THE DESIRED HOUSING SITUATION OF HOUSEHOLDS AGED 55 AND OLDER: HOUSING WITH COMMON SPACES?

Reflection

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Reflection

This document present the reflection on the course of the thesis. It reflects on the process, the methods used, the results and what I have learned from writing this thesis.

As I had an interest in the housing market and how people would want to live, doing a research for my thesis that was related to this topic was something I wanted to do. A subject that caught my interest, was that people aged 55 and older experience difficulty in finding their desired dwelling on the Dutch housing market. The subject of the thesis relates to the theme of housing inequality in the MBE master track. Along the way, a more concrete outline of what exactly I would research, was to be made. I found it difficult to formulate what exactly I was going to research and what research question(s) were to be formulized. As I gathered more information relating to the subject, the outline of what I was going to research, gradually was developed. However, it was challenging to translate all the information into a concrete problem statement and into a coherent narrative. In the beginning, I in hindsight spent too much time on gathering information and on formulating what I exactly was going to research.

Heading up to the P2, the outline of what was to be researched and the method that was to be used in the research, was to be determined. The study in this thesis comprised a quantitative research. This quantitative research consisted of first a secondary analyses in the WoON datafile and of the development of a digital survey. This approach resulted from discussion with my supervisors. The first part, the analysis in the WoON datafile, gave insight into the sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics of people aged 55 and older, the characteristics of the current dwelling and the housing preferences of moving-inclined households. First analyzing these aspects in WoON, allowed to position the results from the self-developed survey. To be able to do so, particular questions were in the survey formulated similarly as in WoON. However, since the data is from an existing survey, it is limited to the way questions have been formulated and to the possible answers in WoON. The second part, the developed digital survey, gave additional insight lacking in WoON. The survey gave insight into the housing preferences of people that would want to move if an attractive dwelling that meets their desires would be present. Herein included it gave insight into the extent of interest and the preferences among people aged 55 and older with regard to living in housing types with common spaces.

The findings from the study broadened the understanding of the preferences of people aged 55 and older. The findings can contribute to the understanding of how the housing desires can be met in the housing provision in the Netherlands. The results for instance showed the extent of interest in regard to housing types with common spaces, the preferences related to these housing types, the preferences with regard to life-cycle proofness, dwelling type, tenure type, number of rooms and housing costs.

However, given the way respondents were gathered for the survey, the eventual number of respondents was too low to make the determined division of age and household size groups similar to the division used in the analyses of the results from WoON. The results were only able to be shown for people aged 55 to 65 and 65 years and older. In addition to that, a low number of observations was present for some aspects, limiting the ability to accurately explore the percentages for some of those aspects. A larger sample size would thus have been desirable.

Furthermore, the way respondents were gathered, limited the generalizability of the results to a wider population in view of the representativeness of the sample. The sample for instance comprised a lower percentage of people aged 75 years and older than on average and comprised a lower percentage of single person households. Given the way respondents were gathered, the sample does most likely not comprise a nationwide spread sample. Respondents were not asked in the survey where they are from. This thus remains unspecified. In addition to that, it also remains unspecified what the income is of the respondents in the survey and thus how representative the sample is in terms of the financial position of the respondents. A different way of gathering respondents would have been desirable.

A quantitative research using a survey turned out to be a bit more challenging than I expected. Disseminating a survey without channels of a party such as an internship company or other party namely formed a challenge in reaching a wide audience and reaching a sufficient number of respondents. However since it was a first time doing a research on this scale, it was hard to be able to foresee such aspects. Besides disseminating the survey, also developing the survey itself was challenging. Developing a survey asked for a lot of things to be thought through. Formulating the questions in the survey was sometimes challenging, for instance with regard to how people might interpret certain questions or the possible answers that respondents are to choose from. Discussions with the supervisors helped in discussing and developing the questions that were to be asked in the survey.

During the whole process of writing this thesis I learned a lot. I firstly learned more about what plays a part in doing a quantitative research. Writing this thesis was as I addressed earlier namely a first time I had to do a research of this scale and therefore I had little prior knowledge about quantitative research. I learned more about making a survey and how challenging it can be to formulate the questions. Doing the statistical analyses, with the assistance of my supervisors, has taught me more about performing statistical analyses and has led me to learn to work with the software SPSS. Lastly writing this thesis has made me learn more about writing itself and contributed to improving my (academic) writing skills.