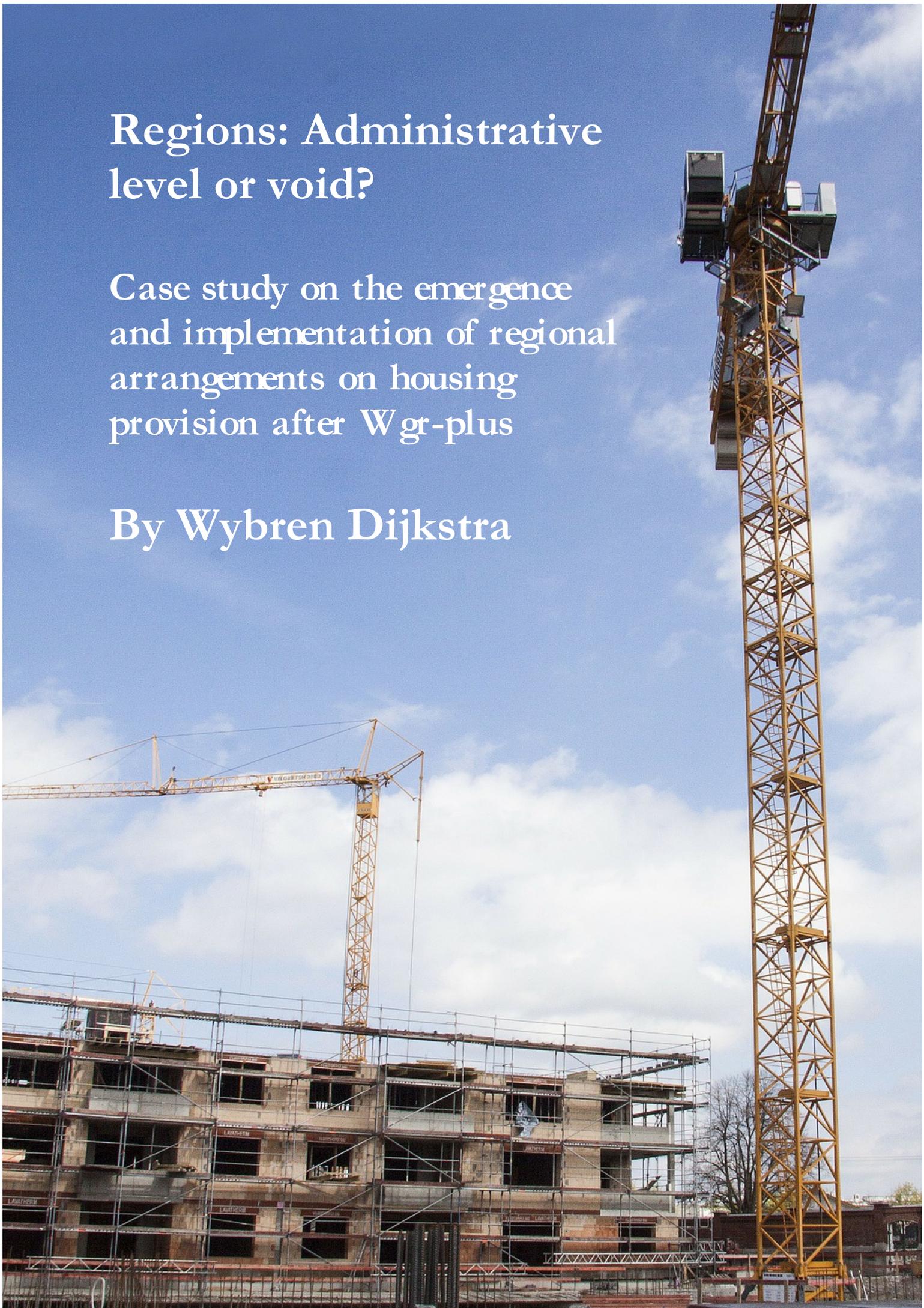


Regions: Administrative level or void?

Case study on the emergence and implementation of regional arrangements on housing provision after Wgr-plus

By Wybren Dijkstra



Regions: Administrative level or void?

Case study on the emergence and implementation of regional arrangements on housing provision after Wgr-plus

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When I started working on this thesis I got lost in the countless aspects of regional governance. I assumed that I could cover all aspects in just one master thesis within a time frame of six months. However, it soon became clear that scoping was the major struggle for this thesis. Besides, due to the actuality of this topic the process of establishing regional structures on housing provision has just started. It was therefore sometimes hard to reveal the attitude of provinces, regional bodies and municipalities, as the policy cycle of regional cooperation has not yet completed. I am therefore very grateful to the interviewees who found time to talk to me. This was the only way to grasp the relationships between province and municipalities on housing provision.

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Wybren Dijkstra

Summary

Municipalities play an important role in the provision of housing in The Netherlands. Housing provision however also serves other policy domains. Socio-economic and demographic municipal objectives are realised by providing housing to attract specific target groups. The economic downturn of 2008 stressed the importance of regional arrangements on the provision of housing among municipalities. The cumulative number of expected dwellings significantly exceeded the regional housing demand that has resulted in externalities to neighbouring municipalities. Simultaneously with the economic downturn, the administrative level of provinces was equipped with additional legal instruments to intervene with municipal decision-making in the spatial domain. Since housing provision transcends municipal territorial borders both provinces and municipalities are looking for ways to coordinate housing provision in a regional context. The objective of this research is to make recommendations that can be used in subsequent decision-making processes among municipalities and provinces in order to improve regional arrangements on housing development. The main research question is as follows:

How can the decision-making process on housing provision among municipalities and provinces be improved by regional arrangements?

Housing market circumstances, demographic characteristics and policies differ per region. A case study is applied to analyse the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities on the regional provision of housing. Three distinctive regions within different provinces were included to this research: Utrecht U10, Regio Midden Holland and Parkstad Limburg. Due to the actuality of this topic, the decision making process is analysed from 2015 to the end of 2016. This timeframe is chosen because municipalities started voluntary partnerships following the abolishment of *plusregio's* in 2015. By means of dossier examination and interviews with civil servants of provinces, municipalities and regional entities, the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities on regional arrangements has been observed. Sources such as policy documents, policy visions and legal frameworks were included in this research. An analytical framework was constructed to create a common research perspective on analysing the decision-making process. In this framework, two analytical models for analysing decision-making are combined. First, the model on agenda setting was used to explore in what situations regional arrangements on housing provision emerge. Second, explanatory variables of the multi-network approach were used to explore elements that contributed to the interaction process among provinces and municipalities.

This research showed that both provinces and municipalities started with the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. The regions included in this research established regional arrangements in which regional interests are reflected. Regional arrangements address regional interest in which municipal objectives are indirectly captured. In comparison to former *plusregio's* regional arrangements are not longer about governing a regional organisation, but regional arrangements are about the further development of the region and what kind of effort is required from individual municipalities. Municipalities want to move freely among other municipalities in the region, without being restricted by joint agreements on housing provision. This approach, however, creates a vacuum in which municipal autonomy is respected and less stringent coordination among municipalities is required. Provinces are willing to interfere with provincial ordinance to counteract non-committal relationships among municipalities. Provinces created an interdependent relationship among municipalities, in which the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision is encouraged. Provincial intervention is needed for cases where the pace of establishing regional arrangements lags behind the pace of regional housing market developments. Municipalities jointly designed regional arrangements on the

provision of housing. However, provinces lack hierarchical power to prescribe process requirements on the execution of regional arrangements. Municipalities are thus interdependent for the execution of regional arrangements. Compliance to regional arrangements is therefore subjected to participating municipalities in regional partnerships.

Three points of attention that can be used in upcoming decision-making processes are addressed. First, the purpose of regional arrangements has to be clear. Provinces and municipalities will only cooperate when dependencies among them exist. Mutual dependencies form the basis for the establishment of cooperative structures and thus regional arrangements. Second, regional arrangements have to serve regional interests and do not infringe to municipal decision-making. Regional arrangements are about the development of the region by informal institutions rather than governing a regional entity by formal procedures. Third, uniformity in the exchange of land use plans among municipalities is necessary. Different interpretations on the legal status of land use plans will result in an inadequate overview of the possibilities for housing construction within regions.

A follow-up study could focus on the decision-making process among municipalities in the regional provision of housing. Since interdependencies exist among municipalities, the study should analyse the elements that contribute to the joint implementation and compliance of regional arrangements.

Keywords: regional governance, housing provision, administrative void, provinces, municipalities, Netherlands

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1. Introduction

1.1. Context of research

Traditionally, housing provision has been the responsibility of municipalities. By establishing zoning plans (*bestemmingsplannen*), municipalities have the main spatial instrument required for land development. From this monopolistic position, municipalities pursued an active land policy in order to guide spatial developments in the desired direction, and capture financial gain from increased land value (Priemus & Louw, 2003). By applying this policy, municipalities might experience the effect of neighbouring municipalities' decisions on housing development. Continuous supply of newly built dwellings and subsequent vacant properties during the economic crisis stresses the importance of cooperation among municipalities. Until then, risks associated with this approach have been disregarded. Risks became visible during the economic crisis, as municipalities got in financial troubles (de Zeeuw, 2012). Obviously, the level of municipal administration does not match with the scale of housing development as housing markets overlap multiple territorial borders of municipalities. This discrepancy between territorial scale of municipal administration and scale of socio-economic processes is called the regional gap (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009).

There have been attempts to handle this discrepancy in the past. Along with the reconstruction of the Netherlands and reduction of housing shortages after World War II, the involvement of local government to jointly address supra-local issues was desired. The *Wet gemeenschappelijke regelingen* was introduced in 1950 to allow for cooperation among municipalities, provinces and other public authorities, with or without legal personality (Hulst & Van Montfort, 2007). This legal framework was extended during the 90's, by providing the province with the opportunity to establish municipal cooperation in a regional administrative body on request from municipalities. These *Wgr-plus* regions or *stadsergio's* were assigned to realise spatial alignment on subjects of regional importance such as housing, business parks, transport, recreation and green areas (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2010). From 1 January 2015, the central government abolished the *plusregio's* as part of the *Wet gemeenschappelijke regelingen*. According to the central government, there is no room for an additional administrative level with assigned legal power en responsibilities, except for central government, provinces and municipalities (Rijksoverheid, 2013). At this moment, a legal basis for cooperation among administrative levels does not exist. Together with the abolishment of the *plusregio* as intermediate level between municipalities and provinces, the central government is transferring task and responsibilities towards either the provincial or municipal government. Responsibility for spatial policies is decentralized towards municipalities and provinces (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu, 2012). Due to shifting administrative responsibilities and reconsideration of the regional gap, provinces and municipalities are looking for an appropriate way to coordinate the transcending interests in the development of housing.

In order to minimise the risk of oversupply of newly built dwellings, the central government introduced the Ladder of sustainable urbanization (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu, 2013). The application of this instrument is an obliged component in the decision-making process for new land use plans. The essence of this instrument is that spatial developments should comply with regional demands to prevent for redundant housing developments, resulting in oversupply on the local level. This instrument is called Ladder of sustainable urbanization because policy makers are asked to think critically about the following three questions. First, is there evidence of a regional need for the intended local or urban development? Second, if so, can this intended development be realized within the existing built areas in this region (use of empty spaces or a reconstruction or transformation of built areas?) 3. if not, is it possible to realize the intended development at nodes that are accessible via different modalities (or that can be made accessible)?

The Ladder of sustainable urbanization is meant to enhance transparent decision-making concerning spatial development projects, in such a way that the available space in urban areas will be used efficiently (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu, 2013).

1.2. Problem analysis

Cooperation between municipalities and provinces on the local level is not a sinecure. Spatial planning in the Netherlands is incorporated in a three-layer framework in which each administrative level, central government, province and municipality has a decisive function in the spatial organization of the country by conferred legal powers. Municipalities were charged with the development of housing in this framework, while the central government and provinces were responsible for municipal transcending developments like infrastructure. Provinces and municipalities were able to pursue their policies effectively thanks to this framework (Boelens, 2010). Continuous local housing development is contingent on increasing provincial interference to secure provincial or municipal transcending interests. The number of provincial ordinances increased from when the Spatial Planning Act 2008 came into force (Evers, 2015). Increasing provincial interference could be a sign for administrative cooperation.

The spatial organization of the Netherlands is considered to be effective, since the development of housing is an municipal activity (Buitelaar, 2010). By housing development, municipalities are able to attract target groups corresponding to local aims, knowledge and circumstances that are preserved for municipalities. The economic crisis of 2008 stressed the possible value of municipal transcending coordination since municipal development decisions can have externalities on neighbouring municipalities and visa versa. By means of the *plusregio's*, municipalities were obliged to align municipal housing development in a joint housing program. With the abolishment of the *plusregio's*, the joint programming of housing became optional in voluntary administrative partnerships.

Increased provincial inferences on municipal developments and importance of coordination of municipal developments require a mode of cooperation on housing development among municipalities and provinces. Currently, both municipalities and provinces across the country are exploring ways to coordinate the development of housing in a municipal transcending context. As little is known about the way coordination in this administrative vacuum is shaped, and how to deal with the regional gap, the following problem statement is formulated: *it is unclear which elements have a decisive or disruptive role in the development and execution of a regional housing provision, since housing development transcend municipal borders.*

1.3. Research objective and research questions

Provinces are establishing additional regulations towards municipalities, while municipalities approach each other in partnerships at the regional level. The way in which these administrative levels are looking for opportunities to fill the regional gap varies. Geographic and demographic differences are contingent on chosen approaches by provinces and municipalities for the development of housing. Currently, province and municipalities are looking for an appropriate mode of cooperation that can be used for handling different levels of planning. For that reason, the following objective for this research is formulated: *to make recommendations that can be used in subsequent decision-making processes among municipalities and provinces in order to improve regional arrangements on housing development.*

The following research question is formulated from the problem statement and research objective:

How can the decision-making process on housing provision among municipalities and provinces be improved by regional arrangements?

