in various employment and education programmes. While these programmes may yield some individual results, they tend not to make convincing social economic change, not even at a neighbourhood levels (see Lawless, 2006). More important, it is hard to justify a policy strategy which is highly selective in nature, but lacks any evidence that it will yield additional results in tackling urban social problems.

Third, there is the societal issue of cultural integration of immigrant groups, which constitutes the ‘hidden problem’ of neighbourhood regeneration. Except in Sweden policy where integration of first generation immigrants is more explicit, policy documents treat the presence of immigrants cautiously or circumspectly. For instance, ethnic presence is never used as a selection indicator. This taboo is probably out of concern for being accused of institutional racism. Nevertheless, interviews with policy makers and the political discourse reveal the importance of an immigrant or ethnic presence in neighbourhood regeneration interventions. Especially concentrations of lower class residents from immigrant backgrounds are thought to be problematic.

While this study didn’t focus on cultural integration specifically, integration is treated by policymakers as a people-based change. So, like tackling social economic deprivation, it is highly unlikely that interventions in a few areas with concentrations of immigrants will trigger some integration or assimilation of an entire immigrant group into native culture. Even if all residents within an area are reached, the focus on a few areas is too limited.
7.2 The effect of housing policy frameworks and housing market on regeneration

The second part of the main research question dealt with how the housing context, i.e. housing policy framework and housing market characteristics, affect neighbourhood regeneration. Although all chapters make references to this relationship, chapters 5 and 6 dealt specifically with this part of the research question. Chapter 5 attempted to paint a picture of some of the political dynamics within Western European welfare states and the connection to housing. Chapter 6, however, was more specific with regard to neighbourhood regeneration and the local managers’ quest for local social transformation. Based on the chapters, several explanations from a state perspective for the present form and meaning of neighbourhood regeneration can be identified. These will be discussed from macro-level downward.

Welfare state change

The emphasis on social deprivation within neighbourhood regeneration policies and interventions should be seen against the backdrop of the constant renegotiation, retrenchment and revision of welfare state arrangements, or social contract. Particularly important in this case are the notions and discourses that outline the state's responsibilities and tasks with regard to social policies, personal responsibilities, ownership and economic enterprise (Schmidt, 2002, Cochrane, 2007). We can outline three trends in welfare state change in the last three decades which are related to neighbourhood regeneration policies with an emphasis on social ambitions. These are: a shift in what is deemed the social responsibility of the state (1), the selective and temporal aspect of regeneration matches the retrenchment agenda away from universal provisions (2), and shifts in economic and employment policies from national to urban, from demand-side to supply-side (3).

First, since the 1970s there has been a slow shift away from universal interventions with the intention to secure some sort of social equality. While the state is still held responsible for social malaise and social policy, its task has shifted from ensuring a degree of social equality towards guarantying equal opportunities, i.e. a level playing field, within competitive urban-based economies. In this respect, neighbourhood regeneration’s emphasis on place as something which may hinder individuals’ life chances is in line with this emphasis on equal opportunities.

Second, the retrenchment of welfare state arrangements means small steps by tinkering with rules of eligibility and duration of support (Pierson, 1998). The selective territorial focus and programme-like character of neighbourhood regeneration and urban policies are also in line with this tendency to make social support more conditional and short-term.

Third, urban policies also fit the shift away from post-war Keynesian economic policies. These policies were focused on ensuring full employment and a source of family income. To achieve this, policy was characterized by demand-side action through government spending. However, as this became unsustainable and a new liberal doctrine took over, economic policies became focused on controlling inflation while adopting a stronger laissez-faire stance. This stance meant less direct government intervention in market demand for labour (Cerny, 2000). Instead, labour policies that focus on supply-side (i.e. labour side) action, i.e. retraining, internships, from welfare-to-work type programmes, became more important. As a result, in addition to an urban competitiveness agenda (see Cochrane, 2007), it is no surprise that regeneration efforts include measures that seek to bolster employment by stressing education, work experience or even by increasing individuals’ assertiveness and aspirations (see Raco, 2008). These measures are often framed as the empowerment of communities and residents (see below).
Welfare state, housing policy and regeneration

While neighbourhood regeneration with social aims fits new attitudes towards the meaning of social policy within the welfare state, it does not quite explain the use of housing as a mechanism to achieve social change. This study has outlined how welfare state politics tie into the restructuring agendas within housing policies. The UK is a clear example of where the promotion of owner occupancy is framed within terms of ownership, personal responsibility and securing additional income to augment care and pensions. As a result, neighbourhood regeneration in the UK is concerned with owner occupancy for low income households and with housing market performance rates (cf. Malpass, 2008, Cameron, 2006). Furthermore, since the Right-to-Buy legislation British government has actively sought to transfer or privatise social council housing. Consequently, regeneration subsidies from the central state may include conditions on tenure privatisation or transfer, as was the case in Central Estates (see chapter 6).

In Sweden, retrenchment of the state did mean privatisations of municipal housing associations and the sale of rental dwellings (Turner and Whitehead, 2002). However, while privatizations have occurred, these were without an explicit ownership discourse like the UK (Kemeny, 2005). Consequently, regeneration in Sweden typically does not include large-scale tenure restructuring or the wish to promote owner occupancy among low income households. To be clear, regeneration in Sweden does involve constructing middle class dwellings to achieve some social change, but it does not typically involve the demolition of public dwellings to make room for owner occupied housing. In other words, transformation strategies are less invasive and destructive for existing social networks.

Regeneration in the Netherlands, however, does often involve the restructuring of tenure. Tenure restructuring policies are less related to welfare state services, but do include notions of ownership and personal responsibilities. Furthermore the 2001 housing memorandum directly connects owner occupancy to neighbourhood regeneration (VROM, 2001). Middle class occupants are expected to act more responsibly and set a good example for (lower class) tenants. In addition, regeneration is also depicted as a way to bolster lagging housing values in certain areas of the city region, thereby ensuring sufficient growth of housing equity. So, while social housing had been the norm in Dutch housing policies in the 1980s, the promotion of owner occupancy became more important since the 1990s. However, the social housing legacy means that the large social rental stock and their caretakers, housing associations, provide the state with opportunities for extracting social housing wealth. This is done directly through taxation, but also by offloading some of the cost and risk of regeneration to the associations.

The politics between welfare state and housing are quite interesting in Spain because of its specific welfare state- housing nexus. Owner occupancy and private property have long been cornerstones of the family-based welfare state in Spain. As a result, owner occupancy is high and neighbourhood regeneration interventions have to work with and around the fragmented ownership of housing and land (see below). However, the issue of affordability of middle class housing in the Barcelona region has forced the Catalan government, which has considerable autonomy in housing policy, to action. New housing policies specifically focus on creating an affordable rental housing stock for weak groups, but also for young families. This can already be seen in current regeneration projects in Barcelona, where new housing will be sold or rented under a social regime to young families or social economic deprived households. More importantly, the new emphasis contrasts with the tendencies towards owner occupancy in the Netherlands, UK, and, to a lesser degree, Sweden. It remains to be seen whether this emphasis will change the housing system or is merely an attempt to hold up the welfare state- housing relationship.

The main point here is that the agenda of welfare state reform forces politicians to seek opportunities within, among other policy realms, the housing system. Because
the reform agendas differ and because national housing systems have their own institutional legacy, housing policies and housing market characteristics vary, and so does neighbourhood regeneration.

