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3 The Effects of State-Led Gentrification in the Netherlands

Peter van der Graaf and Lex Veldboer

Introduction

In this chapter we present our most recent research on the effects of the Dutch urban renewal programs based on two research projects. The first project (Veldboer et al. 2008) searched for the ideal middle class: which members of the middle class were most likely to be tolerant of and helpful to poor residents in urban renewal areas. The second research project (Van der Graaf, 2009) explored the emotional ties of residents in deprived neighborhoods in the Netherlands and the changes these residents experienced in their attachment to the neighborhood when urban renewal programs were operating in their area.

Although both projects explored quite different subjects, they both comment on the dominant strategy of urban renewal in the Netherlands: a serious upgrading of the housing stock in deprived areas to increase the share of the middleclass. This can be classified as a form of state-led gentrification by which the Dutch government and local actors attempt to improve not only the neighborhood but also the poor residents living in it, by providing them with more wealthy neighbors who can lend them a hand and show them a way out of deprivation. These arguments are familiar with the international found motives for social mix (see Sarkissian 1976). This social mix strategy is heavily criticized by scientists in and outside the Netherlands, who argue that state-led gentrification is doing more harm than good for poor residents. To shed more light on this debate, we researched both sides of the argument: the first project takes the proponents' logic as a starting point and asked which middleclass groups would be more helpful in supporting their poor neighbors, while the second project starts with the critics' argument that gentrification causes displacement instead of more opportunities for poor residents in their neighborhood. How is the place attachment of these residents affected by urban renewal? ¹ Together, the two research projects present a fuller picture of the effects of state-led gentrification in the Netherlands.

We will discuss the main findings, starting in paragraphs three to five, with the potential lifting effects of urban renewal. We will argue that a small tolerant and helpful middle class exists, which is opposed

by a larger middle class that is pre-occupied with its own position and which is not very compassionate towards poor residents. Contrary to what is commonly expected, this engagement is not found among social climbers from the same (ethnic) groups who already live in the neighborhood, but is linked to new residents arriving in the neighborhood with idealistic ideas. Yet, their numbers are small and therefore the lifting effect of this middle class group is limited. Nevertheless, the presence of new high-status groups in the area is valued by the residents in deprived areas.

This is followed in paragraphs six to eight with a discussion of the findings from the second research project, arguing that losses and potential for gains are greater when the emotional ties of residents in urban renewal areas are considered. Moving out of the neighborhood causes feelings of displacement and not belonging, while staying and starting over with the new neighbors in the regenerated neighborhood does positively affect the attachment of residents in deprived areas. Before we discuss these findings in more detail, we will start with a brief overview of the social mix policy to frame our findings in the present academic and policy debate.

The Netherlands: state led-gentrification as urban policy

A central notion in the Dutch urban policy is to prevent selective migration of the urban middle class by offering these groups the opportunity to make a housing career within the city, preferably within the area where they live. To accommodate the middle class in the city, the National Government and local authorities are investing large sums of money in the conversion of the housing stock in deprived post-war areas. Areas with high rates of unemployment, nuisance and social problems are selected for extensive urban renewal programs which aim to reduce social housing and expand the stock of private rental and owner-occupied housing. These large-scaled conversion and construction programs are embedded in an array of social plans for the original residents. Inhabitants confronted with regeneration projects have in most cases the right to return to the neighborhood. Many of the poor and middle-class residents use this 'right' to return to the renewed area after the completion of the urban renewal programs (Slob, Bolt & Van Kempen 2008).

Because of these compensating mechanisms, there are hardly any examples of urban renewal in the Netherlands that fit the picture of a 'hard' sanitizing makeover that is so vigorously opposed by neo-Marxist researchers in Anglo Saxon countries (Slater 2006). Moreover, problems of deprivation are less extreme in the Netherlands than in the

United Kingdom and the United States; no-go areas do not exist and the housing stock is still in demand in deprived areas. While in other countries, such as the USA and France, the dominant social mix strategy is to enable poor residents to move out of deprived areas to 'opportunity-rich' neighborhoods, in the Netherlands – and in the UK – the aim is to mix deprived areas by attracting middle-class groups to less affluent areas.

Social equality or social tectonics?

The policy of residential social mix in the Netherlands is based on three motives (see also Ouwehand & Van der Laan Bouma-Doff 2007):

1. Social equality: improving the wellbeing of disadvantaged groups in the neighborhood;
2. Social efficiency: reducing social costs for society, such as crime, nuisance and deviant behavior; and
3. Neighborhood improvement by upgrading the housing stock and facilities in the neighborhood.