In order to answer this research question, several sub-questions are formulated:

First, the conventional process of decision-making in residential planning among municipalities and provinces has to be identified: *what role do municipalities and provinces have in the decision-making process of housing development in the spatial planning system?*

Second, in connection with the first sub-question, the concept of the region as an intermediate level between provinces and municipalities has to be discussed: *what role can the region play to deal with municipal -transcending issues concerning the provision of housing?*

Third, based on case study research, elements determining the effect of regional arrangements on housing development will be discussed: *which elements have a decisive or disruptive role in the development and execution of a regional housing program?*

A detailed description of the research methodology for this study is included in chapter 2.

1.4. Scientific and social relevance

From a scientific perspective, this research deals with the theme of administrative coordination among provinces and municipalities. Considerable research is done in this field, for instance by Buitelaar and de Kam (2009), and Evers (2015). However, there is little research on the emergence and implementation of regional structures. Regional structures that existed during the years have failed, with or without corporate responsibility specifically. See Van Hulst and Montfort (2007) for instance. This research differs from prior research since this study focuses on the roles of provinces and municipalities on establishing regional arrangements. Besides, this study is applied to the specific context of housing provision that has become a prominent matter on the political agenda after the economic downturn of 2008. While regional structures were used in situations of regional decline solely, regional arrangements on housing provision currently serve multiple purposes (Verwest, Sorel, & Buitelaar, 2007). This study will therefore focus on regional arrangements concerning the provision housing and respective roles of provinces and municipalities. This perspective includes a new and actual, specific applied to housing provision, scientific perspective.

Subsequently, the societal relevance will be discussed. As previously mentioned, the absence of cooperation among municipalities might result in unfair competition on the provision of housing, or an excess supply of dwellings, vacancies or degradation of spatial structures. These aspects will be discussed in detail in chapter 3. Nevertheless, these aspects are incorporated in the societal relevance of this study, since cooperation can prevent such negative consequences. Finally, this research contributes to the societal debate of administrative reform in The Netherlands. The central government abolished the *plusergio's* on the basis of *Wet gemeenschappelijke regelingen* in 2015, as there should be no administrative level between provinces and municipalities (Rijksoverheid, 2013). This study will contribute to the societal debate, as it will reveal the consequences of regional arrangements on housing provision.

1.5. Reading guide

This study report is structured as follows. Chapter 2 elaborates on the applied research methodology. Emphasis is given to the application of case studies. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical background regarding housing provision that is rooted in spatial planning, and how provinces and municipalities can intervene with the regional provision of housing. Chapter 4 will present the used analytical framework for this study. Chapter 5 describes the included regions. Chapter 6 elaborates on this description, by comparing the selected cases in this study by means of the analytical framework that is created. To conclude, Chapter 7 answers the research question and gives a reflection of the applied research method.

2. Research methodology

This chapter describes and explains the research methods that are used to answer the research question. This so-called research methodology consists of three components. First, a suitable research strategy question is chosen to obtain the required knowledge regarding this study. Second, the objects (cases) that are part of this study are selected. Third, this chapter concludes by presenting the constructed research design for this study. This way this study is carried out is incorporated in the research design.

2.1. Research strategy

Considerations for a suitable research strategy are outlined by Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010), by means of making choices within three key decisions. This section elaborates on the choices made within the three key decisions. The choices are justified considering the objective of this research. The outcomes of the key decision result in the selection of a suitable research strategy to conduct the research.

The first key decision is related to the choice between breadth and depth research. A broad overview can be obtained in breadth research, while investigation of specific aspects of the research subject is done in depth research. This choice entails a tension between the extent of generalization of results and being able to examine processes in depth. For this research it is clear, from existing knowledge and studies, how housing provision is shaped by municipalities and provinces, and which elements play a role in decision-making processes. This research goes beyond decision-making processes through investigating the elements that may trigger success or failure of regional arrangements in the provision of housing. Such insights can only be obtained by means of depth research.

The second key decision for the selection of a research strategy concerns the choice between qualitative and quantitative research. Quantitative research is used to quantify the research problem by means of collecting numerical data and transforming data in useable statistics. This data is used for the quantification of for instance behaviour or opinions. In quantitative research, research findings are presented in a numerical way in tables and figures. Qualitative research is explorative and is used to understand underlying reasons and motivations. Findings will be reported in a contemplative and reflective way in qualitative research, which offers room for explanation. Decision-making processes are hard to grasp in theoretical models due to complicated structures in varying interest, diverging perceptions and underlying factors. Qualitative research allows for dealing with this complexity, because the possibility for a detailed elaboration on specific aspects that may be experienced during the research is provided. Since housing provision is strongly dependent on contextual conditions that require a more clarified and extensive elaboration of research findings, a qualitative approach is desirable in this study.

The third key decision concerns the choice between empirical research and desk research. Desk research is only possible when ample literature and related sources are available (Bryman, 2012). There is literature and information on how municipalities and provinces want to achieve regional arrangements. However, little is known on how these arrangements develop and function in reality. This study is therefore based on both desk research and empirical research, by gathering information from practice.

Case studies are used as research strategy in this study, based on the choices on the key decisions. A case study enables the researcher to apply a holistic approach, meaning that the meaningful contextual factors in real-life cannot be disregarded (Yin, 2014). Above all, a case study allows for context-specific investigation. Exploration and case-specific interrogation in case studies allows

for the inclusion of contextual differences in housing provision in this study. The decision-making process among municipalities and provinces concerning regional arrangements on housing provision can be studied in a real-life context with a case study. Since this research focuses on regional arrangements in housing provision, the region is chosen as object of the study. However, regions do not have clear territorial demarcated borders. Borders of regions therefore might overlap with jurisdictional borders of one or more provinces or municipalities (Healey, 2007). Regions can thus include one or more provinces or municipalities. Since including all provinces and municipalities captured by a region is infeasible, an embedded case study is used for the case study design. An embedded case study contains one or more sub-units of analysis within a holistic case, i.e. one province and one municipality within a region (Yin, 2014). This approach provides a more detailed level of research regarding the decision-making process between province and municipalities. The next section elaborates on the regions, provinces and municipalities that are selected in this research.

2.2. Case selection

With the case study as research strategy, the cases that are part of this study have to be selected. The criterion for case selection is that a variety of variables in decision-making processes concerning regional arrangements on housing provision are included. For this study, three cases are selected. Regarding the objective of this study, an increased number of cases are desirable. However, including more cases is not realistic due to time limitations.

Case requirements

The included cases meet predefined requirements. An overview of the requirements is included in Table 2.2.1. First, this study concerns regional arrangements on housing provision. Therefore, a form of regional cooperation to deal with the gap between municipalities and provinces is needed. The extent to which established regional coordination is formalised or considered successful, is not significant. Decisive is the existence of any attempt to reach regional coordination on housing provision. The existence of regional coordination introduces the second requirement concerning the progress that is already made in the process of establishing coordination. The decision-making process on regional arrangements should be initiated a while ago. A decision-making process that just started seems to have insufficient substance for exploration and discussion. Third, there must be diversity between the cases. For this study, three regions in three different provinces are selected. This approach is chosen as each region faces different challenges due to socio-economic and demographic differences. This may in turn lead to the use of different policies and management techniques during the process of establishing regional arrangements. Fourth, the way in which cooperation is established within a region should differ among selected regions. Different forms of cooperation could provide insights on certain preconditions in establishing regional arrangements on housing provision. Therefore, both former *Wgr-plus* regions and voluntary-partnerships are suitable for this research. The fifth requirement is related to the third requirement, and stresses specific policy objectives in housing provision and/or spatial planning. Socio-economic and demographic differences require a different supply of housing whilst spatial policies can be decisive in possible locations for housing production. To prevent for the inclusion of two or more regions with the same socio-economic, demographic and challenges on housing provision a distinction is made between the third and fifth requirement.

Table 2.2.1. Requirements for case selection

Requirements for case selection
There is a mode of regional coordination
Regional coordination has started a while ago
Three regions within distinctive provinces on socio-economic and demographic development
Three regions with different modes of regional coordination
Different challenges concerning housing provision and/or spatial policies

Case selection

The process of case selection started with selecting three distinctive provinces to meet the requirements of different regions among different provinces. The provinces of Utrecht, Zuid Holland and Limburg are selected. In contrast to Utrecht and Zuid Holland, the province of Limburg is challenged by demographic decline in their policies. Demographic decline might lead to a situation of real estate vacancies if housing provision is unconstrained (Verwest et al., 2007). The provinces of Utrecht and Zuid Holland are confronted with housing shortages, but these provinces differ on the application of spatial policies (Binnenlands Bestuur, 2016; Cobouw, 2016). Utrecht focuses on urban densification due to stringent policies on landscape protection, while policies in Zuid Holland are less strict.

After the selection of three provinces, a region is selected within each province. This selection is based on the mode of regional cooperation that is applied. The following cases are selected: U10 in Utrecht, Regio Midden-Holland in Zuid Holland, and Parkstad Limburg in Limburg. Regional coordination started a while ago in these regions, and therefore meet with this requirement. The U10 region is the successor of the Wgr-plus partnership Bestuur Regio Utrecht. Participating municipalities in the U10 have decided to continue their cooperation on a voluntary basis in U10 (Bestuur Regio Utrecht, 2015a). Parkstad Limburg is also a former Wgr-plus region although cooperation within Parkstad Limburg is currently on the basis of delegated powers (Parkstad Limburg, 2016b). Cooperation in the Regio Midden Holland has always been on a voluntary basis. Cooperation within Regio Midden Holland was institutionalized in the *Intergemeentelijke Samenwerking Midden Holland* (ISMH). Although the ISMH was no Wgr-plus region the municipalities themselves established cooperation.

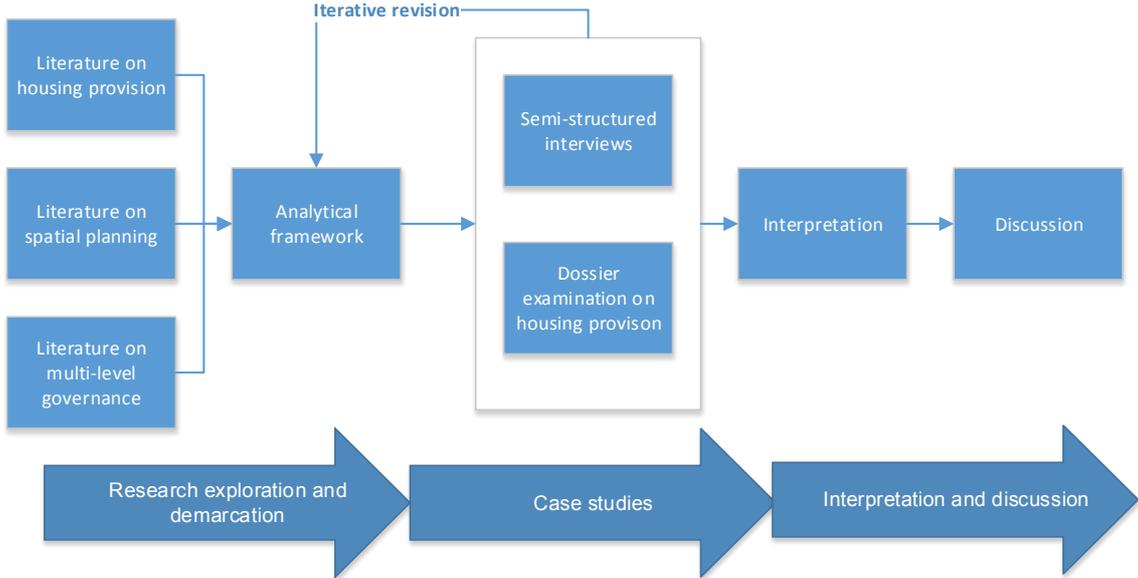
Finally, a municipality was selected for each region. The following municipalities are selected to their respective regions: municipality of Nieuwegein for U10, municipality of Gouda for Regio Midden-Holland and the municipality of Heerlen for Parkstad Limburg. All municipalities have participated or still participated in regional structures on the provision of housing and therefore comply with the predefined requirements. All these municipalities distinguish themselves by handling challenges regarding municipal cooperation or restrictions by spatial policies on housing provision differently. For instance, new housing development within the municipality of Nieuwegein is restricted by provincial spatial policies; the municipality of Gouda has to deal with an excess number of projected dwellings whilst vacancies are subject of decision making for the municipality of Heerlen. These aspects will be discussed in more detail in the case description of Chapter 5

2.3. Research methods and research design

The decision-making process on regional arrangements among municipalities and provinces will be revealed in this study. A visualisation of the research design is depicted in Figure 2.3.1. This study starts with a theoretical description of the spatial planning system in which the provision of housing and respective roles of municipalities and provinces are incorporated. An overview of former and current modes of governance in the field of multi-level-administration is part of this theoretical description. These insights will be used to develop a demarcated research framework that can be used in the case studies.

Two research methods will be applied during the case studies. The decision-making process is revealed by examining dossiers and semi-structured interviews. First, dossier examination is used for case exploration. It is also used to develop possible propositions on decisive and disruptive elements in the process of establishing regional arrangements. Dossier examination is in this study principally limited to: policy documents on housing and/or spatial visions; housing programs and housing monitoring available from provinces; and regional entities and municipalities. The inclusion of additional policy domains, although interrelated to housing provision, would be impossible regarding scope and time limitations of this research. Second, in addition to dossier examination, people involved in the decision-making process on regional arrangements will be interviewed. Interviews allow for a more elaborated approach on aspects and contextual information that would not be revealed by studying policy documents. The aim of the interviews is to reveal how provinces, regional entities and municipalities relate to each other regarding the policies and policy instrument deployed by them. The used interview guides include a common framework of themes, because semi-structured interviews are explored. An example of such an interview guide is included in Appendix B. The interview guides differ in matter of case-specific content, because the regions differ. This study will conclude with a reflection on the case study findings in order to provide recommendations that can be used in subsequent decision-making processes on regional arrangements on housing provision.