The welfare state typology by Esping-Anderssen (1990, 1999), which served as a means for case study selection (see chapter 1), appeared to have limited explanatory value in the fields of housing policy and neighbourhood regeneration. Its significance today lies mostly in explaining the degree of ownership ideology in Sweden (low) and in UK and Spain (high). Like its classification in Esping-Anderssen’s work, Dutch policy is more ambivalent in its ownership ideology.

**Political considerations and moral panic**

Although the preceding paragraph already highlighted the political component, this chapter should also mention the political support for neighbourhood regeneration for the sake of intervention. This study termed this as the Something Is Being Done syndrome. Urban social malaise poses a complex and challenging issue for policymakers and politicians. To provide some sort of policy response, the integrated and localised approach of neighbourhood regeneration is an attractive option. It shows the state and its elected officials directly intervening where the malaise seems worse.

Furthermore, media and public outcry over incidents can put further pressure to act and affect policy deliberation (see Hajer, 2005). An extreme example of this phenomenon was the aftermath of a series of incidents in a postwar neighbourhood in Gouda, the Netherlands, in the summer of 2008 (see Zonderop, 2008). After several incidents of threatening and abusive behaviour by youth towards bus drivers and a robbery, the bus company cancelled its route through the neighbourhood (de Volkskrant, 2008). This was picked up by the journalists and commentators and quickly evolved into a media hype. The supposedly Moroccan identity of the perpetrators as well as the concentration of Moroccan residents in the neighbourhood were particularly important in the moral outrage. The defensive behaviour of (Moroccan) residents towards the media crews looking for quotes fueled the familiar journalistic discourse of ‘ethnic ghetto’s’ (see Wacquant, 2008: p. 137-145). The moral panic culminated in an emergency meeting of the Dutch parliament whereby members of parliament were questioning the responsible Minister about the race riots in Gouda. Although no race riots had taken place, the identity and place of residence of the assailant unknown and youth programmes were already active, extra funds and attention were put in the youth work, the installation of CCTV systems, and initial planning for regeneration of the neighbourhood.

The extreme Gouda example shows the power and importance of moral panic in the deliberations and decision to tackle problems on site. The four estates discussed in chapter 5 were also subject of moral panic and branded ‘ghetto’s’ leading up to the call for regeneration and social transformation. While it may induce a sense of urgency and bring some vigour to neighbourhood regeneration, the anxiety over moral decay and social chaos also narrows the focus down to the neighbourhood and obstruct the view on more structural trends in society. Consequently, policy deliberations are structured towards a place-based approach to urban social problems.

**Local Managers**

Lastly, the role of local managers and their wish for a stable, ‘normal’, and, above all, manageable area was highlighted as well. To the surprise of the researcher when conducting the interviews, the wish for stability and transformation is almost universal among Western European managers, administrators, and policymakers. As such, the social aims of neighbourhood regeneration, especially when it involves social transformation of areas, is supported and called for by local managers. Their support for
regeneration may even have some impact on the design of national housing and urban policies (see Uitermark, 2003). Nevertheless, local managers have to deal and work with the opportunities and constraints of the housing context. As mentioned, this context includes the policy framework, which is shaped by multiple layers of politics discussed in the preceding subheadings. In addition, the housing context refers to the local housing market characteristics, which provides its own opportunities and constraints. Nevertheless, the call for social transformation from those in the lower echelons of state and semi-state agencies undoubtedly facilitates the aim for social change within neighbourhood regeneration.

7.3 In sum

This study links the housing context to neighbourhood regeneration interventions and how this affects social outcomes. The outcomes appear to be limited when confronted with the promises made by politicians and policy makers (chapter 2). While liveability and neighbourhood satisfaction may be increased when dealing with a set of areas with specific problems (chapter 3), the social economic agenda is hampered by the selective territorial focus and by the social transformation agenda (chapter 4). The reason for the current form of regeneration, i.e. with social ambitions and social transformation agenda, can be found in its context of multiple layers of government which involve the changing European welfare state, the politics of welfare state and housing (chapter 5), urban policies and moral panic (chapter 2), and local managers trying to effectively manage ‘their’ deprived areas and achieve some sort of social transformation (chapter 6). There appears to be a great need for distinguishing between strategic policy intervention at the urban, regional and national levels and the ad-hoc needs of local actors involved.
### 7.4 Reflection

The remainder of this chapter will reflect on the results of this study. In other words, why should we care about current purpose, form and shape of neighbourhood regeneration in Western Europe? Isn’t this a case of the proverbial no harm no foul?

#### 7.4.1 Neighbourhood regeneration’s misguided, or misguiding, social aim?

Among those involved in regeneration, many cite the unrealistic modernistic expectations about human behaviour and social engineering ideals of 1960-70s town planning as a significant cause for social problems. There is then perhaps some historical irony in their ‘solution’. In the end, transformation strategies and the notion of social mix in regeneration also amount to a form of social engineering, or social tinkering at least.

The original plans were inspired by visions of a ‘modern man’, content to leave his family in his healthy and spacious dwelling. While this monochromic breadwinner commuted to the city centre, his family stayed behind in a well-serviced and green residential zone. This utopia has been replaced by the community ideal, where social heterogeneity in household composition, ethnicity, culture, income, age and gender is recognised but do not pose a challenge or threat for social contact, exchange of social capital, volunteering, and altruism. The new utopia expects middle class households to leave their brand new apartments and terraced houses to engage and help lower class households to become educated, employed, empowered and integrated. While there are examples of social capital exchange, these ideas constitute a lot of wishful thinking. Research indicates that there are limits to the amount of social contact and exchange between groups that share large differences in terms of income, interests or culture (Galster et al., 2008, Cole and Goodchild, 2001, Blokland, 2002). Also, chapter 3 showed a positive effect of perceived social mix on the level of neighbourhood dissatisfaction. What’s more, the professed social benefits of mixing to social economic deprivation in the city are insufficiently supported by research evidence (see Galster, 2007). In addition, radical transformation may even have negative effects of poor individuals when their local support networks are ripped apart (Pinkster, 2009). In some cases the ensuing social disorganisation and instability after restructuring may even result in higher crime levels rather than lower (Van Wilsem et al., 2003), so an area may (temporarily) become less manageable.

So, the political and financial costs may not warrant it when social economic deprivation is the objective. Nevertheless, these social engineering ideals are still professed and reproduced in the correction of post-WWII housing estates and other types of neighbourhoods for reasons explained above. Apart from the waste of resources and the negative aspects of displacement effects, the hollow social ambitions in neighbourhood regeneration may even be harmful.

An important risk of neighbourhood regeneration with social ambitions is the pathologisation of poverty. The social policy focus on the poor themselves and on their living environment implies that these individuals and their neighbourhoods are seen as the cause for their exclusion or destitution. As a result, regeneration can increase the stigma of poverty and exclusion rather than lift it. More importantly, this policy focus ignores

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23 Some policy makers and managers realise this deficiency. In the most extreme case of social transformation in chapter 6, the regeneration of the Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam, several interviewees noted that poverty and exclusion continue to be problems which have to be dealt with more extensively in order to truly transform it into a ‘normal urban neighbourhood’ without displacements.
more structural causes in society. When regeneration policies do not yield the desired results, it may even amount to blaming the victim, i.e. the poor and excluded, for their predicament. Social justice may be better safeguarded through domain-related actions and structural measures in the fields of education and labour markets. These efforts may take some toll on economic enterprise, but do guarantee a living wage (cf. Wacquant, 2008).