Most urban policy plans are formulated by authorities as inclusive strategies: disadvantaged residents have to profit from the arrival of middle class groups in the neighborhood. Dutch policy makers believe that there is something like 'a middle-class burden': a felt obligation among the well-to-do to help their socially vulnerable neighbors. Policy makers and housing professionals in the Netherlands are inspired by Wilson's (1987) thesis that poor residents cannot do without a surrounding middle class. It is their belief that residents in deprived areas do not only have limited access to labor markets and educational opportunities, but also miss access to the right kind of social capital. Living too close to people with the same lack of opportunities is believed to reduce chances for upward mobility. By knowing the right kind of people, residents should acquire access to much needed information and skills to move up the societal ladder. Processes of selective migration of the middle class are therefore seen as problematic (VROM-raad, 2006) and should be reversed by urban renewal policies which focus on attracting these residents back to less affluent inner city areas.

Many academics are wary of these programs. First of all, they question the negative effects of segregated living. Compared to neo-liberal Anglo-Saxon countries (Ellen & Turner 1997), isolation effects are seen as rather light or missing in the Netherlands; illustrative is that inhabitants of segregated areas fare no less in terms of school performances or unemployment compared to similar residents in social mixed areas (Musterd & Pinkster 2005). On the other hand: evidence is found of in-

creased chances among ethnic groups to experience higher levels of job insecurity, a greater risk of becoming a victim of crime, a greater chance of downward socializing; a lower language ability; a reduced knowledge of dominant cultural codes; and, a less 'Western' orientation (see the chapter of Musterd and Pinkster in this book; see also Van der Laan Bouma-Doff 2005; Gijsberts & Dagevos 2005). These effects are indeed not very strong, but they give ground to speak of a rather ambivalent picture regarding Dutch isolation effects.

A further comment made by researchers is that the middle class residents living in deprived areas are hardly willing to connect with poorer groups in their neighborhood. Blokland (2001) showed, for example, that higher income groups do not develop more civil action in neighborhoods than lower income residents. Kleinhans, Veldboer and Duyvendak (2000) and Beckhoven and Van Kempen (2002) have demonstrated that in newly mixed neighborhoods social contacts between different status groups were limited. 'Meeting' (the possibility of contact) rarely leads to 'mating' (engaging into meaningful contact), because residents prefer to interact with people who are more like themselves. Instead of interacting with each other, different groups are mainly living apart. Recent research confirms that, of all the groups living in the renewed neighborhoods, the middle class has the least contacts (Van Bergeijk a.o. 2008). In sum, the middle class in these renewed areas can hardly be labeled as the 'cement of the neighborhood'.

These findings are hardly surprising; the neighborhood as a framework for social integration and community has been in decline for a number of decades. Almost all neighborhoods (regardless of composition) are nowadays characterized by relatively limited neighborhood networks (Wellmann et al. 1988; Volker & Verhoeff 1999). In neighborhood networks, higher income groups are structurally underrepresented because they have more outward time-space patterns: they are more mobile and less bound to their homes (SCP 2008). Moreover, the differences in status between residents reduce the chances of (neighborhood) contacts (see Pettigrew 1998). This is not to say that contacts between neighbors are non-existent: contacts are maintained more strategically, focusing on the importance of good neighbors next door (which can provide practical aid and can be called upon in case of an emergency). Contacts also are maintained at a more general level, focusing on the neighborhood composition as a whole, as a way of expressing the status of the area and as a way to define 'home' (see below).

If social mix does not stimulate a warm, mating and bridging community, however, then what is the social impact of social mix strategies in urban renewal? Some researchers claim that mixing has mostly negative effects; it is regarded as sharpening divisions between groups of

residents, feeding relative deprivation among the poor (Kleinhans et al 2007) and a 'place struggle' or 'social tectonics' between different inhabitants (see Butler 2008). Increasing the share of the middle class is seen as bad news for the social bonds of people in a poor neighborhood; making areas more (class) diverse can lower the trust in already diverse areas with disadvantaged native born and ethnic groups (Lancee & Dronkers 2008). This line of reasoning echoes the work of Putnam (2007), arguing that any diversity enlarges distrust and fosters isolation and that only similarity stimulates compassion and cohesion (Laumann 1966). Social mix is labeled by these critics as an empty or even counterproductive 'mantra' (Bolt & Van Kempen 2008).

Another critique relates to neo-Marxist gentrification research in Anglo-Saxon countries. This line of research argues that cities in their competing quest for the middle class do not have the interests of their disadvantaged inhabitants at heart; instead, disadvantaged residents in urban renewal projects are subjected to a program of discipline and eviction. Urban renewal is, in this view, strategically employed for managerial purposes to control, civilize and disperse lower income groups, for the benefit of a 'revanchist' middle class (Uitermark & Duyvendak 2005b). The new prosperous occupants are considered to have a predominantly negative interest in their poorer neighbors; they prefer to avoid any contact with 'dangerous groups' in their area (see Smith 2002; Slater 2006).