Figure 2.3.1. Visualisation of research design



3. Theoretical perspective

The theoretical perspective on housing provision and regional arrangements among provinces and municipalities is provided in this chapter. A description of existing knowledge is required for a substantive analysis and discussion of research findings. Four relevant topics will be discussed. First, reasons for governmental policies on housing provision will be discussed. Second, the use of housing programs as an essential instrument in housing provision by municipalities is discussed. Third, the planning system is elaborated by describing distinctive instruments that provinces and municipalities can apply for establishing regional coordination. Fourth, the available governance structures that can be used by both government and private parties in the coordination of regional housing provision are discussed.

3.1 Housing provision in The Netherlands

This first section discusses the development of policies on housing provision in The Netherlands. The first subsection includes a brief history on the origin and alterations of housing provision over time. It is important to note that steering housing provision is rooted in the domain and instruments of spatial planning. Housing provision and spatial planning are therefore interlinked. The second subsection deals with the question why governmental intervention on housing provision exists.

3.1.1 Historical background on housing provision

Policies on housing provision originate from the 19th century. Health and quality of life of citizens became negatively affected in this century due to poor living conditions. The emergence of housing associations by industrial companies to improve living conditions of (initially) blue-collar workers was until then limited by private initiatives (Elsinga & Wassenberg, 2014). The adoption of the *Woningwet* by the central government in 1901, meant for the enhancement of inhabitant's well-being, is illustrative for the first government intervention in housing provision. The *Woningwet* imposed requirements for quality of dwellings and public space aiming for a healthy and sanitary living environment. During the years the aim of housing policies broadened its impact to other domains rather than preventing poor living conditions. Housing policies became more often related to the implementation of socio-economic and spatial objectives (van der Cammen & de Klerk, 2010). Central government intervention increased in the second half of the 20th century. World War II resulted in real housing shortages that demanded for the construction of new dwelling in a fast pace. To tackle housing shortages, the central government started promoting the construction of new dwelling by (social) housing associations by means of granting subsidies (Boelhouwer, 2002).

Along with the upcoming trends of demographic growth and urbanization in the second half of the century, the central government committed itself to a coordinative role in the provision of housing. The first Memorandum on Spatial Planning of 1960 (*Eerste nota ruimtelijke ordening*) is illustrative for this coordinative position taken by the central government. Subsequent memoranda on spatial planning also include a centralized coordination strategy applied by the central government on the provision of housing. The central government assigned locations for new housing developments by means of spatial policies. Examples of such spatial policies are *gebundelde deconcentratie*, *groei-kernen* and *compacte-stad-benadering* (van der Cammen & de Klerk, 2010). Although locations for housing development were suggested by the central government, the implementation was subject to provinces and municipalities. This division of roles seized to exist in the beginning of the 21st century, when the problem of housing shortages was resolved.

By the adoption of the *Nota Volksbuisvesting in de jaren '90* the central government already commenced abandoning the coordinative role on housing provision. This policy document aimed

at privatising the social rental sector, promotion of private home ownership, abolishment of granting subsidies for housing construction, and fostering the free market principles. The central government adopted a new policy document a decade later, the *Nota Wonen – Mensen, Wensen, Wonen*, in which the trend towards free market and less government was continued (Priemus, 2001). Essence of this policy document was that qualitative housing shortages should be met, instead of concentrating on quantitative housing shortages. Along with the adoption of the *Nota Wonen – Mensen, Wensen, Wonen* in 2001, the process of deregulation from central government towards provinces and municipalities had been ratified by adoption of the *Nota Ruimte* in 2004. Municipalities became the director of new housing developments and the executing of municipal policies. This is similar to the current position of municipalities. Locations for new housing developments were no longer assigned by the central government. However, there was no supervision from either central government or provinces on municipal housing provision. Until 2008, the spatial plans on housing provision adopted by central government and provinces had no binding effect towards municipalities or citizens. By the adoption of the *Wet ruimtelijke ordening 2008*, the central government and provinces obtained additional competences for the reconciliation of municipal policies to policies of higher government. From that moment on, both municipalities and provinces became subjected to the domain of housing provision.

3.1.2 Legitimacy of government intervention

The role of the government on housing provision was briefly outlined in previous subsection. One may have noticed that the role and extent of government intervention varied during the years. Changed views on government intervention often resulted from intangible social and political dynamics that are no part of this study for practical reasons. Until 2004, spatial planning was coordinated by the central government whilst coordination is left to provinces and municipalities nowadays. Government intervention is generally justified, since it is assumed that market and society insufficiently serve public interests. However, in response to these market failures, it is often argued that market failures are the result of government intervention (Buitelaar, 2003). Discussions about market failures and government failures will not bring this research any further. For this reason, emphasis is given to elaborate on the legitimization of government intervention on the provision of housing. For this research, three grounds are identified for the legitimization of government intervention.

The first argument of government intervention relates to securing housing provision that does comply with municipal housing needs and housing preferences. It is possible that property developers or investor are not willing, or even not able, to supply dwellings that meet with market demands and preferences. As a result there might be a risk of an excess or short supply of dwellings that will turn in vacancies or housing shortages. By means of spatial or housing policies, the government tries to control housing production against housing demand and housing demand. The second argument on housing provision relates to effective spatial planning. This rather abstract argument serves as point of departure regarding objectives on conservation of green spaces, realisation of attractive cities, accessibility and sustainability. The third element, although strongly related the first argument, concerns the realisation of public objectives like the provision of social housing. The government interferes on the market to guarantee available housing for lower-income households which otherwise probably would not be provided. In addition, preventing for neighbourhood deprivation, social segregation or securing for public facilities in proximity to residential areas are concern of public interest. Those objectives will be pursued by government interventions.

3.2 Provinces and municipalities guiding housing provision

The previous section stressed the role of the government regarding housing provision and how this role had developed over the years. This section will elaborate on the legal instruments that

can be applied by both provinces and municipalities in the domain of housing provision. These instruments are rooted in the spatial planning system and stipulated in law. The first section therefore discusses contemporary spatial planning system of The Netherlands by distinct two types of spatial plans. The second section will elaborate on the instruments that provinces and municipalities can use to steer housing provision. In this section, emphasis is given to the coordinative instruments that can be used among provinces and municipalities.

3.2.1 Spatial planning in a nutshell

The spatial planning system of The Netherlands is considered to be comprehensive as each level of government has the authority to adopt spatial plans (Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000). Housing provision is often incorporated in spatial plans. Housing provision can be the purpose of a single plan or it might be part of an integrated spatial plan. However, distinctive spatial plans do not all have equal purposes. Ideally, a distinction can be made between strategic plans and project plans. This distinction is important to mention since each spatial plan has distinctive characteristics regarding plan preparation, form and actual effects towards the administrative level or citizens. Distinctive characteristics of both strategic and project plans are depicted in Table 3.2.1.1

Strategic planning is “a transformative and integrative public-sector-led socio-spatial process through which the visions or frames of reference, the justification for coherent actions, and the means for implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and what it might become” (Albrechts, 2010). Strategic plans, or structure visions in The Netherlands, can be defined as a framework for action, in response to expected future developments. In that sense, a strategic plan has to be considered as a record of reached agreements. According to Faludi (2000), strategic plans relate to the coordination of subsequent projects and decisions taken by other parties. This in turn is the implementation of planning. Interaction in strategic planning is an on-going process, as all involved will keep options open. It serves as a way of storytelling to shape perspectives regarding future developments (van Dijk, 2011).

In comparison with strategic plans, project plans can be considered as blueprints and form an unambiguous guide to implementation (Albrechts, 2004; Faludi, 2000). Blueprints, or land use plans in The Netherlands, incorporate measures to achieve the predefined end-state of the object e.g. housing development. Once a land use plan has been enacted, there is little room for change. Outcomes must conform to the specifications as laid down in the land use plan in order to comply with predefined intentions. Interaction in the planning processes for the land use plan is concerned to the adoption of the plan, which is carried out by the municipal council. In case of uncertainties, diverging interests and multiple parties the adoption of a land use plan will be complex. In such situation strategic plans are preferred to projects plans. Project plans are more common on the municipal level, while provinces and the central government apply strategic plans to guide future developments more frequently.

Table 3.2.1.1 Characteristics of strategic vs. project plans (Albrechts, 2004; Faludi, 2000)

	Strategic plans	Project plans
Object	Decisions	Material
Interaction	Continuous	Until adoption
Future	Open	Closed
Time element	Central to problems	Limited to phasing
Form	Minutes of last meeting	Blueprint
Effect	Frames of reference	Determinate

3.2.2 Legal instruments for coordination

Besides that provinces and municipalities can apply structure visions or land use plans to guide the provision of housing, legal instruments can be used as a way to coordinate policy alignment.

Table 3.2.2.1 provides an overview of the instruments that each level of government can apply, including measures that can be taken by the central government to secure their interests.

Table 3.2.2.1 Instruments that can be applied by each level of government according to the Wro 2008

	Strategic	Project	Adopted by	Additional instrument
Central	Structuurvisie	Rijksinpassingsplan	Minister	Algemene Maatregel van Bestuur
Province	Structuurvisie	Provinciaal inpassingsplan	Provinciale staten	Verordening
Municipal	Structuurvisie	Bestemmingsplan	Gemeenteraad	Verordening

Each governmental level is authorized to adopt a structure vision, in which the essentials of spatial policies to be pursued are defined. In addition, the structure vision explains the way these policies are achieved. Both municipalities and provinces are able to adopt a joint structure vision with respectively other municipalities and provinces. Structure visions are indicative, and thus have no legal consequences, other than the government that has adopted the structure vision. A structure vision can be considered as a strategic plan in that sense, as it presents an action framework for future developments. An ordinance is often applied to secure interests granted in structure visions that is legal binding for municipalities and citizens.

In contrast to the structure vision, project plans like land use plans of distinctive governmental levels are legal binding. This does not mean that others are obliged to implement the plan. It is binding since project plans function as framework for legal security. Land use is regulated by these land use plans. Land use plans include detailed rules on how a certain area or plot can be used. It provides information about what kind of developments are allowed like dwellings, shops, industry, water, nature and more. Land use plans do also provide information about permitted building height, widths and protection zones owing to environmental stipulations. As was mentioned earlier, there is little room for flexibility once a land use plan has been adopted.

The current spatial planning approach differs from the earlier applied approaches. Catching the housing shortages at the end of 80's and beginning of the 90's called for direct control by the central government. Places for large-scale development were assigned by the central government in consultation with provinces and municipalities. The central government assigned the areas and the number dwellings to be built. Lower levels of government were responsible for the development of those assigned areas. When municipalities adopted zoning plans to build outside built-up areas provincial approval was needed according to the 1962 Spatial Planning Act. In the Spatial Planning Act of 2008, national and provincial can only intervene when national or provincial issues are at stake. In contrast to the current system of spatial planning, this approach is rather considered top-down. Planning initiatives had to take place within predefined spatial policies on the central level. As was explained in the previous section, nowadays provinces and municipalities are subjected to the provision of housing. By means of the programming of housing municipalities project housing production against future housing needs. The programming of housing fulfils an important role in municipal housing provision and will therefore be discussed in more detail in the next section.

3.3 The programming of housing

In the previous section, the reason for and means of government intervention on the provision of housing were outlined. Discussed instruments all derived from the spatial planning act. This

section will discuss the programming of housing by municipalities, which is an important aspect regarding the provision of housing. First section stresses the programming of housing in general. The second section discusses the importance of municipal housing programs regarding cooperation among municipalities.

By means of a housing program, municipalities attempt to get housing demand and housing supply in accordance. In connection to previous sections, the programming of housing may also contribute to the realisation of socio-economic objectives and quality of the living environment. Since the adoption of development plans is the exclusive right of municipalities the programming of housing is a municipal responsibility. However, municipalities have to work within the playing field of central government and provinces. The programming of housing by municipalities entails the process in which future housing needs are set against the projected number and types of dwellings to be built within a municipal territory. The total number of projected dwellings is called *plancapaciteit*. The definition of *plancapaciteit* can be subdivided into *harde plancapaciteit* and *zachte plancapaciteit* depending on the phase of the development process:

- *Harde plancapaciteit* includes housing developments that have completed legal planning procedures and are adopted in land use plans or *omgevingsvergunning in afwijking van het bestemmingsplan*.
- *Zachte plancapaciteit* includes housing developments that have no legal status.

It is important to mention that this terminology might have a different meaning among municipalities. Contractual relationships between municipalities and property developers or land already acquired by developers are deterministic for this classification regarding the legal status of plan development.

Since the adoption of land use plans is the exclusive right of municipalities alterations in the *plancapaciteit* are subject to municipal decision making as well. Regional coordination may include changes in municipal housing programs. Changes on municipal housing programs may include the elimination of development projects to reduce the *plancapaciteit* or the transformation of development into dwellings that does comply with current circumstance on the housing market. Provinces have different instrument that can be used to reach coordination on regional housing provision or enforcing municipalities to coordination. Provincial consultation by municipalities in procedure of land use planning, *provinciaal inpassingsplan* or provincial ordinance are instruments by which coordination can be created. These instruments have a proactive nature, since they are used before municipal decision-making will place. On the contrary, provinces can reactively decide to ban the adoption of municipal land use plan by means of *reactieve aanwijzing*. Regional housing provision can affect municipal autonomy irrespective of legal consequences related to the reduction of *plancapaciteit*.