7.4.2 Housing and sustainability

The discussion about neighbourhood regeneration as a form of social policy above implies a broad, national level, view. Indeed, this study dealt with national policies with aims that affect social conditions on a local scale (housing and liveability issues) and beyond the local scale (exclusion and deprivation). This work has been most critical of the broader social ambitions of neighbourhood regeneration. However, regeneration, and particularly the social transformation strategies (see chapter 6), also raise some issues on an urban-regional scale.

As we have seen, transformation strategies can fit multiple purposes; the promotion of homeownership, privatisation of social housing, modernisation and renewal of housing with low qualitative demand, and increasing the attractiveness and upkeep of public space. Nevertheless, the problems that cause alarm with managers, policy-makers, residents, and the public are more related to social economic deprivation than housing deterioration issues 24.

However, to accomplish a reduction of deprivation in the city, the transformation of neighbourhoods with visions of social mix may not be a sustainable strategy in the end. As transformation strategies rely on upgrading, rising house prices or decreased availability of low-income housing, this may push low-income households towards other neighbourhoods in the region. This phenomenon is referred to as displacement, spill-over or knock-on effects (see Musterd and Ostendorf, 2005, Slob et al., 2008). When a significant amount of residents move towards a limited amount of areas, new neighbourhoods may need to be transformed or ‘remixed’. In the high-demand region of Barcelona, displacement will further add to the pressing problems of housing affordability, especially for low-income households.

Also, the tenure restructuring strategy may prove to be unsustainable. When the social rental sector is diminished and residualised through tenure restructuring projects and privatisations while ownership is promoted among low income households, urban poverty and social issues will not remain constricted to tenants in the (social) rental sector, but will increasingly manifest itself across other tenure forms as well. To put it simply, poverty is not bound by tenure. When this is the case, owner occupancy may bring new problems. This is evident in the massive privatisations of the public rental stock in Middle and Eastern Europe in the 1990s. After privatisation, many residents found themselves owning a dwelling which they could not afford to maintain (Murie et al., 2005).

When new interventions in the area are necessary in the future, the advantages of consolidated ownership through (semi-)public housing associations will be lost. Compared to regeneration in areas where ownership is consolidated and residents rent, regeneration and social change in areas with high shares of owner occupancy is harder to achieve with higher costs, as the Barcelona case in chapter 6 showed. Furthermore, when residents are dependent on a tight ownership housing market, their means from their previous dwelling in a low demand neighbourhood may be insufficient to purchase a new dwelling within the region.

24 The Catalan case is a notable exception. Concern over housing deterioration did shape regeneration in Barcelona’s postwar neighbourhoods.
Conversely, transformation in Amsterdam and Birmingham benefited from the consolidated ownership of housing and land, and from the presence of the rental stock which could (temporarily) house tenants elsewhere. These conditions may no longer be present after restructuring when the share of the rental housing in neighbourhood is lowered and the city’s social housing stock marginalised.

In sum, the social transformation strategy may not prove to be sustainable. When low income housing diminished through tenure restructuring or processes of gentrification, the risk of affordability issues and displacement increases. In addition, from a policy standpoint, it will be harder and more costly to regenerate neighbourhoods when ownership is fragmented. Moreover, a regional housing stock should have a sustainable balance of different tenure types. An owner occupied dominated housing market is extremely vulnerable to displacement effects, and may endanger the ability of future generations to effectively regulate the housing market and renew dilapidated areas. Any regeneration strategy should take this point into consideration. In this respect, the Swedish case which showed a ‘tenure neutral’ regeneration strategy, is most sustainable from a housing point of view.

7.4.3 The ethical questions of regeneration

The preceding paragraphs were quite critical of neighbourhood regeneration, in particular of the social transformation strategy. The basic ethical question was: Does helping a few individuals warrant the neglect of many more? For the case of neighbourhood regeneration, we could find no justification to do so. This study showed that in its current form, the social and financial cost of regeneration will not yield the benefits of stated ambitions. Moreover, the current social agenda can even be stigmatising and distracting from addressing the real causes of social malaise.

However, this does not mean there should be no state intervention at all. While the social agenda should be toned down considerably, neighbourhood regeneration does have a potential for changing the city for the better. Regeneration can improve and restore dilapidated places. Also, a well balanced housing stock makes a housing market more flexible when market conditions change. Neighbourhood regeneration may be a means to this end.

However, even without a distinct social economic deprivation ambition, regeneration efforts may still have to include renewal and moving residents for instance in case of physical deterioration. So, there will always be a social cost to neighbourhood regeneration. This cost will be related to either breaking up social networks or to some form of displacement. This displacement may be due to renewal or may be the result of gentrification processes (see Lees et al., 2008).

In sum, neighbourhood regeneration should not only be treated as a political and organisational question, but also as an ethical question; do the benefits of transformation strategies outweigh the negative effects? Consequently, the challenge for every regeneration effort will always be to find a balance between the benefits of improving housing and public space and the social cost which regeneration may entail. The next paragraph will give some hint of who we should look to.
7.4.4 The guardians of regeneration

While there is reason to be skeptical about the social transformation and social agenda, neighbourhood regeneration also offers opportunities for city life. Together with more economy-oriented redevelopments, neighbourhood regeneration constitutes the never-ending reinvention and remaking of the city. As was highlighted in the literature review in chapter 1, a city's housing, physical and social spaces are essentially formed by interests and politics (see Robson, 1975), working through (housing) institutions and the actors confronted by these institutions. This study particularly focused on the state, which, although not unitary, arguably has the biggest impact on the aims and strategies of regeneration. Nevertheless, residents may play an important role in safeguarding the quality of the regeneration. The residents are likely to be most concerned with the fate of their neighbourhood along with self interest. A concern for the neighbourhood will likely be higher when a place has a social meaning for ethnic groups, such as the Surinamese community in the Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam or Pakistani in Sant Roc, Barcelona (see chapter 6). Some form of residential input may guide the improvement of place and housing. Moreover, it will most likely lead to a more responsible and sustainable form of social transformation. However, this will probably not go without conflict, as the interest of policy makers may collide with residential interests. Consequently, policy makers and managers often find residential protest a nuisance. Nevertheless, the involvement and engagement of residents in the regeneration process tends to improve the quality of the regeneration rather than damage it (Van Gent, 2008). However, before residents can even start to think about their neighbourhood and participate in any regeneration, they will first need not to worry about the livelihoods of themselves and their families. Hence, a state guarantee for steady income is a prerequisite for residential involvement and ultimately vital neighbourhoods. This is contrary to the current philosophy of regenerating neighbourhoods to provide the poor with income.

7.5 Challenges for further research

To help answer the ethical questions of regeneration, there are several venues for further research which will help our understanding of neighbourhoods and the capacity for social change. First, the scope of research may be broadened to include other institutional environments. An interesting option would be to expand the gaze towards Middle and Eastern European countries. The housing contexts in these post-Communist countries are substantially different from those in Western Europe due to different historical-geographical trajectories. These trajectories have led to differences in urban issues and policy responses. The heritage of the communist years, the large scale sale of public-owned housing in the 1990s, the overall economic conditions and employment situation, and the absence of large-scale immigration will likely produce different housing and urban policy frameworks for regeneration (see Hall et al., 2005, Van Beckhoven, 2006). In addition to including different national policy contexts, further research may also benefit from including more types of urban-regional environments. This includes more variation in terms of employment structures and urban economy as well as the regional housing market. An expanded variation of different types of housing market characteristics would give us further understanding of social transformation strategies within neighbourhood regeneration. Low demand regions with large shares of private owned housing will likely produce different outcomes than high demand markets dominated by private rental housing or owner-occupancy.
Second, as mentioned, neighbourhood regeneration and cultural and social integration of immigrant groups provides several interesting topics for further research. Issues of immigration and integration are definitely deemed relevant to urban issues and their solution. This warrants more research and discussion on the way these issues impinge upon the aims and strategies of neighbourhood regeneration in European countries (see Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2008). Furthermore, it would be interesting to look at the possible and real outcomes of the integration aim. In other words, what is exactly the capacity of neighbourhood regeneration to achieve integration of immigrant groups into society? This study remained skeptical about what was possible with a territorial focus, but the integration aspect of regeneration needs more attention.