We argue that both claims, a 'revanchist' and 'depriving' middle class, do not apply particularly well to the Dutch case. Claims in this direction are mostly extrapolations of Anglo-Saxon research and do not address very precisely the class effects of social mix in the Netherlands. Lancee and Dronkers (2008), for instance, initially only researched neighborhoods with growing ethnic diversity and did not look for class diverse urban renewal sites². Van Bergeijk et al. (2008) are quick to link negative neighborhood perceptions to an increase in ethnic heterogeneity in renewed areas, but do not provide any evidence of a link between income diversity and reduced neighborhood satisfaction. There is support for the assumption that low levels of trust can be explained by a polarization between lower-class native Dutch and immigrant groups (Burgers & Van der Waal 2006). However, there is hardly any proof that residential mix is fostering an extra polarization between well-to-do and disadvantaged groups. In theory, this could be the case if race and class cleavages fall together, but the mere presence of an ethnic middle class in most renewed areas does not fit this picture. And although disciplining strategies towards outsider groups are increasingly popular in the Netherlands, this is again merely related to ethnic polarization and not to class polarization (see also Ouwehand & Van der Laan Bouma-Doff 2007).

It is also questionable whether disadvantaged residents are truly unsatisfied with the arrival (or enduring presence) of more affluent groups. Contacts might be scarce but a larger middle class presence can improve the status of the neighborhood, uplifting the social and financial support for key facilities, and this can also be beneficial for deprived groups of residents. Most of all, it is hardly known whether the middle-class in question has a truly negative view of disadvantaged residents. Clearly some middle class residents will try to distinguish themselves, but does this necessarily mean that all middle-class groups show a negative interest in less privileged neighbors?

In search of tolerance among the mixed middle class

Interestingly, not many members of the Dutch middle class oppose the general aim of social mix, but few of them are actually willing to share a neighborhood with disadvantaged residents. The crucial question is, therefore, which middle-class groups are willing to live in a mixed area, and are they also tolerant towards deprived groups of residents? This question was central to our case-study research in two regeneration areas of Amsterdam (Veldboer 2008).

In our research, we followed the distinctions made by politicians and chose not to re-categorize them immediately into more academic categories of middle-class groups (based for example on economic or educational criteria) for the sake of evaluating the validity of their argument. Local policymakers in Amsterdam distinguished three different middle-class groups who they thought were interested in living in these areas and who should be able to make a difference: social climbers, the creative class (working in the arts, the media, entertainment and in commercial creative services) and social professionals (working in education, health or safety).

Social climbers, and especially ethnic social climbers, are clearly a popular group among policy makers in Amsterdam. A growing number of immigrants is prosperous (by accessing higher education or by setting up their own business) and is looking to buy their own house. For example, the renewed area of south-east Amsterdam was re-designed with the Surinamese families originating from the area (known as the Bijlmer) in mind to maintain this ethnic group for the area. The so-called 'western garden cities' to the west of Amsterdam followed the same strategy in order to offer their own ethnic climbers (mostly Turkish and Moroccan residents) an alternative in the city to the desirable terraced houses in the nearby commuter villages of Almere, Purmerend, Zaanstad or Hoofddorp. Ethnic climbers are usually keen to stay in the area: they are familiar with the area and can be per-

suauded to stay to pursue a housing career in their neighborhood or borough with sufficient financial incentives. Policy makers are keen to be of service, assuming that their familiarity with the area will motivate them to share their social capital with less fortunate members of their ethnic group living in the area.

Secondly, policy makers in Amsterdam have high hopes for the creative class. Almost every political bench, with the liberals in front, hopes that the preference of the creative class for diversity is not limited to their working and recreational life, but stretches out to their residential life. Many policy makers assume, with Florida (2002), that creativity, urban renaissance, tolerance and altruism go hand in hand. Although it is acknowledged that most regeneration sites outside the city centre lack quality of space and, therefore, are not on the top of the list of the creative class, the assumption is that students and artists or creative entrepreneurs with small earnings might be interested in living in these areas and are willing to extend a helping hand to disadvantaged residents.

Next to the creative class and the social climbers, Amsterdam is keen to add more social professionals to its population in deprived areas, in particular lower-middle-class residents in social professions, such as teachers, nurses and police officers. Therefore, the city council prioritizes the housing needs of key members of the service class (*maatschappelijk noodzakelijke beroepsgroepen*) and fast tracks them in the distribution system to provide them with swift access to a home in the city. This should prevent a shortage of practitioners in these professions for the city and they are expected to take some of their virtues home. As social professionals, they are particularly good at establishing contacts; they are experienced in addressing different groups of people and are able to help them access a range of public and private agencies otherwise unknown to these residents. As residents, it is assumed that social professionals could potentially fulfill a similar role in their own neighborhoods.