The economic downturn of 2008 and crisis on the housing market started the reconsideration of the programming of housing. Decreasing housing demand in the last decade was prone to the projection of an excess number of dwellings in municipal housing programs. The programming of too many dwellings might have disadvantages. The first concern relates to the tragedy of the commons representing a situation where individual users act independently according to their self-interests causing the over- or under exploitation of that resource (Feeny, Berkes, McCay, & Acheson, 1990). Concerning housing provision, municipalities all encroach on the resource of housing demand. Municipalities are afraid to lose competition on housing demand with neighbouring municipalities. The result is a housing market that works insufficiently. The second element is related to the avoidance of unnecessary transaction costs. Development processes for housing involves many transaction costs, see for instance Buitelaar (2004), and Needham and de Kam (2004). A large proportion of the transaction costs will probably not be recouped due to decreasing housing demand, which means that projects will not be realised at that moment.

However, transaction costs for plan making still have to be amortized by developers, investors or even municipalities. Unnecessary transaction costs are therefore considered as a financial burden. Amortization of investments and interests costs of land acquired by developers that not will be developed are also a financial disadvantage that could be prevented by the coordination of housing provision among municipalities.

In addition to financial arguments, there are also spatial arguments for the programming of housing. The first spatial arguments relate to the tension deciding for construction in existing cities or construction of dwelling in the meadows. Investments costs for the construction of dwellings in meadows are relatively lower than for construction projects in existing inner cities (Economisch Instituut voor de Bouw, 2011). Inner cities developments are valuable from a spatial perspective. The development will be hard to take place in a situation of a sufficient housing program, or even excess supply of newly built dwellings. The second spatial argument is related to an effective implementation of *beeldskwaliteitsplannen*. New valuable initiatives for housing can be blocked by plans that became part of the housing program earlier. The last argument is related to the restrictive regulations of provinces. Spatial policies of provinces can have a restrictive effect in the search for locations for new housing developments. By means of this the programming of housing is insufficient to meet with housing demands. Provincial competences are discussed in next section.

3.4 Governance and regional coordination

This fourth section of the theoretical perspective will elaborate on coordinative aspects of policy and decision-making processes. The role of provinces and municipalities on housing provision is substantiated in previous sections. The way municipalities and provinces aim to realise regional housing provision is dependent on the application of coordination mechanisms. Less relevant is the question who and what is subject to coordination, but more relevant is the way this is done. First subsection therefore discusses three types of governance structures: hierarchies, markets and networks. Subsequently, the second subsection will continue by considering the application of multi-level governance referring to task and competences among levels of administration.

3.4.1 Governance structures: hierarchy, markets and networks

This research relates to regional arrangements on housing provision among municipalities and provinces. Insights into institutions or rules that guide interaction among those administrative levels will have a positive contribution for this research. Institutions and rules that structure or coordinate interactions among actors can be classified in three governance structures. For this study, a distinction is made between hierarchical structures, market structures and network structures. These structures and related coordination mechanisms will be discussed below. This discussion is based on Bevir (2012), Buitelaar & de Kam (2009) and Needham & de Kam (2004).

Hierarchies

Hierarchical coordination entails the classical mode of governance to guide developments in desired directions. Hierarchical governance includes a top-down approach in which lower governments are subordinate to higher levels of government. Higher governmental levels use their authorities or legal powers to make sure that lower governmental levels (or others) act in the desired way. Even provinces and municipalities can impose restrictions towards private parties, meaning that an authorised level of government can control the use of private resources. Both provinces and municipalities have instruments that can be used within hierarchical governance.

On housing provision provinces can impose additional regulations or restrictions towards both municipalities and private parties by means of a *provinciaal inpassingsplan* or *provinciale verordening*. Municipalities in turn can impose restrictions on the use of properties, like land and dwellings, by

means of a *bestemmingsplan* or *gemeentelijke verordening*. Restrictive measures experienced by municipalities or private parties result in dependent relations among provinces and municipalities respectively.

Markets

The structure of market governance is considered as the place where supply and demand meet, and goods will be exchanged. The way parties interact and negotiate will determine the market outcome. However, price as mechanism for coordination is not general applicable to all domains. Market governance assumes the exchange of a significant number of commodities whilst land is scarce unique and unmoveable (Buitelaar & de Kam, 2009). Therefore governing housing provision solely on market mechanisms seems to be inadequate. A limited number of sellers and buyers lead to situations in which parties have to rely on each other. In such situations exchange is dependent of other coordinating mechanisms like price.

Networks

The hierarchy-market dichotomy is questioned in literature, see for example Thompson, Frances, Levacic and Mitchell (1991). Thompson et al. added a third governance structure to this pair: the network structure. Networks are about long-term relationships between two or more parties. Networks rely on reciprocity and trust. In that sense, networks differ from hierarchies coordinating on mechanisms of rules. Interactions in networks are related to social or political commitments instead of legal stipulations.

The distinction between hierarchical, market and network structures will rarely be experienced in reality. There will be no strict separation of coordination mechanisms; there will be a overlapping and mixed form of governance containing elements of all structures (Buitelaar, 2003; Needham & Kam, 2004). In addition, the presence of coordination mechanisms will differ across policy domains. Even provinces, municipalities and private parties might use different mechanisms of coordination simultaneously. To conclude, the distinction between these governance structures are helpful to get a structured analysis of the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities on housing provision.

3.4.2 Multi-level governance

Due to multiple developments in society, the coordination of public policies has become more difficult. Processes of deregulation, decentralisation and privatisation have resulted in scattered deployment of coordination mechanisms (Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000). Policy implementation based on one governance structure seems no longer possible or desirable. Policies are not longer dictated by command and control of government or by market prices. In fact, multiple parties have their thoughts on and contributions to policy processes. Absolute authority of governments has reduced along with those developments. For this research the concept of multi-level governance is relevant as it deals with the transfer of tasks and responsibilities among higher- and lower level of government or towards organisation affiliated to government.

The development of theories on multi-level governance has started along with the process of integrating European policies into national policies. National policymaking became increasingly influenced by European policies, see for example Brenner (2003) or Zonneveld and Spaans (2014). The aim of the European Spatial Development Perspective was twofold. First, it was about the integration among and within different policy domains. Second, emphasis was given to the promotion of economic development and territorial competition. The concept of multi-level governance provides a valuable approach for analysing relations in policy- and decision-making processes among levels of administration. Hooghe and Marks (2013) have developed two types of theoretical models on multi-level governance. Type I concerns the traditional approach to

decentralisation as used in federal systems. There is a fixed and limited number of administrative levels in this approach. Jurisdictions do not intersect and constitute a coherent system. Administrative levels of type II are considered to be more flexible. Governance is no longer for the general-purpose but can be responsible for certain policies. Those administrative levels can intersect from a territorial perspective.

Distinctive types of multi-level governance proposed by Hooghe and Marks (2013) are prompted from a theoretical perspective. In his paper Andreas Faludi (2012) criticizes the concept of multi-level governance by its application in spatial planning. The essence of his critique relates to the position of regional and local levels of government in a hierarchal order, and the way of decision-making in a governance setting. He stated that:

“The major criticism has been that the concept as such is ambiguous. Mostly, it refers to vertical relations within a multi-level polity and thus to relations between bodies of government, and not the more comprehensive process called governance by which societal decision-making takes place in interaction between such bodies and private actors.” (Faludi, 2012, pp. 19–20)

In connection to this observation, regional arrangements among province municipalities on housing provision should not solely encompass administration from a hierarchical-perspective. Instead, they should incorporate or promote interactions among public administration and private parties. This study will therefore focus on the use the coordination mechanism of governance structures applied by provinces and municipalities on housing provision on the regional level.

3.5 Synthesis: significance for regional housing provision

This chapter contains a theoretical perspective on the provision of housing and distinctive roles for provinces and municipalities. The theoretical description made it clear that governmental intervention on the provision of housing has reduced by the abolishment of granting subsidies and development towards the application of free market principles in the beginning of the 21th century. These developments resulted in an increased involvement of property developers or investors on the provision of housing. Housing provision does not only serve housing policies, but also aims to realise qualitative housing and achieving socio-economic objectives. Housing provision does not solely focus on provinces and municipalities but also on (social) housing associations, property developers, investors and owner-occupiers. Regional arrangements on housing provision are therefore interplay between legal instruments granted to provinces and municipalities, and cooperation on the basis of networking.

4. Analytical framework

The analytical framework is presented in this chapter, which entails the analytical perspective on decision making among municipalities and provinces on the regional provision of housing. The analytical framework combines (1) theoretical insights from previous chapter and (2) the stream model of Teisman (2000), which is primarily chosen as research perspective in this study. The first section outlines two analytical perspectives that should be included in the analytic framework. The second section discusses the concepts of the stream model in more detail. The third section will extend the stream model with explanatory variables that enable for a thorough analysis on regional housing provision. The fourth section presents the analytical framework that will be used in this study.

4.1 Towards an analytical model for analysing decision making

The previous chapter outlined the playing field and roles of provinces and municipalities on regional housing provision. It stressed that regional coordination will be a trade-off between legal instruments of provinces and municipalities, and cooperation among those levels based trust and diplomacy in networks. For instance, provinces can impose regulations towards municipalities triggering the establishment of regional arrangement. Municipalities can also voluntarily decide to go for municipal cooperation without intervention of higher-government. Although provinces and municipalities are formally separated, they might be dependent on each other. Hence provinces and municipalities rely on the spirit of goodwill towards regional housing provision. The lack of an absolute authoritative regional centre requires the establishment and exchange of mutual benefits.

This study is twofold. It will: (1) examine in what situations regional arrangements are established; and (2) grasp coordination mechanisms deployed by both provinces and municipalities on the regional provision of housing. To structure the analysis, this research is decomposed in two components. First, it has to be identified how and when either provinces or municipalities attain to regional coordination on housing provision. Second, once regional arrangements are established, how should this be shaped? In reality there will be no linearity between those components but are elements that do co-exist. There is no analytical model for analysing decision-making that incorporates both perspectives. For this research a analytical framework is designed in which the stream model of Kingdon (1984) and multi-network approach of Van Bueren, Klijn & Koppenjan (2003) are combined. The stream model is useful because it contains the perspective of agenda-setting, which is comparable to the emergence of regional arrangements. The multi-network approach is useful because the model includes explanatory variables to analyse the course of decision-making processes. Both approaches have useful elements for this research and will be discussed in more detail in upcoming sections.

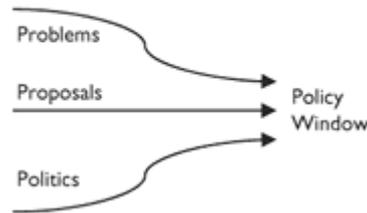
4.2. Stream model for analysing the emergence of regional arrangements

The stream model is used in this study to analyse the emergence of regional arrangements. The stream model is developed by Kingdon (1984) and followed by an extension of Teisman (2000). As multiple research perspectives are available for analysing decision making no further comparison of these perspectives is included in this study. The establishment of regional coordination is still in an explorative phase. The application of the stream model in this study therefore has a similarity with agenda setting as supposed by Kingdon (1984).

The stream model distinguishes concurrent streams of problems, solutions and participants complementary. In literature, these streams are often referred to as problems, policy and politics respectively (Kingdon, 1984; Teisman, 2000). The significance of each stream in decision-making will be clarified in this paragraph by discussing those streams separately. The coupling of those

streams in a ‘policy window’ allows for the analysis of decision-making concerning a specific issue i.e. establishing regional arrangements on housing provision. A visualisation of the stream model is included in Figure 4.2.1.

Figure 4.2.1 Visualisation of stream model



Essential element of this metaphoric model on decision-making processes concerns the largely independency of distinctive streams. Each stream develops according to its own dynamics and rules. The stream model therefore focuses on timing of coincidental merging of the streams than on subsequent steps in decision-making processes used in rational approaches (problem identification, creating alternatives and implementation). Policies are not the product of rational actions since parties involved in policy processes rarely compare and evaluate alternatives systematically. The stream model aims to explain why some issues and problems become prominent in policy making or are included on the policy agenda, or are even translated into concrete policies, whilst others fail and never will get that prominence (Kingdon, 1984; Teisman, 2000). The emergence of a major problem or issue, the proposal for a solution and a conclusive set of participants are important to realise a ‘policy window’ for the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. The arrival of a ‘policy window’ is also required for a governmental level to take a problem into consideration.

Problem stream

The problem stream includes (policy) issues or problems in society that requires attention. Before issues or undesirable situations can be turned into concrete policies they have to be identified or explicitly formulated. Situations in which issues are neither identified nor explicitly formulated will never be eligible for policy making. A sense of urgency or awareness concerning undesirable situations is apparently needed before action or policies can be taken on issues at stake.

In this study, the problem stream will focus on issues or undesirable situations concerning regional housing markets. Principally, emphasis is given to the circumstances that might affect the mismatch between housing demand and housing supply. However, the problem streams can be more widely applied than housing demand and housing supply strictly. Aspects, like regional spatial characteristics, the application of existing housing policies or municipal cooperation that already exist, are aspects that could be included to the problem stream. Such aspects have to be considered together when identifying issues in the problem stream on regional housing provision.

Solution stream

The solution stream or policy stream refers to the formulation of policy proposals or alternatives. Without policy proposals or alternatives new policies will never be treated or get adopted in subsequent stages in the policy cycle. According to Kingdon’s view, policy proposals or alternatives are not drawn for given issues or undesirable situations observed. Actually policy proposals are looking for problems to which they can be tied to (Kingdon, 1984). That is why policy proposals or alternatives do not originate from one single actor that might be affected by the undesirable situation. Proposals for policies can originate from different actors like policy makers, experts or lobby groups.

The solution stream in this study focuses on the attempts made by both provinces and municipalities for the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. By regional arrangements is meant any intervention that has contributed to the establishment of regional arrangements. Regional arrangements therefore will vary among procedural interactions, like legal stipulations or soft policies, till informal interactions among provinces and municipalities. The solution stream thus focuses on the attempts that are made to establish regional arrangements on housing provision.