Third, this research study was conducted before the 2008 housing and financial crises, which will likely have major societal and political consequences. As the crises take their toll in the fields of housing and employment, it will have a profound influence on the political arrangements and agendas, which are driving housing and urban policies. Sustained recession may even trigger new rounds of state subsidies for housing development as was the case in Europe after WWII, and in the the Netherlands, Sweden and Spain in the 1980s. Furthermore, in most European cities, housing market prices are already showing decline. It is unsure how long this trend will continue, but previous slumps have shown that the impact of less demand is immediately felt in deprived neighbourhoods. Moreover, social transformation through restructuring or upgrading will be harder to achieve as spill-over demand for middle class housing will be considerably less. In general, the crises have provided both research and policy with major challenges as social hardship increases and urban issues change.

Fourth, further research could be done to investigate alternative scenarios for enhancing liveability and social mobility for urban dwellers. It would be a ‘false choice’ to assert that neighbourhood regeneration has to entail social transformation strategies or not be applied at all (see Slater, 2006). Despite its dilemmas, neighbourhood regeneration can have beneficial effects for residents in terms of liveability. The exploration of alternative approaches which would consider both the ethical and the practical would surely benefit policy development.

Fifth, this study researched and discussed neighborhoods as singular units at one point in time, much like policy tends to treat them. This approach offered some advantages and useful insights. Nevertheless, neighbourhoods are, of course, units defined by their inhabitants, their housing structure and their physical form. Opening up ‘the black box of neighbourhood’ and illuminating the relationship between types of households and types of housing over time can provide useful insights. The relationship between housing and households can be seen in the light of housing careers rather than solely as a structurally determined relationship. Further research could investigate whether certain types of housing which are deemed universally unwanted by policy (e.g. social rent, from post-war era, small), may serve a demand from some types of households or in some types of neighbourhood. Furthermore, research into this relationship would also contribute to debates about gentrification, household displacement and entrapment.

Lastly, there is a major research challenge in the critical evaluation of area-based policy programmes with aims for social change. Evaluation of their aims, strategies and outcomes ex post should be done regularly and with proper resources. Social researchers and institutes are not the only ones to blame. Presently, insufficient policy budgeting for research means that evaluations are scarce, limited in scope, haphazard or underfunded. This is essentially pennywise pound-foolish. These policy programmes are also meant to improve insights in neighbourhood regeneration practices. Without proper research, both mistakes and good practices will go unnoticed. What’s more, without sufficient evaluations there can be no (theoretical) debate on how regeneration and other types of social policies can achieve social change which is sustainable, ethical and realistic.
References


Summary: Realistic Regeneration

1. Introduction

Nowadays almost every city in Western Europe has one or more stigmatised and deprived neighbourhoods, which are widely understood to be highly problematic or even no-go areas. The regeneration of these neighbourhoods, notably those built in the postwar era, has become a centre point of attention in public policy debates. Across Europe, politicians, policymakers, managers, journalists, observers, academics and the general public are not only concerned with the technical quality of housing, but more so with social issues. The neighbourhoods are identified as a nexus of poverty, squalor, immorality, violence, crime, long-term unemployment, estranged youth, drug use, extremism and cultural seclusion. Likewise, policies of regeneration are aimed to instill not only a physical change but also some sort of social change.

This study is about neighbourhood regeneration and in particular the aim for social change. The aim of this study is to appraise the state’s capacity for social change at a local and supra-local level through policies and practices of regeneration. In addition, this study aims to explain the social strategies of neighbourhood regeneration by its context. Like the social practice of neighbourhood regeneration, this study places an emphasis on social change through housing-related mechanisms and on the housing context as the explanans. This emphasis in research derives from the realist approach, which stresses the importance of social context in explaining social phenomena and how this context provides conditions and constraints within the causal mechanism. Policy making is a social mechanism in itself whose outcomes are contingent on its (housing) context. So, the objective is to explain and understand the practice of neighbourhood regeneration itself within a multi-layered context.

In accordance with the research aim and approach, the main research question is twofold: What is the capacity of neighbourhood regeneration policies for social and societal change, and how does the housing and policy context affect this capacity in Western European cities?

Figure 1 outlines the study’s conceptual model, which also serves as a reading guide to this book and this summary. The first part of the study (2-4) focuses on the aims and capacity of neighbourhood regeneration for social change. It is important to note that the outcomes are not defined in terms of how the governance, negotiation or implementation process went, but in terms of social change both on a local level and on a societal level. The second part (5 and 6) focuses on the context of neighbourhood regeneration policy and practice. In this study the focus of explanation will lie in the housing context. This means a focus on urban and housing policies on the national level and on the housing market characteristics at the urban and local level, including the mediating policymakers, professionals and managers.
This study employs comparative case studies. The case study research strategy fits the explorative and explanatory propositions of this study’s questions and aims and is best suited to research the main unit of analysis, neighbourhoods and their context. The comparison is between four contexts of neighbourhood regeneration, with the exception of chapter 3, which adds 25 cases to the comparison. The cases are the regeneration within urban neighbourhoods in:

5) Sweden
6) the Netherlands
7) UK
8) Catalonia, Spain

These cases represent four distinct types of social welfare states, covering a wide array of Western European contexts. However, the relationship between welfare state and housing policies proved to be more versatile (see below). Within the case study research strategy, this study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Furthermore, this study’s comparisons benefit from and build on the findings of the RESTATE research project, which ended in 2005.

2. Neighbourhood regeneration ambitions

Urban policies in Western Europe have increasingly taken a territorial focus in addressing social problems through area-based initiatives (ABI’s). Policy discourses emphasise the role of the residential environment in the social economic deprivation and the need to
socially transform areas and create balanced, or socially mixed, ‘communities’. However, a territorial focus which tackles both place-based issues and people-based problems would only make sense either when a ‘critical representation’ of the target population resides in several areas in an already divided city, or when neighbourhood effects take place. In the European context, the existence of either scenario is not a matter of fact.

An overview of four urban policies reveals that even though the rhetoric makes multiple allusions to the existence of the two scenarios, there is no convincing evidence. Moreover, in some cases the evidence refutes policy assumptions. This means that the policies are merely tackling unrelated problems: people-based social economic deprivation and place-based liveability and housing issues. In addition, urban policies stand against a backdrop of social and cultural integration debates. It is unknown what the territorial focus will do for integration, but it is unlikely that ABI's will be successful in effectively tackling social economic deprivation in European societies. It seems that these interventions are pursued due to a need of politicians and policy makers to do something, i.e. Something Is Being Done.

3. Regeneration’s capacity for liveability

If the policy ambitions behind neighbourhood regeneration are partly related to liveability, the question is whether regeneration has the capacity to make places more liveable. Because liveability is a subjective notion based on the opinions of residents, the level of neighbourhood satisfaction is used as an indicator for neighbourhood quality of life. Case study data of 29 post-WWII neighbourhoods in Europe was used in a fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fs-QCA) to construe the conditions for both ‘satisfied and optimist’ and ‘unsatisfied and pessimistic’ neighbourhoods. Fs-QCA is a method based on Boolean and fuzzy logic, which aptly fits the analysis of causality of neighbourhood satisfaction for the small number of cases. The analysis included both quantitative and qualitative data on neighbourhood regeneration along with other potential conditions.