Dissimilar or similar tolerance in the middle classes?

To analyze the extent to which various middle-class groups are tolerant of disadvantaged groups and willing to lend a hand to their less affluent neighbors, we conducted research in two renewal areas between 2005 and 2006; one in Amsterdam south east (*F-buurt* in the Bijlmer) and one in Amsterdam's new west (Geuzenbaan in Geuzenveld). Both areas of the Dutch capital are part of an urban renewal operation that is unprecedented in size in the Netherlands, with large-scale demolition of pre-war social housing to be replaced by new private rental and

owner-occupied housing, combined with the private sale of rental housing in order to change the income composition of both neighborhoods (Aalbers et al. 2003).

We conducted research in the two renewal areas in Amsterdam, asking residents about their tolerance towards, contacts with and support for less fortunate neighbors. Tolerance was measured by using questions about feelings of commitment towards disadvantaged people in general and to the residents in non-renovated parts of the area in particular. Residents were also asked whether they had any problem with their children playing with children living in the non-renovated parts of the neighborhood which were predominantly occupied by lower-class groups. The surveys among the middle-class households showed a response of slightly over thirty percent in both areas. A well-known problem with this type of research is that people find it difficult or impertinent to judge their neighbors. Therefore, more indirect questions were used, such as the example mentioned above about children playing together. In addition, the expert opinion of local professionals was sought to triangulate the data. Interviews were conducted with local social workers on their experiences with the bridging of classes in their area. A particularly interesting group in the survey were teachers; as part of the service class of priority social professions (*maatschappelijk noodzakelijke beroepsgroepen*) they were easy to trace and more likely to talk openly, in their roles as resident and as professional, about their mixing experiences.

In distinguishing different groups of the middle class, we followed as far as possible the political categories that were applied by the municipality of Amsterdam. We categorized all ethnic social climbers into one category, regardless of their occupation. Further analyses indicated that the overlap with the other two groups, creative class and social professionals, was minimal and that most middle-class immigrants ranked at a middle position on the income ladder.

What we found in our analysis was that dissimilar groups, such as the creative class and the service class, who were at greater social distance from disadvantaged groups in the area, showed relatively more tolerance and willingness to help deprived groups than the more similar ethnic middle class who maintained more contacts with disadvantaged residents. Generally, the results for tolerance (highest score 25 percent), contact (40 percent) and support (20 percent) were very modest in the survey, although resident-teachers scored considerably higher.

This is in line with the assumption that the service class is more likely to demonstrate high levels of civil commitment (Van der Land 2004). Teachers in particular demonstrated a willingness to support neighbors with social problems in their spare time. This characteristic

usually ran in the family, with teaching being established as a family tradition and as a consequence an almost genetic inclination to lend a helping hand, both at school and in their neighborhood. Amsterdam houses several of these social-democratic inspired teachers, but their number in the middle class is small and, therefore, their support as a whole is limited.

The results confirm, to our own surprise, Florida's theory on the tolerant behavior of the creative class towards more marginalized groups in the neighborhood. Florida argues at the macro level that the presence of the creative class contributes to a modern city and that at the micro level they are attracted by diversity. A specific part of the creative class – let us call them idealists – can indeed be found in mixed areas and is not only relatively tolerant, but is also known to lend a helping hand to less fortunate residents in the deprived neighborhood where they choose to live. This finding is confirmed in both our surveys³ and our qualitative research at mixed primary schools. These idealists are an interesting but relatively unexplored group by social scientists. We know relatively little about them: they are confident and not bound by 9-to-5 working days, which allows them to be flexible, but other characteristics are unknown.

Another surprise in our research was the limited tolerance and support from ethnic climbers. Immigrants who improve their social-economic status are rather ambiguous; they like the ethnic facilities and the presence of friends but they are also keen on the presence of white, high-status groups. Ethnic social climbers had by far the most contacts with disadvantaged people in their areas; however, these mainly consisted of family members. The ethnic climbers in our research were hardly willing to lend a helping hand to 'unknown' and less successful residents from their own ethnic group or to disadvantaged members of other ethnic groups. They feared a 'fall back' in status if they associated themselves too much with these groups and their time was taken up by their own career development and support for their own family.

In short, middle-class residents who are willing to mix with poorer residents and help them bridge their social and cultural capital deficit are more likely to be found outside familiar groups of disadvantaged residents. Apparently, some social distance fosters tolerance and enlarges the willingness for bridging. Ergo, the weak ties of Grannovetter (1973) – although their impact is less intense – appear to be more useful for social mobility in deprived neighborhoods than the strong ties promoted by Wilson (1987). At the same time, the number of these tolerant and helpful groups is limited and it would be unrealistic to burden them solely with the social lifting of poor residents in Dutch cities.