Political/participants stream

The participant stream includes participants longing for involvement for the issues at stake. This participant stream must be considered as quite comprehensive since the stream model on decision-making has a metaphoric meaning. According to Kingdon this stream consists of things like the attitude of the public, public opinion, campaigns by pressure groups and ideological contributions (Kingdon, 1984). The inclusion or exclusion of policies in the agenda-setting stage is dependant, for example, on the changes to the composition of government after elections. Political and societal dynamics thus may also influence the course of the agenda setting stage.

This study deals with the emergence and implementation of regional arrangements on housing provision. The stream model enables researchers to explain why regional housing provision has become prominent in policy making in specific regions whilst regional arrangements in other regions partly succeeded or even failed. One point of critique on the stream model concerns the emphasis on agenda-setting and coupling of streams creating 'policy windows'. Agenda-setting is just one part of the policy cycle or decision-making process. The enactment and implementation of policies are of less importance in Kingdon's model (Howlett, McConnell, & Perl, 2015). However, this study also pays attention to the results and outcomes of the implementation and execution of regional arrangements on housing provision. This aspect is not incorporated in Kingdon's model for analysing complex decision-making processes. The use of the stream model is thus partially inadequate for this study and should therefore be extended to make it applicable for this research. The extension of the stream model will be discussed in next section.

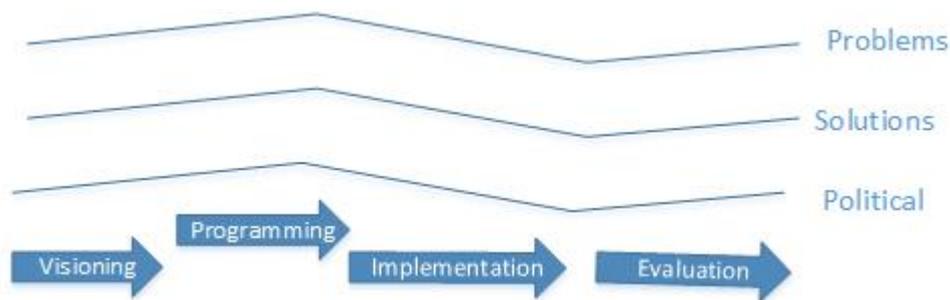
4.3. Extension of the stream for decision-making in regional housing provision

In order to make the stream model applicable for this study, Kingdon's model is extended. The extended stream model should incorporate distinctive stages of the traditional policy cycle. Furthermore, it should explain results and outcomes of decision-making process concerning the establishment of regional arrangements among provinces and municipalities. The stream model of Kingdon and distinctive stages of the traditional policy cycle are visualized in figure 4.3.1.

In literature attempts have been made to incorporate the whole policy cycle in Kingdon's model instead of solely emphasise on the agenda-setting stage in decision making processes (i.e. Howlett et al., 2015; Ridde, 2009). The metaphoric nature of the stream model allows for a relative ease of extending the model, by simply adding the aspect of policy implementation without undermining the principles and legacy underlying the stream model. The idea of independent and simultaneously running of parallel streams remains. One way of extending the stream model is by adding new streams that suit the metaphoric character of Kingdon's model, reflecting on the development process of subsequent stages of the policy process. These models also contain confluence points to distinguish subsequent stages of the policy cycle. Such elaborations on Kingdon's work will not contribute to this study however, because this study essentially aims to understand why streams coincide or not coincide. For this study, emphasis is given to the question why streams coincide and which elements contribute to that. To explain the dynamics of individual streams, which might result in diverging or converging streams that in the end

determine success or failure of regional arrangements, the stream model will be extended by explanatory variables.

Figure 4.3.1 Stream model vs. traditional policy cycle



The explanatory variables that will be used to construe the stream model are derived from the multi-network approach developed by Van Bueren, Klijn and Koppenjan (2003). The multi-network approach aims to explain decision-making processes by means of explanatory variables that can cause impasses and breakthroughs in decision-making processes. Social, cognitive, institutional and network variables can explain impasses and breakthroughs in decision-making processes (Van Bueren, Klijn & Koppenjan, 2003). Klijn and Koppenjan (2004) distinguish three identical factors meant to explain uncertainties in decision-making processes. The factors identified by Klijn and Koppenjan are strategic, institutional and substantive factors. These factors are considered to be the causes of impasses and breakthroughs in decision-making processes. The variables of Klijn and Koppenjan (2004) will be used for practical reasons. Klijn and Koppenjan (2004) use a limited number of explanatory variables compared to Van Bueren et al. (2003). The three selected explanatory variables will be discussed in upcoming subsections.

Strategic factors

Provinces and municipalities can pursue strategies that contribute positive or negative to the course of decision-making, i.e. regional arrangements on housing provision. Strategic factors deal with to what extent provinces and municipalities acknowledge or neglect their mutual dependencies. It is important to note that without mutual dependencies, cooperation among provinces and municipalities, and between municipalities themselves, there would be no purpose for deploying cooperative strategies (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Because of dependencies among provinces and municipalities, decision-making processes on regional arrangements will always include a form of cooperation. Concerning strategic factors, this study focuses on the presence of mutual dependencies among provinces and municipalities.

Klijn and Koppenjan (2004) identified five strategies that can contribute positive or negative to the course of decision making processes. The strategies can be divided in two categories: non-cooperative (negative) strategies and cooperative (positive) strategies. An overview of possible strategies is presented in Table 4.3.1. By pursuing a go-alone strategy no interaction between provinces and municipalities take place. Conflicting and avoiding strategies neither include any cooperative attitude from provinces or municipalities. The application of such strategies will impede the progress of the decision-making process i.e. the establishment and execution of regional arrangements. However, provinces and municipalities can change their attitude and shift because of changing circumstances, from non-cooperative strategies towards cooperative strategies. In situations of cooperative and facilitating strategies dependencies among provinces and municipalities are acknowledged. The result of those strategies will be increased interaction among provinces and municipalities and thus cooperation among them.

Table 4.3.1. Overview of actors strategies in decision making based on Klijn & Koppenjan (2004)

Cooperative (positive)	Cooperative	When cooperative strategies are applied provinces and municipalities acknowledge their external dependencies. By means of cooperative strategies provinces and municipalities try to convince themselves and others of their proposals or actions to be taken. Negotiation is used to achieve the desired outcome.
	Facilitating	Facilitating strategies are inspired by the fact that to come up with a mutual beneficial solution, provinces and municipalities have to cooperate. This strategy focuses on bridging conflicts. Provincial or municipal interests or a sense of responsibility for actions on regional housing underlie to the application of facilitating strategies.
Non-cooperative (negative)	Go-alone	In a go-alone strategy provinces or municipalities impose their proposal or actions regardless of strategic dependencies among them. A consequence of neglecting mutual dependencies might be prone for opposition of either provinces or municipalities. On the opposite, it is also possible that proposals or actions are accepted despite possible disadvantages.
	Conflicting	Conflicting strategies are aimed to prevent or block proposals or actions taken by provinces, municipalities or others. This strategy concerns proposal or actions desired by a single actor.
	Avoiding	In avoiding strategies provinces or municipalities do not resist a particular proposal or action. This strategy is characterised by the application of an avoiding or passive attitude in the decision making process. For instance municipalities can apply this strategy to prevent for an additional administrative or financial burden involved in provincial proposal or actions on regional housing.

By the active management of decision-making processes, it becomes more likely that provinces and municipalities pursue non-cooperative strategies. Process management offers the possibility to align provincial and municipal strategies and enhance interaction and cooperation among them. Process management is preferably performed by an independent actor, which serves as mediator, facilitator or conflict manager. On regional housing provision process management is likely to be carried out by provinces or a regional entity due to the municipal border transcending aspects. De Bruijn, Ten Heuvelhof and In 't Veld (2010) have identified four core elements of a good process. Along with the application of previous mentioned strategies the following principles of process management are included to this study:

- Process management should ensure an open process. Provinces or municipalities do not take action alone, but the initiator of proposals or actions adopts an open attitude. Provinces, municipalities and other relevant actors can contribute and steer the decision making process by placing topics on the agenda.
- In the decision-making process, the core values of parties are protected. Provinces and municipalities will ensure that their interests will be addressed during the process. They will not take the risk that their interests are not sufficiently addressed and are not harmed.
- The decision making process includes incentives for progress. The risk of an open process and protection of core values is that decision making stuck in discussions and negotiations. Provinces and municipalities therefore must have the idea the decision making on establishing regional arrangements on housing provision contains momentum and progress.
- The decision-making process should include substantive quality standards. For instance including expert knowledge or research reports on regional housing markets are elements that will provoke interaction among provinces and municipalities in the process.

In this study, the strategic factors such as explanatory variable will be addressed by: (1) analysing the strategies applied (cooperative or non-cooperative); and (2) to what extent the principles of process management are included in the decision-making process meant to increase interaction among provinces and municipalities.

Institutional factors

Because of mutual dependencies, neither provinces nor municipalities are able to address or even resolve the issues of regional coordination on housing provision individually. The way provinces and municipalities interact is revealed by the identification of governance structures mentioned in section 3.3. The governance structures and respective mechanisms of coordination are summarized in Table 4.3.2. It becomes clear from this overview that the decision-making process on regional arrangements on housing provision can be shaped by both procedural and informal interactions. However, as was explained earlier in section 3.2.2 provinces have the exclusive right to impose additional regulations towards municipalities and thus create institutions among them. For instances procedural and legal decisions made by provinces may lead to informal interaction on the municipal level.

Table 4.3.2 Typology of governance structures based on Bevir (2012)

	Hierarchies	Markets	Networks
Degree of dependence	Dependent	Independent	Interdependent
Mechanism of coordination	Rules and commands	Haggling	Diplomacy
Culture	Subordination	Competition	Reciprocity

In connection to the discussion of the deployment of strategies, institutions are a way to realise interaction in the decision-making process on regional arrangements. The combination of both procedural and informal interaction structures the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities. By analysing the procedural and informal interactions, this study explains to what extent the deployment of coordination mechanisms contribute (positive or negative) to the decision making process on regional arrangements. It is important to note that institutional factors can also contribute to interactions within levels of administration. However, this study focuses on the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities. Relevant to this study is which institutions are deployed and by whom, to establish regional arrangements. Institutions among municipalities cannot entirely be ignored, since regional arrangements on housing however may include voluntary or imposed agreements among municipalities.

In this research the institutional factors as explanatory variable will focus on which institutions are deployed and by whom to establish regional arrangements on housing provision. In addition, emphasis is given to the institutions that have structured the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities concerning regional arrangements on housing provision.

Substantive factors

Decision-making processes are not solely based on the deployment of strategic and institutional factors, but is in fact a mixture of multiple factors. In connection to substantive quality standards in process management, substantive factors as explanatory variable can contribute to the decision making process concerning the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. Provinces and municipalities have different or multiple frames of references and therefore interpret the available information differently. This complexity will not be resolved by collecting more information, because it is caused by the lack of a common frame of reference among provinces and municipalities. Gathering information will thus not reduce this complexity, but will contribute to it (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004).

Provinces and municipalities will value the need for regional arrangements on housing provision differently, and even the way in which regional arrangements are shaped is contested. In addition, regional arrangements touches different other policy domains like for instance spatial planning, and land policy which lead to a more complexity. Provinces and municipalities have different perceptions regarding the performance and development of the (regional) housing markets and

therefore favour different solutions. Substantive factors in the decision making process have to work towards a common frame of reference that can be considered as starting point for the establishment of regional arrangements. There different options to realise a common frame of reference provoking shared visions on regional housing. Possibilities are: shared housing visions, monitoring of demographic changes, monitoring changes in the housing stock and housing production. The implementation of such substantive aspects, whether or not driven by strategic or institutional factors, will contribute tot the creation of a common frame of reference.

In this study, the substantive factors as explanatory variable will focus on: (1) the existence of a common frame of reference used for regional arrangements; and (2) a shared starting point i.e. monitoring system for the further elaboration to prevent for regional arrangements that stuck in conflicting perceptions.

4.4. Framework: combing streams and explanatory variables

In previous sections, two approaches were discussed for analysing decision-making processes. The stream model and explanatory factors of the multi-network approach will be combined in this section to construct the analytical framework that is used in this study to analyse the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities on regional arrangements. The main concepts of the analytical framework, outlined in previous sections, are summarized in Figure 4.4.1. This figure illustrates: (1) the decision-making process including distinctive streams of problems, solutions and participants; and (2) the explanatory variables that influence the course of the decision making process. The meaning of the distinctive streams and explanatory variables are summarized in Table 4.4.1.