The results reveal that for a number of cases dwelling satisfaction is a necessary condition for neighbourhood satisfaction. In other words, the quality of housing is pivotal. Along with dwelling satisfaction, environmental quality, social cohesion or neighbourhood regeneration prove to be key determinants. So, there is potential for neighbourhood regeneration and housing renewal to increase liveability. However, this may not be the case for creating a new social mix through regeneration. Contrary to policy beliefs, a socially mixed neighbourhood does not appear to cause satisfaction. Moreover, the results suggest that in some cases an ethnic presence in combination with a lack of social cohesion causes dissatisfaction.

4. Regeneration’s capacity for tackling social deprivation

Urban policies assert that neighbourhood regeneration benefits not only the neighbourhoods but society as a whole. Supposedly, deprived neighbourhoods are a black hole of poverty and social malaise, tearing the social fabric of society apart and creating societal divisions.

Also current Dutch urban policy has opted for a focused approach to solve urban social problems. The Minister of ‘Housing, Neighbourhoods and Integration’ aims at tackling social deprivation and liveability problems in a limited number of neighbourhoods. Several assumptions underpin the policy ambitions: e.g., a strong interrelationship between social deprivation and liveability; a clear social and spatial divide in Dutch society; and extra negative effects of problem accumulation.
When these assumptions are tested at the neighbourhood level, it appears that the two types of problems are in fact unrelated. This means that targeting a limited number of neighbourhoods does not effectively address social deprivation. Furthermore, there is yet insufficient research to support the idea that there would be extra negative effects associated with an accumulation of social deprivation and liveability problems. In other words, there do not seem to be any benefits to society as a whole in adopting a selective area approach to societal divisions. Especially, when considering that a mere 8 per cent of those who may need social assistance live in the neighbourhoods selected by policy. In other words, more than 90 per cent of those who need it do not pluck the fruits of urban policies. Similar results have been found in Sweden.

5. Welfare state politics and housing policy context

For context, this study placed some emphasis on welfare state typologies as a means to discern different policy environments. The selection of cases was based on a welfare state typology. So, the interplay between (welfare) state politics and housing is of particular importance to the housing context of regeneration. In Western European countries, the preferred and dominant housing tenure structures have long been associated with the form of welfare state capitalism. Large shares of public funded housing was typically associated with social democratic and corporatist states, and owner occupancy with liberal states. However, with the rise of owner occupancy in most European countries, this association lost its straightforwardness. An alternative is to view housing policies that promote owner occupancy for citizens to acquire assets, as an attempt by the state to reform social welfare provisions. The neo-liberal politics of welfare state reform are closely related to discourses of choice, personal responsibility and asset-building which are being associated with owner occupancy, or home ownership. The basic idea is that unmortgaged assets from housing wealth can supplement or replace welfare state provisions such as pensions, social and health care. Because they can purchase their own care and supplement their pensions from housing wealth, individual citizens would no longer have a need and a wish for collective welfare provisions. This view is mostly based on the British experience, where owner occupancy provides government income. However, similar assertions of ownership ideology cannot be made for Sweden. A closer examination of housing tenure policies and politics in the Netherlands and Spanish Catalonia reveals that while ownership rationales are similar, historically grown national housing systems offer different opportunities for welfare state change. The Dutch case shows ownership rationales in housing policies, yet they are not related to the provision of funding for pensions, health and social care. Furthermore, while owner occupancy does not provide government with income, the substantial social rental sector does. Housing associations provide opportunities for taxation and for ‘subcontracting’ social provisions and social policies, including neighbourhood regeneration. The Catalan case can be regarded as an ‘ownership society’. Ownership in housing forms a pillar of the family-based welfare system. However, issues of affordability of housing in high demand urban regions such as Barcelona, have put a stress on this system. Consequently, the Catalan government slowly developed a social rental housing sector. It is debatable whether this constitutes welfare change or an effort to sustain traditional welfare-family-housing relations. The point is that in its housing policy and politics, the state is driven by opportunism as much as welfare state ideology.
6. Housing context and local social transformation strategies

As this study ascertains, regeneration policies tend to revolve around the relationship between residential environment and the individual’s life chances. Consequently, neighbourhood regeneration in Western European cities often relies on social transformation strategies that use urban renewal to institute social change in deprived and stigmatised areas. However, the dictates of housing policy alone are insufficient to understand the role of the housing context. The local practice of neighbourhood regeneration offers us more insight into how context impinges upon the form and outcomes of neighbourhood regeneration.

Local managers and policy makers tend to favour social transformation as a means to make an area more manageable both socially and physically. In general, there are two types of social transformation strategies: large-scale tenure restructuring and upgrading. The first type of strategy relies on radically changing the housing stock through renewal to directly change social composition, giving local managers a lot of control. The second strategy relies on physical interventions and new amenities to upgrade the area’s housing market position in order to attract middle class households. The transformation through market gives managers less control. While transformation with control is favoured by local managers, the type of strategy they are able to adopt is dependent on the housing context. The comparative analysis of four cases of regeneration in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Birmingham and Stockholm showed that the opportunities and constraints of national policy framework and regional housing market characteristics explain the type of social transformation strategies adopted at the local level. The absence of a housing restructuring agenda in Sweden, for example, inhibits the use of tenure restructuring in the Stockholm case, while it proved enabling in the other cases.

7. Conclusion

In short, this study links the housing context to neighbourhood regeneration interventions and how this affects social outcomes. The outcomes appear to be limited when confronted with the promises made by politicians and policy makers (chapter 2). While liveability and neighbourhood satisfaction may be increased when dealing with a set of areas with specific problems (chapter 3), the social economic agenda is hampered by the selective territorial focus and by the social transformation agenda (chapter 4). The reason for the current form of regeneration, i.e. with social ambitions and social transformation agenda, can be found in its context of multiple layers of government which involve the changing European welfare state, the politics of welfare state and housing (chapter 5), urban policies and moral panic (chapter 2), and local managers calling for the social transformation of ‘their’ deprived areas (chapter 6). This last point shows that there is a need for distinguishing between strategic policy intervention at the urban, regional and national levels and the ad-hoc needs of local actors involved.

The findings of this study serve the ongoing debate on urban policies which involve neighbourhood regeneration. This study and other research suggest that the political, social and financial costs of regeneration do not warrant it when social economic deprivation is the objective. Apart from the waste of resources, the hollow social ambitions in neighbourhood regeneration may even be harmful. An important risk of regeneration with social ambitions is the pathologisation of poverty. The social policy focus on the poor themselves and on their living environment implies that these individuals and their neighbourhoods are seen as the cause for their exclusion or destitution. As a result, regeneration can increase the stigma of poverty and exclusion.
rather than lift it. More importantly, this policy focus ignores more structural causes in society. When regeneration policies do not yield the desired results, it may even amount to blaming the victim, i.e. the poor and excluded, for their predicament.

In addition, from a housing point of view the social transformation strategy may not prove to be sustainable. When low income housing diminished through tenure restructuring or processes of gentrification, the risk of unaffordable housing and displacement increases. In addition, from a policy standpoint, it will be harder and more costly to regenerate neighbourhoods when ownership is fragmented. Moreover, a regional housing stock should have a sustainable balance of different tenure types. An owner occupied dominated housing market is extremely vulnerable to displacement effects, and may endanger the ability of future generations to effectively regulate the housing market and renew dilapidated areas because of fragmented ownership. Any regeneration strategy should take this point into consideration.