However, it is important to note the existence of these small 'bridging' groups. Their presence questions the claim of critics that mixing

class groups releases the same negative social tectonics as an involuntary ethnic mix between disadvantaged groups. Our research makes clear that the negative diversity-effect that is still felt in deprived areas is not necessarily enlarged by the enlarged presence of a middle class. The middle class in renewed neighborhoods is not solely driven by distinction; there is also some compassion towards the less affluent neighbors. However, this middle-class effect is too small to neutralize the bigger ethnic diversity-effect between disadvantaged groups that is demonstrated by other researchers.

Our findings are in line with other case studies on mixed areas in which deprived residents are asked what they think about the presence of more affluent groups. Deprived residents often stated that interclass contacts hardly increased; however, they felt that their neighborhood was no longer stigmatized and, therefore, they sensed that the achievement of a better quality of life was possible (Veldboer et al. 2007; see also Ouwehand & Davis 2004). In sum, the Dutch policy of state-led gentrification is not creasing out all ethnic tensions between the lower strata and does not bring clear cut social mobility for the poor, but it does provide them with some new compassionate neighbors and an improved area reputation that motivates them to look further ahead.

Social mix: social uprooting or emotional detachment?

The positive effects of social mix are modest, but does this prove the critics of social mix right that the Dutch state-led gentrification is in fact about the forced retreat of the poor, uprooting their social lives? Again, a nuanced picture emerges from research on the effect of urban renewal on the social networks of residents in deprived neighborhoods. Recent research suggests that, contrary to the critics, the negative effects of social mix are equally modest.

Kleinhans (2005) demonstrated that, to some extent, networks were indeed uprooted by social mix, but to a limited and relatively harmless extent: residents that were forced to move out of their neighborhood relocated in adjacent neighborhoods, thus in close proximity to their old neighbors leaving these networks virtually intact. Contacts that were lost were not usually mourned, because the neighborhood was only a small node in their network (work, school, family and friends). In sum, loss of social capital was limited both in extent and magnitude, and seemed easily restored.

However, Kleinhans' research points to a new direction, where losses are greater and potential gains are higher. He demonstrates in his dissertation (2005) that relocated residents did mourn the loss of attachment to the place they lived in. The emotional ties they developed over

time with the place where they lived provided an emotional source of comfort and identity, which is cut by moving, thereby causing distress, feelings of displacement and not belonging. It can evoke uncertainty about the future: what are the options to return, what will happen to the neighborhood in between? Feelings of home surface and become challenged by the regeneration process: 'Will I feel at home in the new house or neighborhood?', 'Will I still feel at home in the same neighborhood when people I know have left?' Although feelings related to a place are fluctuating, even volatile, and can differ strongly between people, clear-cut moments, such as restructuring, have an undoubtedly strong impact.

These findings suggest that in specifying the effects of social-spatial interventions more attention is needed to the social-emotional ties of residents' place attachment. Although much research is devoted to the uprooting of and changes in the social networks of residents in urban renewal, much less is known about the changes in the emotional ties of people to the neighborhood. We argue that framing the social dimension of urban renewal cannot do without a reference towards the emotional ties of residents to places. This will also open up the gridlocked debate on combining physical and social interventions in urban renewal, because it is in the emotional ties of residents to their neighborhoods that the different paces of interventions of urban renewal meet.

Emotional ties to the neighborhood in the Netherlands: does urban renewal matter?

To amend for this gap in our knowledge, we studied the emotional ties of Dutch residents in general and in particular in deprived areas. Do residents in deprived areas feel less at home in their neighborhood or are urban renewal programs able to make a difference? To answer these questions, we used survey data from the Dutch Housing Needs Survey (WBO 1993 to 2006), one of the largest random sample surveys in the Netherlands developed by the Dutch Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment to inform their policy making on the urban renewal of the Dutch big cities (Dutch Big Cities Policy). The survey is repeated roughly every four years and contains data for all major cities in the Netherlands on the compositions of households, their housing situation, housing demands, and relocation. Next to objective indicators on neighborhood composition (levels of education, income, household compositions and tenure) residents were asked to assess the physical and social quality of their neighborhood and to express their wishes for future housing. Among these attitudinal indi-

cators were questions on neighborhood ties, neighborhood perception and sense of belonging.

To measure the emotional ties of Dutch residents, different variables from the WBO have been used to construct several scales on attachment to the neighborhood, replicating as closely as possible scales constructed in international research on place attachment (Riger & Lavrakas 1981; Cuba & Hummon 1993).