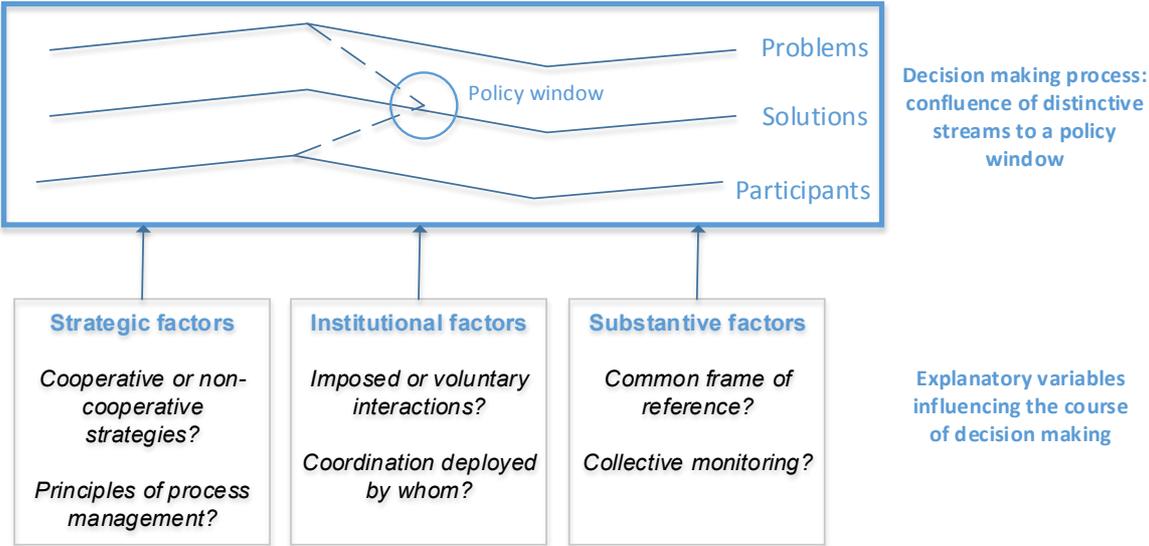
Table 4.4.1 Explanation of concepts used in the analytical framework

		Explanation
Distinctive streams in decision making	Problem stream	- Focus on regional housing markets. Emphasis is given to circumstances that might affect the mismatch between demand and supply such as spatial characteristics, housing policies and forms of municipal cooperation that already exists.
	Solution stream	- Focus on the attempts that are made by provinces and municipalities to establish regional arrangements on housing provision.
	Participant stream	- Focus on participants longing for involvement on the issues at stake in the region. The participant stream includes the attitude and opinion of the public and stakeholders.
Explanatory variables in decision making	Strategic factors	- Acknowledgement of dependencies by the deployment of both cooperative and non-cooperative strategies: cooperative, facilitating, go-alone, confliction or avoiding strategies. - The use of process management as mean to increase interaction among provinces and municipalities: open process, core values, incentives for progress, substantive quality standards.
	Institutional factors	- Presence of procedural or informal institutions and respective coordination mechanisms that has structured the decision making process among provinces and municipalities on regional arrangements: imposed or voluntary.
	Substantive factors	- Presence of a common frame of reference or different perceptions on the need and execution of regional arrangements. Like for instance processes of visioning. - Existence of a shared or collective monitoring system on for example projected and realised housing production used for the further elaboration of regional arrangements.

As indicated in previous section, the use of strategic, institutional and substantive factors is not exhaustive but relate to each other. For instance, the application of a facilitating strategy by a

certain province may precede the establishment of voluntary regional arrangements among municipalities. For this reason, explanatory variables are principally considered to be of equal importance in the decision-making process. However, the analysis of the decision making process could reveal a pattern on the application of strategic, institutional or substantive factors. The distinctive explanatory variables thus could be of relative importance along different stages of the decision making process. Although this study does not explicitly aims to reveal such patterns the relative importance among explanatory variables will not be ignored during the analysis in chapter 6.

Figure 4.4.1 Visualisation of the analytical framework



This analytical framework will be used in the upcoming chapters to analyse the decision making process among provinces and municipalities. After the identification of distinctive streams, the explanatory factors will be used to review the course of decision-making on the establishment and execution of regional arrangements on housing provision.

5. Case study: description

Three cases are analysed in this chapter, based on the theoretical insights and analytical framework presented in previous chapters. The case study information is obtained by dossier examination and interviews, as was explained in chapter 3. Policy documents and legal frameworks on housing provision from provinces and municipalities were discussed in more detail during the interviews. A list of interviewees is included in Appendix A. Each upcoming section will address a single case in which one of the selected regions of U10, Regio Midden Holland or Parkstad Limburg will be analysed. Upcoming sections will have an identical structure. The first subsection presents contextual information of the region regarding administrative, demographic, spatial housing developments. The second subsection elaborates on the problems and solutions proposed for the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. Participants involved among those problems and solutions are mentioned in this subsection as well. The third subsection discusses the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities on the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. In this subsection, the analytical framework is already implicitly used to focus on the deployment of explanatory variables. The fourth subsection concludes by summarising the case description, in which the following two-fold question is addressed: (1) when regional arrangements are established; and (2) how decision-making is shaped by provinces and municipalities, including regional arrangements on housing provision.

5.1 Region of Utrecht U10

5.1.1 Background and contextual information

The region of Utrecht is an attractive area for the settlement of people and companies. The region of Utrecht is ranked within the top three of most competitive European regions in 2017, for the second time in a row (Regional Competitiveness Index, published by the European Commission, NRC, 2017). This means that the region of Utrecht contains special characteristics in respect to other regions. The region of Utrecht is situated within and in proximity of nature areas and economic activities. Households and companies that settled within the region fully utilize the advantages of those characteristics. The attractiveness and competitiveness of region U10 is the result of cooperation among municipalities within the region Utrecht of the last decades (Bestuur Regio Utrecht, 2015b). In order to strengthen the current position of the region, the abundance of around 50 partnerships concern a multiplicity of policy domains had to be transformed into a new more effective umbrella partnerships form (Bestuur Regio Utrecht, 2015b). The attractiveness and demographic developments of the region increased the demand for dwellings in this region. Additional dwellings are a prerequisite for maintaining and increasing the position of the region. Housing shortages for this region are estimated at 7.000 dwellings in 2020, and around 18.000 – 25.000 in 2040 (Gemeente Nieuwegein, 2015a). The way cooperation in this region has evolved and how municipalities jointly deal with the construction of new dwellings is discussed in next sections.

5.1.2 Problems, solutions and participants

The problems, proposed solutions and participants involved concerning the problems and solutions at stake are reviewed in this section.

As mentioned in the previous section, housing shortages are expected within the Utrecht region. The current housing stock is unable to accommodate for the increasing number of households that will settle within the region of Utrecht. According to future forecasts the number of households in this region will increase by 26.800 between 2015 – 2020 and by around 43.000 between 2020 – 2030 (RIGO Research en Advies, 2016). Especially target groups like students,

starters, young families and elderly experience difficulties in their search for suitable and affordable dwellings. The lack of additional dwellings and an increasing number of households looking for a suitable dwelling may increase pressure on the housing market within the region Utrecht. Households that are inclined to take a next step in their housing career within the region will keep their current dwelling occupied due to lacking alternatives to move to. Research on the housing stock and housing preferences within the region has indicated that the region Utrecht has housing shortages in the social sector. There is especially a need for single-household dwellings in the social rental (RIGO Research en Advies, 2014).

Housing preferences of households within the region however changed simultaneously with quantitative housing shortages. Housing demand regarding residential environments has shifted from expansion sites towards the more urban living environments. However, new housing developments cannot be fully covered within existing urban environments. The development of housing in extension areas in green areas is therefore inevitable. The interviews have however shown that spatial contours preventing for urban sprawl in green areas are stringent applied by the province of Utrecht. Urban extension in green areas is thus complicated in this region. Because of region's geographical position within the *Groene Hart* is urban extension a political-charged issue. Nevertheless, urban infill developments of housing in existing urban areas are complicated either. Inner city development involves private properties that are more difficult to grab for intervention from an administrative perspective.

Until January 2015, municipalities within region Utrecht cooperated on housing provision within the partnership of *plusregio Bestuur Regio Utrecht* (BRU). BRU was a *plusregio* based on the *Wet gemeenschappelijke regelingen*. *Plusregio's* were financial funded by the central government to support cooperation among municipalities on predefined policies including housing. *Plusregio's* were formalised bodies with corporate responsibility consisting of an own administrative organisation with an own governing board. Policies and decisions made by BRU were directly applicable to participating municipalities. The interviews with U10 and the municipality of Nieuwegein brought forward that new (legal) policies could be adopted by BRU without the consent of individual participating municipalities. This way of decision-making was not always appreciated as will be discussed later. Municipalities within BRU cooperated on the policy domains of traffic and transport, housing, spatial planning, economy, nature and environment. The nine municipalities that participated in BRU were Bunnik, De Bilt, Houten, IJsselstein, Nieuwegein, Stichtse Vecht, Utrecht, Vianen en Zeist. By the abolishment of *plusregio* by the central government in 2015 a formal basis for municipal cooperation on housing provision should not exist anymore. Municipal cooperation was however considered desirable regarding the competitiveness of the region that should be maintained.

Throughout the years, the board of BRU has adopted a *Regionale Huisvestingsverordening* and *Regionaal Woningbouwprogramma*. These policy adoptions were directly applicable to participating municipalities of BRU, because of the status of *plusregio*. On the effectiveness of this regional housing program, the interviewees indicated differences among the perspectives of quantity and quality. From a quantitative perspective, the regional programming of housing was considered to be effective. Each municipality was responsible to allocate a predefined part of the regional housing demand in exchange of financial subsidies from central government. However, regarding housing quality the regional housing program seemed not to be that effective. Differences among municipalities within BRU were that big that the implementation of a regional housing program was not successful. The regional programming of housing was strongly focussed on housing quantity whilst housing quality became more important regarding future housing needs. Differences in household preferences and housing quality among municipalities are hard to capture in joint regional housing programming. Along with the abolishment of BRU and loss of

financial support for the construction of new dwelling, municipalities decided not continue the regional programming of housing. Although the interest of housing quality in the programming of housing had increased, municipalities no longer recognize the value or regional housing programming. The way of decision making within BRU has resulted in decreasing support for municipal cooperation in BRU and the regional programming of housing. Hence, additional policy programs were required to deal with upcoming housing shortages. Along with issues on inner city development and an increasing number of vacant offices linkages among other policy-domains can be created (Provincie Utrecht, 2016a).

The formal regional administrative body *plusregio Bestuur Regio Utrecht* ceased to exist in 2015. With the adoption of *Wet Afschaffing Plusregio's*, duties for traffic and transport of BRU got transferred to the province of Utrecht. The policy domains of spatial planning, housing and economy have been placed back towards individual municipalities. However, municipal cooperation did not come to an end with the abolishment of BRU. Municipalities that have been part of BRU decided to continue their collaboration in a new voluntary partnership (Bestuur Regio Utrecht, 2015a). This new partnership, called U10, was founded simultaneously with the process of eliminating BRU. The organisation and policy agenda of U10 derives from the municipalities whilst BRU was a formal and separate organisation with corporate responsibility. Although 9 participating municipalities were part of the *plusregio BRU*, the partnership of U10 formally consists of 10 municipalities. The partnership is split up into six different *bestuurstafels* concerning six different themes: economy, housing, mobility, social domain, spatial domain, energy, and sustainability. A municipality is represented by a member of the board of mayor and alderman that can, depending on division of policy domains, participate in one or more tables. Depending on the issues at stake, topics might overlap and cross multiple *bestuurstafels*. Around the *bestuurstafel* of housing municipal representatives deliberate about the allocation of dwellings, especially social housing, across the region in relation to the *regionale huisvestingsverordening*, coordination of municipal housing visions, performance agreement with social housing associations, and the match of housing supply with demographic developments.

Concerning the differences about cooperation between BRU and U10, the interviewees mentioned that municipalities started opposing against the way decision-making was carried out by BRU. Despite this stance against central decision making during the BRU-epoch municipal cooperation is however still desired. According to the interviewees municipal cooperation has benefits for municipalities in case municipal transcending aspects like housing. In the new mode of cooperation of U10 decision making returned back to individual municipalities and municipal councils. Municipalities within U10 aim to discover if and where there might be an added value for the region to cooperate among municipalities (U10, 2017b). Essentially, U10 is a voluntary partnership of ten municipalities within the Utrecht region. The number of municipalities that actually group together may vary depending on the issues and related policy domains at stake. Municipalities within U10 do not necessarily have to join on each topic. Municipalities outside the U10 are also allowed to join, depending on the subject matter. By cooperation, the U10 municipalities expect: an open attitude towards the regional interest; and a willingness to get in conservations. This might result in commitment to municipal cooperation. Cooperation within the U10 is practised differently from cooperation within the former BRU-partnership. Due to the excess number of partnerships on different policy domains that existed along the BRU-epoch, municipal cooperation became embedded in the working culture of municipalities.

As mentioned earlier, the regional programming of housing stopped because of the abolishment of the BRU. By the absence of a regional housing program, the planning and projection of housing production regarding future housing needs became the responsibility of individual municipalities. However, each municipality is free to decide whether or not they want to set up a

municipal housing program. As a result, the projections of future housing production became obscure. All municipalities could choose another mode of action concerning the programming of housing. During the BRU-epoch, a *planmonitor* was part the regional housing program. This monitor enabled for the monitoring of housing production regarding housing demand. Evaluation of the housing production within the region was still desired, and the province of Utrecht committed itself to this *planmonitor* for provincial interests. The province of Utrecht had never taken any role in BRU yet.

As mentioned before within the interviews, a reduction of housing shortages by new housing developments is hampered by difficulties on infill developments. This is due to private ownership situations and stringent regulations for urban extension outside urban areas. The province of Utrecht, for instance, could apply less strict policies on urban sprawl or support municipalities with inner-city developments. Apparently, as shown in this description, there are no mechanisms or policies that should trigger municipalities to prioritise inner-city development over urban extension at this moment. The municipality of Nieuwegein started a redefinition of their municipal housing program recently, enabling the accommodation and settlement of the increasing number of households in their inner cities. The housing stock of Nieuwegein is relatively one-sided and should be transformed to contemporary needs like dwellings for elderly and care-dependent people. Dwellings have to be realised within reach of social facilities, such as shops and healthcare. The municipality of Nieuwegein actively explores the possibilities in consultation with their inhabitants and property owners, for example about to what extent housing demand can be covered by infill developments (Gemeente Nieuwegein, 2016).

The following observations can be made from the description above. Although municipalities within the Utrecht region and province of Utrecht have an essential role in the decision-making process, both governments are strongly dependent of private parties. As the emphasis is given to inner-city development, linkages towards private land and properties owners have to be created. Scattered ownership situations in inner cities are hard to control in respect of urban densification and housing provision. Municipalities are more often dependent of private parties for housing development in addition, like the municipality of Nieuwegein. Private initiatives are requested since available building plots owned by municipal land banks are scarce and financial risks on municipal land development are no longer desired. Building plots that are available and that comply with provincial stipulation on urban extension are mainly privately owned. It is therefore questionable how these parties or developers can be triggered to start housing production. There is a stable housing need within the region of U10. In addition, there is a real need for social housing across the region. However, social housing associations have postponed investment since central government stipulations have reduced the investment capacity.