So, neighbourhood regeneration should not only be treated as a political and organisational question, but also as an ethical question; do the benefits of transformation strategies outweigh the negative effects? Consequently, the challenge for every local regeneration effort will be to find a balance between the benefits of improving housing and public space and the social costs which regeneration may entail. For policy, the challenge is to critically review how regeneration and other types of social policies can achieve social change which is sustainable, ethical and realistic.

Reference

Samenvatting (Dutch Summary)

1. Introductie

Elke West-Europese stad kent een aantal buurten dat door stadsbewoners, commentatoren, journalisten, politici, wetenschappers en beleidsmakers unaniem aangeduid wordt als typisch problematisch. In het politieke en publieke debat wordt naar deze gebieden verwezen als aandachtswijken, verticale sloppen, getto’s, concentratiebuurten, kritische gebieden, of brandhaarden. In de afgelopen jaren is er veel tijd en energie gestoken in het aanpakken en vernieuwen van deze zogenaamde probleemwijken.

Dit onderzoek gaat over de vernieuwing van deze buurten (neighbourhood regeneration), en met name over de beoogde sociale verandering. Hoewel de staat van de woningen, van de gebouwen en van de openbare ruimte en het stedenbouwkundige ontwerp belangrijk zijn, kan buurtvernieuwing gezien worden als een reactie op het feit dat deze wijken vooral bekend staan als plaatsen waar sprake is van sociale problemen. Deze sociale problemen bevinden zich op het terrein van armoede en werkloosheid, maar ook van onveiligheid, overlast van jongeren, vandalisme, vervuiling, verkeer, en integratie. West-Europese staten proberen door middel van stedelijk en woonbeleid op hoger niveau en door middel van buurtvernieuwing projecten op lokaal niveau een sociale verandering te bewerkstelligen om de bovenstaande problemen het hoofd te bieden.

Het doel van dit onderzoek is inzicht te krijgen in het vermogen van de staat om deze sociale veranderingen door middel van buurtvernieuwingsbeleid en -projecten door te voeren. Daarnaast is het doel om de beleidsstrategie van de buurtvernieuwing met een dergelijke sociale inslag te verklaren vanuit de volkshuisvesting- en woningmarktcontext (housing context). Deze context is binnen de buurtvernieuwing uiterst belangrijk en staat daarom centraal als verklarende factor binnen dit onderzoek. De nadruk op de context past bij de wetenschappelijk realistische benadering van dit onderzoek. Deze benadering benadrukt het belang van de mogelijkheden en beperkingen van een sociale context voor het genereren van sociale mechanismen. Het ontwerpen en uitvoeren van buurtvernieuwingsbeleid is ook een sociaal mechanisme en de context hiervan is dus bepalend voor de uitkomsten.

De centrale vraag betreft zowel de uitkomsten als de context van buurtvernieuwing en is daarom tweeëndelig: Wat is het vermogen van buurtvernieuwing om sociale en maatschappelijke verandering te bewerkstelligen, en hoe beïnvloedt de volkshuisvesting- en woningmarktcontext dit vermogen in West-Europese steden?

Het eerste deel van deze studie richt zich op de beleidsdoelen met betrekking tot sociale verandering van buurtvernieuwing en op het vermogen om die te halen. De doelenstellingen waar naar gekeken wordt, zijn de beoogde verandering in de buurt, stad en maatschappij en niet zozeer de organisatorische en bestuurskundige aspecten van buurtvernieuwing. Het tweede deel besteedt aandacht aan de volkshuisvesting- en woningmarktcontext van buurtvernieuwing op zowel op lokaal als op maatschappelijk niveau.

Om de verkennende en verklarende vragen van dit onderzoek te beantwoorden, is er gekozen voor vergelijkende case studies van buurtvernieuwing. Binnen elke case study zijn zowel kwantitatieve als kwalitatieve onderzoeksmethoden gebruikt.

De studie richt zich vooral op vier contexten van buurtvernieuwing om een zo compleet mogelijk beeld te krijgen van het beleid, de praktijk en de uitkomsten in West-Europa. De cases zijn vernieuwing van buurten in Zweden, het Verenigd Koninkrijk, Catalonië in Spanje en Nederland. Deze vier contexten belichamen vier verschillende typen
verzorgingsstaat. De studie zal echter uitwijzen dat het verband tussen verzorgingsstaat en volkshuishuizensbeleid complex is. De case studies bouwen overigens voort op het RESTATE onderzoek, een omvangrijk Europees programma, beëindigd in 2005.

2. De ambitie van buurtvernieuwing

Stedelijke beleid in West-Europese landen wordt gekenmerkt door een gebiedsgerichte focus op sociale problemen. Het beleidsdiscours benadrukt de negatieve rol van de woonomgeving bij de instandhouding van sociaal-economische achterstanden. Het wordt daarom van belang geacht dat bepaalde ‘probleembuurten’ een verandering ondergaan. Deze verandering betreft niet alleen de fysieke omgeving, de stenen, maar ook de sociale samenstelling van de bevolking. Dit laatste zou vragen om meer middenklasse huishoudens en minder lage inkomensgroepen. Echter de keuze voor gebiedsgerichte benadering die tegelijkertijd de buurt en de mensen wil aanpakken en helpen, zou zijn rechtvaardiging vinden in twee gevallen. Ten eerste, wanneer de doelgroep voornamelijk in een beperkt aantal buurten zou wonen. Wanneer de doelgroep zo geconcentreerd zou zijn, dan gebiedsgerichte strategie een manier zijn om effectief de doelgroep bereiken. Een tweede mogelijkheid is wanneer de buurt daadwerkelijk een negatief effect op de bewoners heeft. Dit zou betekenen dat inwoners van probleemwijken minder sociaal-economische kansen hebben dan vergelijkbare inwoners in andere typen wijken. In de Europese context zijn er echter geen aanwijzingen voor het bestaan van één of beide scenario’s. Een vergelijking van vier beleidsprogramma’s wijst bijvoorbeeld uit dat de beleidsretoriek meerdere verwijzingen maakt naar het bestaan van één of beide scenario’s zonder een duidelijke empirische basis. In sommige gevallen wijst ook onderzoek uit dat er geen sprake is van dergelijke concentraties in een aantal wijken of van buurteffecten. Dit betekent dat het stedelijk beleid met buurtvernieuwing twee ongerekende problemen probeert aan te pakken; individugebonden sociaal-economische problemen en plaatsgebonden problemen op het gebied van woningen en leefbaarheid. Daarbij komt dat stedelijk beleid een rol dient te spelen in het oplossen van culturele integratievraagstukken, hoewel het vaak niet geëxpliciteerd wordt in beleidsteksten. Het is onduidelijk wat een buurtgerichte aanpak kan betekenen voor de integratie van immigranten en hun kinderen, maar het is onwaarschijnlijk dat de gebiedsgerichte aanpak van vernieuwing sociaal-economische achterstanden en tweedeling in de maatschappij effectief zal aanpakken. Het lijkt erop dat de aanpak voor een belangrijk deel gesteeld is op de noodzaak voor beleidsmakers en politici om actie te ondernemen en de complexe stedelijke problematiek het hoofd te bieden ongeacht de effectiviteit. Dit wordt ook wel het Something Is Being Done syndroom genoemd (‘er wordt iets gedaan’).