First of all, a distinction is made between physical and social attachment to the neighborhood. Earlier research by Riger and Lavrakas (1981) highlights two distinct dimensions of place attachment; one called 'rootedness' that represents the extent to which a person is settled or rooted in her/his neighborhood, while another factor represented the extent to which a person has formed social bonds with the neighborhood. Rootedness is indicated by the number of years a resident has been living in the neighborhood, the likelihood of them moving out of the neighborhood and whether they own or rent their house. The second scale, called 'bonding', is indicated by the amount of contact residents maintain with direct and more distant neighbors and the extent to which they feel involved with the neighborhood.

Rootedness is expected to be positively related to neighborhood satisfaction, while bonding has positive correlations with social involvement in the neighborhood (Hummon, 1993). Therefore, a further two scales were developed for neighborhood satisfaction and social involvement. The scale for neighborhood satisfaction used answers of residents to statements on satisfaction with their house, the neighborhood and the neighborhood population. To measure social involvement, a scale was constructed that indicated whether residents felt they were living in a socially active neighborhood. Residents were asked if they thought they lived in a harmonious neighborhood where neighbors lived peacefully and happily together.

To research the different connections between rootedness, bonding, neighborhood satisfaction and social involvement, residents were clustered in distinct groups depending on the neighborhood ties, satisfaction and involvement. This resulted in four different patterns of place attachment to the neighborhood: Community Rootedness, Alienation, Relativity and Placelessness. The clusters replicate earlier research by Hummon, (1992) who identified them in depth interviews with residents in Worcester, Massachusetts. Residents whose place attachment is characterized as *rooted*, experience a strong, local sense of home and are emotionally attached to their local area. On the opposite side are residents who are separated from valued locales and feel displaced. They are unhappy with their neighborhood, they do not feel at home and have no emotional and social ties to their community. They feel *alienated* from the place where they live. Hummon associated their displace-

ment with restrained mobility or from the transformation of a place. A third group shows appreciation, but no particular emotional attachment to a specific place. They have usually lived in a variety of neighborhoods and identify only *relatively* with these places. This group indicates that residents may cultivate a feeling of home in a neighborhood without becoming strongly emotionally tied to that locale. A fourth and final group of residents expressed no emotional attachment to any locale. These residents do not identify with their neighborhood. Their neighborhood is simply a place to live with good and bad sides but they feel basically footloose or *placeless* about their staying.

To compare place attachments and patterns of attachment between neighborhoods, especially between deprived and non-deprived areas, four-digit postcode data has been used to distinguish between five types of neighborhoods:

1. priority neighborhoods in the four main cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht);
2. priority neighborhoods in the other 26 big cities (such as Groningen, Maastricht, Deventer);⁴
3. non-priority neighborhoods in the four main cities;
4. non-priority neighborhoods in the other 26 big cities; and, finally,
5. neighborhoods in smaller Dutch cities and the more rural area of Holland.⁵

Priority areas are the focal point of the Dutch Big City Policy; they are selected for additional urban renewal funding based on multiple indicators of deprivation. Comparing between priority and non-priority areas allows for an assessment of the Dutch Big Cities Policy. The priority area funding is earmarked for the combined development of social and spatial interventions in urban renewal programs. Do these combined efforts make a difference for the emotional ties of residents in these neighborhoods?

How, why and where do Dutch residents feel at home?

Analyzing data for 2002 from the Dutch Housing Needs Survey showed that the most common combination in the Netherlands in 2002 is high social and physical attachment: a third of the Dutch residents felt at home in the place where they lived (rooted) and with the people that lived there (bonding). A quarter of the Dutch felt exactly the opposite and did not have any attachment to their neighborhood and neighbors. Eighteen percent was only socially attached, while 21 percent experiences only physical attachment. Residents with low physical and social attachment were more often found in the priority areas

of the 30 biggest cities, particularly in the four main cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht.

Figure 3.1 *Place attachment in the Netherlands by location, 2002*

More detail is added when patterns of attachment, which include neighborhood satisfaction and social involvement, are considered. A quarter of the Dutch residents can be characterized as community rooted. They show the highest satisfaction with their neighborhood. They are physically and socially attached to the neighborhood they live in. They value their community for its social and material aspects: the house they live in, the cleanliness of the neighborhood, the amenities they can use and the social ties with their neighbors. Their community rootedness is further illustrated by a relatively strong involvement in the neighborhood and active social participation.

A roughly equal group of residents feel exactly the opposite; displaced, alienated and unhappy with their neighborhood. Their main concern is the house they live in and the cleanliness of its surroundings. They are less involved with their neighborhood and their social participation is average. Neutral scores can be found among eighteen percent of the Dutch residents. This group has no special affection (positive or negative) for their neighborhood. They are happy to live there and are mainly concerned with the material aspects of their commu-

nity (dwelling, cleanliness and amenities). They like to be involved but are less keen on social participation and show less social attachment to their neighborhood.