5.1.3 Course of decision-making on regional housing provision

In this section, the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities regarding the establishment of regional housing provision are discussed. This discussion is separated by the deployment of strategies, institutional measures and substantive factors.

Strategic

The new mode of regional cooperation within the U10 commenced simultaneously with the process of abolishing *Bestuur Regio Utrecht*, which officially ceased to exist on 1 January 2015. For about one year there was a dual mode of municipal cooperation in which *Bestuur Regio Utrecht* and U10 coexisted. During this first experimental year it turned out that volunteer municipal cooperation based on networking is the desired way to continue municipal cooperation (Bestuur Regio Utrecht, 2015b). The experimental year demonstrated the added value of volunteer municipal cooperation against the continuation of cooperation in a formalized administrative

setting like BRU. Cooperation within BRU, and within the plurality of other partnerships that existed, was primarily based on the implementation of policies and budgeting. This, while a partnership that is meant to oversee challenges for the region or explore new initiatives was lacking. The founding of U10 created such a partnership, thus filling the gap. According to the interviewees of U10 and the municipality of Nieuwegein, municipalities apply a cooperative strategy among each other. Experiences on municipal cooperation applied by *Bestuurs Regio Utrecht* and other partnerships among municipalities resulted in embedding municipal cooperation in the culture of decision-making among municipalities. In this culture, decision-making is not solely meant for individual municipalities. Decisions and policies are made for the benefits of the region in which the mutual dependencies of municipalities are incorporated. This includes the exchange of experiences and knowledge, solutions for municipal trans border issues and that municipal councils take uniform decisions and secure for the joint implementation (U10, 2015). For that reason, neighbouring municipalities of former BRU-borders want to get on board of municipal cooperation within U10. Formally, ten municipalities constitute municipal cooperation in U10. However, the maximum number of participating municipalities at this moment will be sixteen depending on policy themes and issues. Municipalities are free to decide whether or not they want to join certain *bestuurstafels*. There is no obligation for municipalities to join decision-making on all issues.

Municipal cooperation in the U10-setting is currently bearing its fruit. Although the number of *bestuurstafels* remains six, the administrative burden of those tables has increased. An increasing number of policy issues are placed on the regional agenda by municipalities (U10, 2017a). That does not inherently mean issues placed on the U10-agenda actually will have a follow-up. For each issue the advantage of municipal cooperation on the regional has to be assessed. Municipal representatives around the *bestuurstafel* assess the added value for cooperation on that issue. However, it is to the individual municipal council to assess if and to what extent it is desirable to cooperate and how municipal cooperation will be shaped (U10, 2015). The question is whether and to what extent municipalities could act together. This question takes place in the continuum to the necessity of regional cooperation.

The provision of housing in this region is subject to multiple policy domains. It became clear from the interviews that housing provision in this region is deliberated in conjunction of related policies on housing, spatial planning and social domain. Because of the interrelated policy domains, municipalities group together around joint *bestuurstafels*. By this approach, the related policy domains can be combined easily. However, the interviewees highlight the importance of taking municipal councils along the regional processes to ensure the effective implementation of regional policies. It is the responsibility of the municipal representative to inform his municipal councils and keep them updated of regional processes. By participating in U10, municipalities are able to jointly react towards proposed policies of the province of Utrecht or central government. Cooperation in U10 therefore strengthens municipal powers towards policy-making of higher governments. This attitude of U10 can be considered as lobbying in facilitating bridging conflicts or tensions among municipalities and provinces.

The province of Utrecht is not involved in the process and aspects on housing provision, or on the regional level nor to municipalities. The interviews revealed that the province of Utrecht only interferes with policy domains where problems occur. The province of Utrecht intends to interfere with the municipal level by the adoption of a *provinciaal inpassingsplan* admitting to the transformation of vacant offices. Transformation of vacant offices was considered a problem by the province (Provincie Utrecht, 2016b). However, municipalities like Nieuwegein and its neighbouring municipalities all have a need for new housing developments. Therefore, an urgent housing need is no reason for provincial intervention. However, the province adopted policies

such as the *Kadernota Wonen en Stedelijke Ontwikkeling* to handle with the oversupply of offices and industrial areas across the province (Provincie Utrecht, 2012). Compared to the municipalities, the province of Utrecht is relatively independent and able to address municipal transcending interest regarding private ownership of vacant properties and urban densification. Depending on subject, the province of Utrecht sometimes use a go-alone strategy as applied by vacant offices, while a facilitating strategy is used at other times. For example when a single municipality cannot address topics. The province of Utrecht does not seem to have any formal role in the relationship between province and developer, or between province and municipalities regarding achievements of planned housing production. In addition, situations in which municipalities rely on private initiatives will occur more often. Municipalities within the Utrecht region² have little spare land for development and are therefore dependent on private initiatives.

Institutional

Although the partnership U10 is constituted and financial funded by ten municipalities, an increasing number of neighbouring municipalities across the region would like to participate in this partnership. Initiatives from municipalities to join municipal cooperation within U10 are taken on a voluntary basis. There are no stipulations by which cooperation among municipalities in U10 can be enforced. Hence, the participating municipalities perform the development of policies and decision-making within region U10. Policymaking and policy adoption is fully executed by municipalities without inference of U10 as organisation. Facilitators support municipalities that cooperate in a certain *bestuurstafel*. Facilitators are responsible for services of the secretariats and the organization of meetings. The facilitators constitute the process team of U10 that has the responsibility for maintaining and enrich the relationships with municipalities, municipal councils and social communities (U10, 2015). This can be realised by meetings in which municipal councils or civil servants of U10 municipalities come together. The interviewee of U10 indicated that due to the voluntary nature of U10 each individual municipality principally adopts policies and decisions taken by the *bestuurstafel*. Municipalities always have the possibility to leave the process. However, the representative of the municipality is free to decide to what extent efforts will be putted obtaining regional outcomes. In addition, the representative is free to decide how agreements made around the *bestuurstafel* will be coordinated regarding the municipal board of mayor and alderman or municipal council. The most extensive form of cooperation includes the adoption of regional policies and decision in a regional-format. In this situation, all municipal councils adopt the same policy document, decision or ordinance. The *Huisvestingsverordening Regio Utrecht 2015* was adopted by this way. This ordinance is adopted by 16 municipalities across the province of Utrecht (U10, 2017a).

Together with the abolishment of *Bestuur Regio Utrecht* and transition towards U10, municipalities decided to stop the regional programming of housing. Besides the practical objections on regional programming, it was indicated during the interviews that municipalities no longer recognized the added value of regional programming. Regional programming of housing was considered successful with regard to the allocation of housing among the region. However, the continuation of regional programming was no longer necessary according U10-municipalities. The *Bestuur Regio Utrecht*-epoch has created sustainable linkages between municipalities resulting in voluntary cooperation among them. Cooperation among municipalities is however limited to the formulation of abstract policy goals instead of making agreements on how policies will be achieved, like the programming of housing. For instance, the *Ruimtelijke Ecnomische Koers U10* presents a clear policy goal regarding housing provision:

“We kiezen voor binnenstedelijk bouwen en niet voor uitbreiding, waarmee we het landschap sparen en de groene omgeving versterken. We ontwikkelen geen nieuwe grootschalige en nog niet geplande uitleglocaties.” (U10, 2016, p. 35)

The municipality of Nieuwegein was interviewed on to what extent this municipality cooperates with neighbouring municipalities. The interviewee indicated that there is actually no cooperation or consultation structure with neighbouring municipalities on housing provision. Apparently, sufficient municipal growth and real housing needs is no reason for regional cooperation among municipalities. The municipality of Nieuwegein neither discussed municipal developments on housing to neighbouring municipalities nor in U10. However, the fact still remains that municipalities might affect each other by housing developments. On the municipal level for instance, there seems no awareness of the regional context on housing provision. For example, the municipality of Nieuwegein did not include a regional paragraph to its housing vision that came into force in 2015 (Gemeente Nieuwegein, 2015b).

Notwithstanding the real housing demand and limited opportunities for urban extension across the region, the province of Utrecht maintains its position on urban extensions outside predefined urban areas. The province will apply punitive measures based on the *Wro* towards municipalities when urban extension is proposed outside predefined areas. To prevent such situations, municipalities always contact (*bestuurlijke vooroverleg*) the province during the development process as stipulated by the *Besluit ruimtelijke ordening*. The interviewees indicated that, despite stringent provincial policies, debates between province and municipalities always take place in an amicable setting. For that reason, it is questionable whether a formalised consultative structure could contribute to discussions on provincial policies on urban extension. Nevertheless, the province used their hierarchal powers to support municipalities in developing alternatives for housing developments in built-up areas. In 2016, the province started preparing a *provinciaal inpassingplan* allowing for the transformation of the excess supply of vacant offices and industrial areas to residential areas. By means of this *provinciaal inpassingplan*, the province aims to reduce the oversupply of (new) offices and providing assistance towards municipalities and property developer regarding the redevelopment of offices (Provincie Utrecht, 2016c). By this *provinciaal inpassingplan*, the province has expanded the exploitation possibilities of vacant offices that in turn may lead to an improvement of spatial quality and environmental matters. Since this provincial instrument is directly applicable to municipalities, being part of municipal land use plans, the province of Utrecht enriched to possibility for urban infill developments.

Substance

Although municipalities within the U10 decided to stop the regional programming of housing, the monitoring of the housing production still remained. The province of Utrecht took this responsibility over from BRU. After the abolishment of BRU, the province of Utrecht started monitoring housing production regarding housing needs. With this instrument, the province aims to comply housing production with the needs as laid down in the *provinciale structuurvisie*. However, it became however clear that the municipalities do not value the use of this monitor by the province from the interviews with U10 and Nieuwegein. Municipalities are free to decide which development plan for housing will be included to this provincial monitor. Principally, municipalities only include development plans to the monitor that are adopted and freely accessible to public. For an appropriate evaluation of proposed housing production and future housing production, *zachte plancapaciteit* is relevant as well. At this moment, an overview of the total number of dwellings proposed in all development plans, including *zachte and harde plancapaciteit*, is lacking. Hence, it is hard for municipalities to assess whether neighbouring municipalities have proposals for new housing development that could result in competition among them. Nevertheless, the municipality of Nieuwegein uses their own monitoring system to evaluate the municipal housing four times a year. The municipality of Nieuwegein distinguishes planning initiatives, permits applications, permits initiatives and realises developments in this monitor. Even the municipality of Nieuwegein is questioning the value of a municipal housing program. The interviewee of the municipality indicated that a housing program is just an

indication of proposed housing production. According to the interviewee, proposals for housing development are sometimes so fragile that they might drop off in later stages of development processes.

Although the regional programming and monitoring of housing developments is contested, the focus on housing provision has shifted from housing quantity to housing quality. In upcoming housing policies, municipalities are committed to construct the right dwelling on the suitable place regarding distinctive environmental areas for housing development. During this policy process, social housing associations and developers are invited as those parties enables municipalities to start the reinforcement of existing urban areas. Their interests towards proposals for housing development determine the success or failure. However, policies on housing quality are still subject to individual municipalities at this moment. Municipalities do not actively share experiences on the approach and implementation of housing policies in existing urban areas, including situations of scattered ownership.

5.1.4 Summary

Municipalities within the region U10 are involved in matters on housing market shortages. Municipalities rely on private initiatives to realise new housing developments. In addition, spatial policies of the province restrict new housing developments. Municipal cooperation in this region was constituted in the formal body *plsuregio Bestuur Regio Utrecht (BRU)* and has continued in a voluntary partnership U10. Along with this transition the regional programming of housing ceased to exist. The provision of housing within U10 is based on sharing experiences and knowledge, rather than drafting joint policies on housing provision. Municipalities within U10 jointly work towards an attractive and competitive region in which the autonomy of individual municipalities is respected. Since municipalities within U10 principally do not share municipal housing programs and housing production, the province of Utrecht is committed to them with monitoring and evaluation of production of housing in the region.

5.2 Regio Midden Holland

5.2.1 Background and contextual information

Regio Midden Holland has some special characteristics as the region contains distinctive but complementary spatially related elements. First, the region is characterized by the quality and openness of the agricultural landscape. The countryside of the region is part of the valued *Nationaal Landschap Groene Hart*. Second, the position of the region in proximity of the *Randstad* is utilized for the development of urbanized areas across the region more often. Due to its geographical position, the region can be accessed with a relative ease, for instance by commuters from cities like Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. Regio Midden Holland is an important player regarding the implementation of the urbanization strategy from the administrative partnership Zuidvleugel in the southern wing of the *Randstad*. Part of the urbanization strategy of Zuidvleugel is the construction of 115.000 additional dwellings between 2010 – 2020, and the construction of another 50.000 dwellings between 2020 - 2030 (Intergemeentelijk Samenwerkingorgaan Midden-Holland, 2010). The spatial combination of countryside and urbanized areas results in a valuable and attractive region for the settlement of households and economic activities. However, the construction of new dwellings might be prone to urban sprawl and cluttered landscapes. It is the ambition of the Zuidvleugel partnership to construct new dwellings within the urban built environment (Zuidvleugel, 2010).

5.2.2 Problems, solutions and participants

The problems, proposed solutions and participants involved concerning the problems and solutions at stake are reviewed in this section.

Strengthening the position of the region Midden Holland regarding the future development of the *Randstad* is one of the municipal motives to participate in the Regio Midden Holland. Municipalities consider a balanced demography within the region, cities and villages as precondition to continue and reinforce the vital position of the region currently. A balanced demography is also needed to maintain social facilities, social structures, economic activities in which inhabitants jointly contribute to society (Intergemeentelijk Samenwerkingorgaan Midden-Holland, 2013). In addition, the Regio Midden Holland and its municipalities are considered attractive to households and companies, due to its geographical position. Regio Midden Holland is surrounded by highways and is valued for its nature, because it is part of the *Groene Hart*. Sufficient housing provision contributes to the realisation of these objectives.