3. Het vermogen van buurtvernieuwing om de leefbaarheid te verbeteren

Wanneer leefbaarheid een ambitie van beleid is, dan is de vraag of de praktijk van buurtvernieuwing in staat is om de leefbaarheid te vergroten. Om deze vraag te beantwoorden is een vergelijkende analyse gedaan van 29 naoorlogse buurten die in meer of mindere mate buurtvernieuwing ondergaan of ondergaan hebben. Op basis van kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve case study data zijn de 29 buurten vergeleken door middel van een fuzzy-set Comparative Qualitative Analysis, een analyse gebaseerd op Booleaanse logica en probabiliteit.

Leefbaarheid is een subjectief concept dat verbonden is met de mening van bewoners over hun leefomgeving. Buurtsatisfactie, de tevredenheid en het vertrouwen van bewoners met hun buurt nu en in de toekomst, dient daarom als indicator voor
leefbaarheid. Het doel van de analyse is om op buurtniveau inzicht te krijgen in de voorwaarden voor de mate van zowel tevredenheid en optimisme als ontevredenheid en pessimisme over de toekomst van de buurt. De resultaten wijzen uit dat de tevredenheid met de woning een noodzakelijke voorwaarde is voor buurtsatisfactie. Dit betekent dat de kwaliteit van woningen van groot belang is. Naast de tevredenheid met de woning, spelen de kwaliteit van de leefomgeving, de sociale cohesie, en/of de buurtvernieuwing een grote rol. Dit betekent dus dat buurtvernieuwing en het verbeteren van woningen wel degelijk de leefbaarheid kunnen verbeteren. Een belangrijke kanttekening hierbij heeft te maken met sociale menging. Ten eerste kan het zijn dat de samenstelling van de buurtbevolking door de buurtvernieuwing is veranderd. Dit betekent dat de tevredenheid van verhuisde bewoners niet is meegenomen. Ten tweede blijkt dat de perceptie van een sociaal gemengde wijk geen rol speelt als voorwaarde voor buurtevredenheid. Bovendien blijkt dat een lage mate van sociale cohesie in combinatie met de aanwezigheid van immigrantengemeenschappen tot ontevredenheid in de buurt kan leiden. Dit spreekt de beleidsverwachting tegen die stelt dat sociale menging en leefbaarheid aanvullend zijn.

4. Het vermogen om sociaal-economische achterstanden aan te pakken

Naast het verbeteren van leefbaarheid, speelt sociaal-economische achterstand een grote rol in de ambities van stedelijk beleid. Dit heeft niet alleen betrekking op de buurten maar op de maatschappij als geheel waarbij zwakke buurten worden neergezet als een teken van sociale tweedeling.

Deze redenering geldt ook voor het Nederlandse 40-Wijkenbeleid, dat zowel leefbaarheidsproblemen als sociaal-economische achterstanden tracht aan te pakken door zich te richten op een klein aantal buurten. De aannames zijn dat de leefomgeving en sociaal-economische achterstanden met elkaar verbonden zijn, dat er op buurtniveau een maatschappelijke tweedeling is, en dat buurten in achterstand negatieve effecten voor de bewoners teweeg brengen. Wanneer deze aannames echter getest worden, dan blijkt dat leefbaarheidsproblemen en sociaal-economische achterstand op buurtbereik niet met elkaar samengaan. Ook blijkt dat er geen tweedeling zichtbaar is. Bovendien zijn er vooral geen aanwijzingen voor de negatieve effecten van leefbaarheidsproblemen en sociaal-economische achterstanden samen. Wanneer het beleid zich slechts richt op een beperkt aantal buurten, dan kan het de problemen van tweedeling dus niet oplossen. Dit punt wordt duidelijker wanneer men in acht neemt dat slechts zo’n 8% van de hulpbehoevenden in Nederland in de geselecteerde buurten woont. Dit betekent dat ruim 90 procent weinig tot geen profijt heeft van het beleid. Vergelijkbare cijfers zijn bekend in het geval van Zweden.

5. De context: verzorgingsstaatpolitiek en volkshuisvestingsbeleid

Sociaal beleid en beleid op het gebied van de volkshuisvesting vallen binnen de context van de inrichting en de sociale filosofie van de verzorgingsstaat. De selectie van de vier cases is daarom gebaseerd op verschillende typen verzorgingsstaat. Met name de wisselwerking tussen verzorgingsstaat en volkshuisvesting is van belang voor de context van buurtvernieuwing. Lange tijd was er in West-Europese landen een verband tussen de mate van publieke uitgaven aan sociale woningbouw en het type verzorgingsstaat. Grosso modo kon men stellen dat een omvangrijke publieke sector gepaard ging met een sociaal-democratische of corporatistische verzorgingsstaat. Een nadruk op eigen bezit en een beperkte sociale huursector kon men juist aantreffen in meer liberale verzorgingsstaten. Maar met de toename van eigenwoningbezit in de
Een andere manier om de relatie tussen verzorgingsstaat en volkshuisvesting te benaderen is om beleid dat eigenwoningbezit stimuleert als onderdeel van de politiek rond de hervorming van de verzorgingsstaat te zien. De politiek van hervorming wordt vaak gevoerd aan de hand van het neo-liberale discours rond het opbouwen en het belang van eigendom, keuzevrijheid en persoonlijke verantwoordelijkheid. Het stimuleren van eigenwoningbezit in alle lagen van de bevolking past binnen dit discours. Het idee is dat de overwaarde van de eigenwoning reeds bestaande verzorgingsstaatvoorzieningen zoals medische zorg en pensioenen, zou kunnen aanvullen of zelfs vervangen. In plaats van gebruik te maken van collectiviteitvoorzieningen, zou de individuele burger zijn vermogen uit eigenwoningbezit kunnen gebruiken om zelf de zorgdiensten te verwerven en het pensioen aan te vullen. Deze zienswijze is gebaseerd op de situatie in Groot Brittannië, waar het beleid ter bevordering van eigenwoningbezit bovendien voor staatsinkomsten zorgt. Echter, gelijksoortige claims over de ideologie rond eigenwoningbezit kunnen in het geval van het Zweedse beleid niet gemaakt worden. Een nadere verkenning van Nederland en Catalonië leverd eveneens geen eenduidig beeld op. Er zijn wel enkele overeenkomsten in de beweegredenen en ambities om eigenwoningbezit te stimuleren, maar het blijkt ook dat de verschillende woningmarktsystemen andere mogelijkheden voor hervorming bieden.

In het Nederlandse geval blijkt dat er wel een discours van eigenwoningbezit en persoonlijke verantwoordelijkheid bestaat, maar dat er geen referenties worden gemaakt naar pensioensvoorzieningen of zorgkosten. Daar komt bij dat de Nederlandse staat door eigenwoningbezit aanzienlijke inkomsten uit belastingen misloopt en dat juist het kapitaal in de omvangrijke sociale huursector mogelijkheden geeft voor inkomsten. In de afgelopen jaren zijn woningbouwcorporaties een nieuwe bron van belastinginkomsten geweest. Bovendien worden corporaties gebruikt als onderaannemer om de financiering en de implementatie van sociale voorzieningen en sociaal beleid, waaronder buurtvernieuwing en sociale investeringen, op zich te nemen.