Finally, a similar sized group of Dutch residents shows affection for their neighborhood in that they identify with it and appreciate the neighborhood and its neighbors, but they are not especially attached to it by social-emotional ties. They show, however, relatively high involvement with their neighborhood, although their social participation is less. This group is comparable to Hummon's characterization of relativity. Residents in the priority areas of the 30 biggest cities experienced alienation more often, while residents who lived in neighborhoods where no urban renewal took place were more often rooted in their community.

Figure 3.2 Attachment patterns in the Netherlands by location, 2002

While large differences are visible between urban renewal areas and more affluent urban areas, it is not clear what the impact of urban renewal programs are on the emotional ties of residents. Does urban renewal make matters worse by further reducing the small amount of place attachments that residents in these areas possess, or are they able to make a difference and increase the affection of residents for their neighborhood through urban renewal programs? To answer this question, Dutch neighborhoods were compared through time by combining

different datasets (WBO'98'99'00'02 and WoOn2006) from the Dutch Housing Needs Survey. The results are optimistic: in the last decade both the attachment of Dutch residents to their neighborhood (rootedness) and to their neighbors (bonding) increased. Interestingly, the priority areas in the 30 largest cities showed the biggest improvement, particularly in social attachment. Between 1999 and 2006 residents in these areas improved their attachment to their neighbors (bonding) more than anywhere else in the Netherlands. A similar trend was visible for physical attachment, although in a smaller time frame, with the priority areas demonstrating the biggest growth in rootedness of all the Dutch neighborhoods between 1999 and 2002.

Figure 3.3 *Bonding to the neighborhood in the Netherlands by location, 1999-2006*

Changes are even more pronounced if we look towards groups with different forms of place attachments. Feelings of alienation are strongly reduced for residents between 1999 and 2006 (20-30 percent), particularly in the 30 largest cities, although this is less pronounced in the priority areas of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. Also, feelings of placelessness (+4-16 percent), relativity (+7-13 percent) and community rootedness (+3-8 percent) increased almost everywhere in the Netherlands. Residents in the priority areas feel more neutral towards their neighborhood (placelessness), while residents in the non-priority areas are more relatively connected to their neighborhood. Residents in the more rural areas are the most stable in their attachment

compared to the other areas and show the smallest amount of change in patterns of attachment. For the other areas the changes are more convulsive and change both in a positive and a negative direction between 1998 and 2006.

What is clear from the analyses is that the strategic urban renewal areas in the Netherlands have made remarkable progress since 1999 in the strengthening of physical and social bonds of their residents. The increased attachment does not mean that all is well in these neighborhoods: emotional ties have improved but this does not imply more satisfied tenants and actively involved residents. The direction of change is towards less negative feelings for the neighborhood and a more neutral stance towards the place where they live, in which the neighborhood is no longer a (negative) framework for the emotional well being and identity of its residents. For residents in the non-priority areas of the big cities the direction of change is towards more positive feelings for the neighborhood; they feel more at home, however, they do not feel especially attached to the place where they live (relativity).

What causes more or less place attachment for Dutch residents between 2002 and 2006? To investigate this further, additional regression analyses (with first-order auto-correlated errors) were performed on the changes in physical and social attachment of Dutch residents between 2002 and 2006.⁶ The findings demonstrate that moving house has the largest effect on place attachment and strongly reduces the physical attachment of residents. This result is at first puzzling. How to explain the increase of place attachment in the Dutch priority area where substantial parts of the population are forced to (temporarily) move house? The answer is that moving mainly affected the emotional ties of residents with the neighborhood as a place and not so much their ties with neighbors. The analyses also show that moving house has no effect on the social attachment of residents and these ties show the biggest increase in urban renewal areas. The reduction in physical attachment, caused by relocation, is compensated by a larger increase in social attachment.

This confirmed earlier research by Kleinhans (2005) who demonstrated that social ties escape from urban renewal relatively unharmed. Our research refined this outcome; urban renewal does not harm the social-emotional ties of residents but their physical-emotional ties to the neighborhood. The latter ties are already weak in deprived neighborhoods, compared to the social bonds that exist in these areas, and are further reduced by urban renewal programs.

So, the increase of place attachment is based on an increase in social attachment. This underlines earlier research, stressing the importance of social action and interaction in place attachment: the social relations a place signifies are more important than the place *qua* place (Low

1993; Lefebvre, 1991). Physical attachment on the other hand is a precious commodity in deprived areas, which urban professionals need to be chary of. Projects which take into account the place attachments of residents in urban renewal (and the effect of changing places) are therefore of great value. The most contributing factors to the place attachments of Dutch residents to their neighborhood are summed up in the table below.

