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

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6. Housing context and social transformation strategies in neighbourhood regeneration in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Birmingham and Stockholm

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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
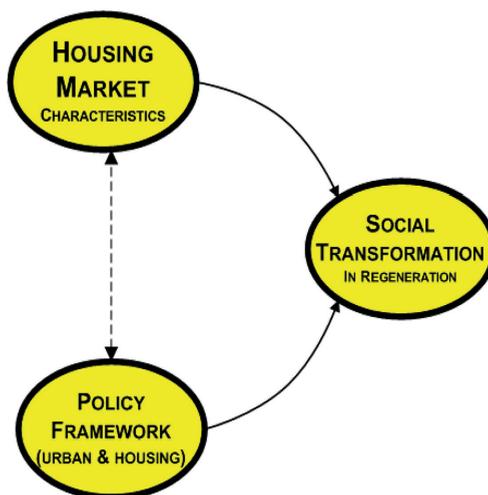
6.3.1 Housing market characteristics

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).

	Central Estates	**Bijlmermeer (East)**	**Tensta**	**Sant Roc**
Urban region	Birmingham	Amsterdam	Stockholm	Barcelona
Location	Central	Peripheral	Peripheral	Between two regional centres
Year of construction	1960s- 1970s	1968- 1977	1966- 1971	1950s- 1960s
Dwellings	3,298	12,764	5,931	3,395
Predominant tenure before regeneration	Social rental housing (83% in 1991)	Social rental housing (92.6% in 1992)	Social rental housing (61% in 2004)	Owner-occupied housing (nearly all dwellings)
Population	6,582	25,496	16,834	15,404 (+ an estimated 2,000 unregistered residents)
Unemployment	17% (among tenants)	11%	15.5%	30.5% (1997 sample)
Ethnicity	39.0% Black and ethnic minority groups	70.2% Non-native	85% foreign born	40% *Gitanos* 36.2% Foreign born

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 neighbour-hood]. 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.[22] 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).

		Central Estates (UK)	Bijlmermeer (NL)	Tensta (Sw)	Sant Roc (Spain)
MARKET	Ownership structure	+	+	+	-
	Demand Potential	+	+	+	+
POLICY	Urban Policies	+	+	+	+
	Housing Reform Agenda	+	+	-	+
STRATEGY		Tenure Restructuring	Tenure Restructuring	Upgrading	Upgrading

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.

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