Spanje en Catalonië kunnen worden gezien als een ‘eigendomsmaatschappij’. Eigenwoningbezit speelt een belangrijke rol in de zogenaamde ‘familieverzorgingsstaat’ waarbij de overdracht van kapitaal binnen familieverbanden voor een sociaal vangnet zorgt. De bevordering van eigenwoningbezit is in Catalonië en Spanje daarom een belangrijk onderdeel van het volkshuisvestingbeleid geweest. Echter, de grote vraag naar woningen in stedelijke regio’s zoals Barcelona, heeft de betaalbaarheid onder grote druk gezet, wat weer druk zet op de staat. De zelfstandige Catalaanse overheid reageert hierop door langzaam de marginale sociale huursector uit te breiden. Het is vooralsnog de vraag of dit een hervorming van de verzorgingsstaat inhoudt of dat het een lapmiddel is om bestaande regelingen in stand te houden.

In wezen is politiek evengoed een oefening in opportunisme. De analyse laat zien dat wanneer het woningmarkten en volkshuisvesting betreft, de staat zich net zo opportunistisch gedraagt als dat hij sociaal-democratische, corporatistische of liberale principes najaagt.
6. De invloed van de context op lokale sociale transformatiestrategieën

Zoals hierboven al is gesteld, gaat het beleid rond buurtvernieuwing uit van een zeer sterke relatie tussen de leefomgeving en de sociaal-economische kansen van individuen. De praktijk van buurtvernieuwing wordt daarom gekenmerkt door veranderingstrategieën die door middel van sloop en nieuwbouw de sociale samenstelling van de buurt proberen aan te passen. Met andere woorden, de strategieën van buurtvernieuwing proberen een ‘sociale transformatie’ van ‘problembuurten’ te bewerkstelligen. Het is echter niet voldoende om naar het beleid alleen te kijken. De lokale praktijk biedt inzicht in hoe de beleids- en woningmarktcontext de strategieën en uitkomsten van buurtvernieuwing vormen.

Lokale managers en beleidsmakers hebben een sterke voorkeur voor sociale transformatiestrategieën binnen buurtvernieuwing. Zij geloven niet alleen dat de sociale verandering voordelen biedt voor de bewoners, maar ook dat het hun eigen beheer-en beheerstaak vergemakkelijkt. Ruwweg kan men spreken over twee typen sociale transformatie: grootschalige herstructurering en ‘upgrading’. Het verschil zit vooral in de hoeveelheid controle die managers kunnen uitoefenen op de snelheid en omvang van de sociale verandering. Grootschalige herstructurering betekent dat door middel van sloop en nieuwbouw de woningmarkt en eigendomsverhoudingen radicaal gewijzigd worden. De fysieke ingrepen geven lokale managers en beleidsmakers veel controle over de sociale verandering via de controle over de hoeveelheid middenklasse (koop-)woningen en goedkopere woningen na herstructurering. Het tweede type biedt echter minder directe controle. De ‘upgrading’ strategie draait om fysieke interventies in de woningvoorraad en openbare ruimte om zo de positie van de buurt op de regionale woningmarkt te verbeteren en een nieuw type huishouden aan te trekken. Het verschil met het eerste type is dat er geen directe veranderingen op grote schaal in eigendomsverhoudingen en inwoners plaats kunnen vinden. Grootschalige herstructurering heeft onder managers en beleidsmakers de voorkeur, maar of deze strategie daadwerkelijk gevolgd kan worden is afhankelijk van de context. Een vergelijkende analyse op basis van vier case studies van vernieuwing van buurten in of nabij Amsterdam, Barcelona, Birmingham en Stockholm wijst uit dat de kansen en beperkingen die het beleidsraamwerk en de woningmarktkenmerken bieden, de strategie verklaren. Het blijkt bijvoorbeeld dat een beleidsagenda rond woningmarktherstructurering in sommige gevallen kansen tot herstructurering gaf. In het Zweedse geval echter, bleek dat een dergelijke hervormingsagenda binnen het beleid ontbreekt. Het gevolg was dat het ontbreken van de politieke wil en de financiële middelen juist een radicale herstructureringsstrategie onmogelijk maakte ondanks de wens van een groot aantal betrokken managers.
Deze studie laat het belang van de ‘wooncontext’ zien voor de vorm en uitkomsten van buurtvernieuwing. De mogelijke uikomsten zijn beperkter dan de beleidsambities. De leefbaarheid en de buurtevredenheid kunnen positief beïnvloed worden door buurtvernieuwing, maar de sociaal-economische ambities worden ernstig beperkt door de territoriale focus op een klein aantal buurten. De verklaring voor de voortzetting van deze vorm van buurtvernieuwing, dat wil zeggen met sociale ambities en sociale transformatiestrategieën, heeft te maken met de context. Vooral van belang zijn ontwikkelingen op meerdere bestuurslagen: de veranderende Europese verzorgingsstaten, de politiek rond verzorgingsstaat en volkshuisvesting, het stedelijk beleid en de morele noodzaak tot ingrijpen, en de lokale managers en beleidsmakers die roepen om de transformatie van ‘hun’ achtergestelde gebieden.

Dit onderzoek tracht bij te dragen aan het beleidsdebat over buurtvernieuwing. Zoals ook andere studies hebben gedaan, laat dit onderzoek zien dat de politieke, sociale en financiële kosten van de vernieuwing nauwelijks opwegen tegen de (mogelijke) uitkomsten wat betreft de verbetering van de sociaal-economische positie van individuen. Naast een verspilling van kapitaal kan de holle beloft van buurtvernieuwing zelfs schadelijke effecten hebben. Zo is er het risico op het ‘pathologiseren’ van het armoedeprobleem. Wanneer een sociaal beleid zich uitsluitend richt op degenen met achterstand en op hun leefomgeving, dan kan dit impliceren dat deze individuen en hun buurten ook als de oorzaak van de armoede en sociale uitsluiting gezien worden. Het gevolg zou kunnen zijn dat sociale buurtvernieuwing het stigma van armoede van de buurten kan verhogen in plaats van verlichten. Daar komt bij dat meer structurele processen in de maatschappij minder aandacht krijgen.

Vanuit een volkshuisvestings- en woningmarktperspectief, kan de sociale transformatiestrategie de duurzaamheid van de buurtaanpak aantasten. Wanneer het aantal woningen voor lagere en midden inkomensgroepen door herstructurering of het gentrification proces na updraging in de stad minder wordt, dan neemt het risico van betaalbaarheid en verdringing (displacement) van lage inkomens toe. Daar komt bij dat het voor de (semi-)overheid moeilijker en duurder zal worden om in buurten in te grijpen wanneer het eigendom over bewoners verdeeld raakt. Wanneer de sociale huursector drastisch kleiner wordt, zal armoede zich namelijk niet beperken tot deze sector. Een regionale woningmarkt zal baat hebben bij gebalanceerde eigendomsverhoudingen. Een door eigenwoningbezit gedomineerde woningmarkt is kwetsbaarder voor verdringing en zal het vermogen van toekomstige beleidsmakers en managers tot woningmarktregulering en fysieke woningvernieuwing beperken. Dit type weerspiegelingen dient een belangrijke rol te spelen bij discussies over buurtvernieuwingstrategieën.

Buurtvernieuwing zou dus niet alleen als een politieke en bestuurskundige kwestie beschouwd moeten worden maar ook als een sociaal dilemma: wegen de sociale voordelen van transformatiestrategieën op tegen de negatieve sociale effecten? De uitdaging in elke buurtvernieuwingproject is het vinden van de juiste balans tussen de voordelen van het vernieuwen, verbeteren en renoveren van woningen en de openbare ruimte enerzijds en de sociale kosten die zich kunnen voordoen anderzijds. Voor het ontwerp van beleid is de uitdaging hoe buurtvernieuwing en andere typen sociaal beleid het hoofd kunnen en zouden moeten bieden aan sociale problemen in de stad op een duurzame, ethische en realistische manier.