Figure 3.4 *Most Contributing Factors to Place Attachments of Dutch Residents (1998-2006)*

In sum, urban renewal has in general a positive effect on the emotional ties of residents, although there is initially a strong negative effect caused by the relocation process on the emotional ties of residents, reducing the physical attachment of residents. However, this initial effect is compensated by increased social emotional ties between residents, improved satisfaction with the house and more (perceived) social mobility for residents. Nevertheless, in the short run, relocation strongly affects residents' attachment to the neighborhood, in spite of generous rights to return and financial support. The emotional damage is more likely to be even greater when residents are not able to return or are unwilling to relocate and therefore urban renewal programs could be geared more towards supporting relocated residents in coping with the emotional stress of moving.

Summary and remarks

In the Netherlands, state-led gentrification is viewed by the national government as a successful urban renewal strategy with winners on both sides: higher-income groups acquire the housing they need, while

lower-income groups can profit from the economic and social resources that higher-income groups bring to the neighborhood. Therefore, social mix is actively promoted by the state in urban renewal in the Netherlands. Social scientists, however, fear that deprived groups do not stand to gain much from this strategy and are rather in danger of losing 'their' neighborhood and their social networks. They write off social mix as an ineffective political mantra that only increases tensions and deprivation in the neighborhood. Our research nuances both the views of proponents and critics of social mix in the Netherlands.

Among middle-class residents in regenerated areas small groups of idealistic helpers can be found that are tolerant towards their less affluent neighbors (including both native Dutch and immigrant groups) and are willing to help alleviate their deprivation. However, they are outnumbered by middle-class residents who tend to look the other way. Contrary to what is commonly assumed by policy makers, the helping hand for immigrant groups in deprived areas does not come from members who belong to the same ethnic community, but from middle-class residents at a larger social distance, such as the creative class and social professionals, who are more often native Dutch and move into the neighborhood out of idealistic motives.

Academic critics of social mix are dismissive of this small neutralizing middle-class-effect and have eyes only for the ongoing tensions between low-income native Dutch and immigrant groups and portray the entire middle class as selfish and unwilling to mix. They also fail to see that state-led gentrification has a neutralizing effect in terms of place attachment. In priority areas of the Dutch Big Cities Policy, there is a clear improvement in feelings from residents towards their neighborhood: feelings of alienation are replaced by a more neutral stance towards the neighborhood. Although urban renewal initially causes emotional distress for residents due to the relocation process, in the longer term, urban renewal can improve the emotional ties of residents. This might be partly due to the change in neighborhood composition caused by urban renewal; less favorable neighbors might have moved out and might be replaced by more valued (middle-class) residents.

In conclusion, the effects of state-led gentrification should be regarded as modest, both in terms of social mobility and place attachment: the direction of change in Dutch urban renewal areas is towards 'neutrality'. Urban renewal will not provide deprived neighborhoods with a new sense of community, based on strong ties between neighbors that readily support and aid each other across ethnic and class boundaries. But this does not mean that urban renewal is irrelevant or even counterproductive. It can be beneficial for disadvantaged residents in deprived areas by providing a neighborhood with an improved repu-

tation, a handful of bridging groups and more place attachment. Social mix is not 'the' answer to neighborhood deprivation but it brings – in the longer term – some much needed relief. Our research shows that state-led gentrification provides a small helping hand from the middle class and results in less heartache for residents in deprived neighborhoods. In order to combat neighborhood deprivation more effectively, new strategies could be included which account for the emotional ties of residents and enhance their attachment to the neighborhood.

Notes

- 1 While the debate on attracting middle classes to deprived areas is in the limelight of urban research and policy, the subject of emotions in urban renewal has attracted little attention from researchers and policy makers in urban renewal.
- 2 Follow-up research (Lancee & Dronkers 2009) shows that economic diversity in areas reduces the experienced social distance between Dutch and immigrant groups.
- 3 See also the results of Van Eijk (2008) in a case study in Rotterdam. She concludes that the creative class in mixed areas has more contacts with poor groups inside and outside the area, compared to members of the creative class in a non-mixed area.
- 4 In later funding assessments, an additional 31st big city was identified and consequently 26 big cities outside the four main cities received funding, changing the terminology from G26 and G30 to G27 and G31.
- 5 Although the majority of Dutch residents live outside the 30 biggest cities (67.6% in 2002), sufficient respondents remain in the other groups of neighborhoods to allow for reliable comparisons.
- 6 These analyses used various variables on place attachment, neighborhood satisfaction and orientation, social participation and community involvement and various demographic (children in the household, education, income and age) and geographic characteristics.