To shape housing provision, all municipalities within region Midden Holland adopted multiple development plans for housing during the decades. In 2012, the total number of projected dwellings in individual housing programs within Regio Midden Holland equalled around 23.000 dwellings. However, this number of dwellings did not correspond to the forecast of future housing demand. Municipalities within Midden Holland programmed an excess number of dwelling regarding future housing needs. According to the *provinciale woningbouwmonitor* for this region, around 13.700 dwellings are needed between 2010 and 2019 (Intergemeentelijk Samenwerkingorgaan Midden-Holland, 2013). The programming of such large numbers of dwellings is prone to competition among municipalities. The excess programming of housing increases the risk of overproduction that may lead to vacancies among others things. Decreasing housing demand or internal movements within municipalities are possible causes that contribute to situations of over production. Despite the excess number of dwellings in municipal housing programs, the balance of migration was almost negative in 2010 (Intergemeentelijk Samenwerkingorgaan Midden-Holland, 2013). Housing quality of newly built dwellings apparently did not meet the housing preferences of households looking for dwellings. Hence, region's vital position is under pressure.

Consequences of continuing housing production in periods of economic decline have become visible prior to intervening in the excess programming of housing by the province of Zuid Holland. Whilst the municipality of Gouda reduced its housing production during the economic downturn of 2008, other municipalities within the region did not (Gemeente Gouda, 2013). In situations of decreasing housing demand and a continuous production of dwellings, municipalities jointly caused an oversupply of dwellings regarding regional housing demand at that moment. The sale of dwellings will be difficult, since the regional housing demand decreased. The interviewees were questioned about the continuous housing production in the light of decreasing housing demand. The interviewees indicated that there was no instrument that prevents for free riding by single municipalities on the continuation of housing production against decreasing housing demand in the region. In addition, the interviewee noted that the number of dwellings recorded in housing programs should comply with the spatial structure and social facilities of municipalities. Given the excess number of dwellings projected in municipal housing programs, this seemed to be an impossible task. Municipal infrastructures and facilities have to adapt to the increasing number of households and traffic movements due to dwellings added to the housing stock.

Municipal cooperation within Midden Holland was institutionalized in the *Intergemeentelijke Samenwerking Midden Holland* (ISMH), which organizes its own management and organisation. The ISMH supports municipalities in Midden Holland on several (regional) policy domains like spatial planning, *Groene Hart*, housing, transport, health and education. Instead of the regions Utrecht U10 and Parkstad Limburg, the Regio Midden Holland had never been a *plusregio* supporting regional housing production by financial means of central government. Nevertheless, the Regio of Midden Holland has analogies with *plusregio's*, in the way cooperation has been performed in the past. Municipalities within Midden Holland has criticised the way of municipal cooperation along with the problems experienced on housing provision. A number of developments, like the decentralization of tasks and competences from central government and provinces towards municipalities, administrative economics of scale realised by the assimilation of municipalities and the emergence of partnerships in the surroundings of the region, have led to the need of new perspectives of cooperation within the region and thus in the ISHM. Interviewees mentioned that the contact point within the region was unclear for players from outside the region, relevant parties or companies. Interviewees also clarified that participating municipalities considered the representation of interests on municipal trans border issues by the ISHM as insufficient. The pace of decision-making by the ISHM was too slow and contained insufficient strength to handle upcoming future developments for municipalities (Intergemeentelijk Samenwerkingorgaan Midden-Holland, 2012). Municipalities of Regio Midden Holland experienced little influence on decisions taken by the ISMH. Municipalities like to have fewer limitations on municipal choices concerning social, economic and political developments to strengthen their position regarding upcoming developments. Municipalities want a transition from being part of stringent municipal cooperation towards municipal cooperation in a network setting.

Consequences of the economic downturn on housing provision have become visible since 2008. Despite developers decreasing housing production in municipalities, an excess number of dwellings were already granted in municipal housing programs. The number of dwellings in municipal housing programs equalled 22.267 dwellings, as was reported to the province in the *provinciale woningbouwmonitor* in 2012. Whilst the assessment of housing needs by the province of Zuid Holland, including production within Zuidvleugel, equals around 13.700 dwellings in 2010 - 2019 (Intergemeentelijk Samenwerkingorgaan Midden-Holland, 2013). Municipalities within Regio Midden Holland decided to reduce the number of dwellings in municipal housing programs to about 13.000 dwellings until 2019. The reduction of municipal housing programs provides more room for the development of socially and financially urgent housing projects

(Intergemeentelijk Samenwerkingorgaan Midden-Holland, 2013). In addition, municipalities committed themselves to a smaller housing program, as this meets the contemporary housing needs and housing market more. With this approach, competition on housing provision among municipalities is prevented as much as possible.

Although municipalities within Midden Holland reduced the number of dwellings in housing programs, the province of Zuid Holland interfered with the adoption of provincial housing policies. Simultaneously with trend of governmental decentralisation, the unlimited programming of housing and non-committal cooperation among municipalities on housing provision stressed the importance of provincial interference. From the interviews, it became clear that the province of Zuid Holland is looking for opportunities to close the gap that arose from the loss of central government interference on housing provision. Housing policies from the province aims to balance housing supply and demand, by establishing regional coordination on regional housing programs in quantitative and qualitative terms (Provincie Zuid Holland, 2014a, 2014b). During the interviews it was indicated that the underlying reason for provincial intervention is related to the excess number of dwellings in municipal housing programs. This allows for a continuous housing production. Therefore, the main provincial objective is to bring the number of dwellings in municipal housing programs in accordance with projected housing needs. In addition, the province of Zuid Holland requests a *regionale woonvisie* and *bestemmingsplannenlijst* from municipalities, which are drawn in a regional context. By this approach, the province obtains information on what municipalities' future perspectives on the regional provision of housing are. The province of Zuid Holland used the *Ladder voor duurzame verstedelijking* as main principle in the construction of this regional framework.

Together with the implementation of new housing policies by the province of Zuid Holland, municipal cooperation within Regio Midden Holland was subject to change. Political support for the *Intergemeentelijke Samenwerking Midden Holland* diminished over time, and municipalities of Regio Midden Holland decided to continue cooperation in a new partnership. Municipalities opted for a mode of cooperation that aims to strengthening regional cooperation. Instead of a system in which municipal administration has been delegated towards an inter-municipal organisation, cooperation is meant for the region and is thus in favour of municipalities. In this regional mode of cooperation, municipalities are looking for opportunities beyond their municipal boundaries and jointly take the advantages of opportunities (Intergemeentelijk Samenwerkingorgaan Midden-Holland, 2012). This was illustrated during one of the interviews: municipalities jointly reacted the administrative lock caused by the application of provincial policies on housing provision. The province strictly adheres the programming of housing in quantitative terms, impeding initiatives for transformations of vacant properties like offices (Regio Midden-Holland, 2016). Region Midden Holland together with property owners, investors and developers started lobbying towards the province and central government for more flexibility in housing policies. In addition to this lobbying function of Regio Midden Holland, decision-making returned towards individual municipalities in accordance with democratic principles. The management and staff of the ISMH ceased to exist mid 2015. Cooperation continued in the *Regio Midden Holland* and was called "*De Nieuwe Regio*" by municipalities. *De Nieuwe Regio* aims for regional collectivity, since it facilitates agreements between municipalities and therefore facilitates both a network organisation and the implementation of five policy programs. Spatial planning and housing is just one of these policy programs. On housing provision municipalities recorded regional aspirations in the *Regionale Agenda Wonen* in March 2013 (Intergemeentelijk Samenwerkingorgaan Midden-Holland, 2013).

Concerning the trend of decentralization, the interviewees indicated that provinces and municipalities question how they should deal with this trend, and what the effects are for their organisations. It was also noted that socio-economic developments stretched the range of duties of municipalities. Developments like the division of housing and care, housing of specific target groups like labour immigrants and licensees and strategic management of the housing stock has putted an extra strain on municipalities. Although these developments transcend municipal borders and are related to policies on housing provision, these tasks have been assigned from the central government and provinces to individual municipalities. Municipalities are dependant on other parties for approaching those socio-economic developments, including neighbouring municipalities of the region Midden Holland.

As mentioned earlier, an increasing number of households are moving towards the Province of Zuid Holland, which will be partly allocated in the region of Midden Holland. Although the settlement of new households and housing production will strengthen region's vital position, housing production may include also a downside regarding regions' attractiveness. Housing development in the countryside might clutter the open and highly valued landscape. For that reason, parties within the informal partnership of *Zuidelijke Randstad* deliberate on future directions on several policy themes, including urban development. Participants in the *Zuidelijke Randstad* are the Province of Zuid Holland, the five regions within the province and hundred thousand-plus municipalities. These parties deliberate and inform themselves on the way to strengthen the economic position of the region amongst other European regions (Zuidvleugel, 2016). The *Verstedelijkingsagenda* is discussed by elaboration of how and on what locations housing production should be realised in urban or rural areas. There is no political assignment for parties in the Zuidelijke Randstad. Hence documents, of the Zuidelijke Ransdtad cannot be considered as formal decisions.

5.2.3 Course of decision-making on regional housing provision

In this section, the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities regarding the establishment of regional housing provision are discussed. This discussion is separated into the deployment of strategies, institutional measures and substantive factors.

Strategic

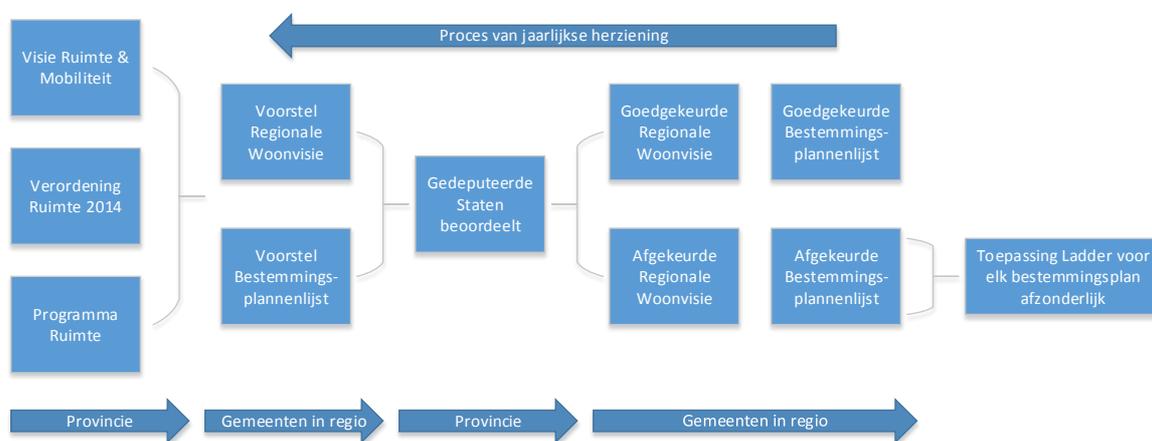
In March 2013, the former *Intergemeentelijke Samenwerking Midden Holland* adopted the *Regionale Agenda Wonen Midden-Holland 2013-2019*. This agenda can be considered as a common framework for municipal cooperation on the provision of housing in the region. This framework aims to enable municipalities within the region addressing opportunities and recognize undesirable developments, to subsequently take action for the common interests. For instance, the first step towards joint housing policies was the reduction in the number dwellings recorded in municipal housing. The *Regionale Agenda Wonen* provides the starting point for municipal cooperation that is elaborated further in the future, depending on demographic and economic developments. A joint monitoring program in which single municipalities provide information on the projected housing production is also included to this regional arrangement. By the *Regionale Agenda Wonen*, municipalities committed themselves to a level of housing production that does meet with the assessment of regional housing needs, including the housing production assigned from Zuidvleugel.

However, cooperation by means of administrative agreements in the *Regionale Agenda Wonen* was unsatisfactory for the province of Zuid Holland. The province of Zuid Holland adopted the *Visie Ruimte en Mobiliteit, Verordening Ruimte* and *Programma Ruimte* on 1 July 2014. This came into force one month later on 1 Augustus 2014. Within these documents, each municipality in each region of the province of Zuid Holland is requested to create a regional vision for housing provision,

and a regional list of projects in which development plans for housing are stated. Although the province of Zuid Holland used its hierarchical position by the application of the ordinance, the province created a strategic win-win situation. Not just for themselves, but also for municipalities within the Regio Midden Holland. The regional project list of housing developments includes the rationale of the *Ladder voor duurzame verstedelijking*. The *Ladder voor duurzame verstedelijking* stipulates a quantification of regional housing needs aimed to demonstrate that the proposed housing developments meet with regional housing needs. The *Ladder voor duurzame verstedelijking* is a compulsory part for the spatial substantiation in land use plans. By aggregating municipal housing programs and comparing these figures against the assessment of regional housing needs, each municipality fulfilled the *Ladder voor duurzame verstedelijking*. This is beneficial for municipalities, since the *Ladder voor duurzame verstedelijking* has to be applied once instead of individually for each development plan. For municipalities, this will result in less endeavour and lower costs in plan preparation, whilst the province of Zuid Holland obtains comprehensive regional information on housing provision. Development plans that are not included in the regional project list still have to prove the regional need for housing.

The provincial framework is designed to ‘force’ cooperation among municipalities. Application of the *Ladder voor duurzame verstedelijking* in provincial policies created benefits for municipalities and thus triggered cooperation. It is questionable how municipalities should share municipal development plans for housing when regional coordination is absent because of the *Ladder voor duurzame verstedelijking*. By all means, the province of Zuid Holland attempted to unify provincial and municipal goals and has stimulated discussion on regional coordination among municipalities. By stipulating regional frameworks, the province of Zuid Holland tries to connect municipalities and results in an administrative burden in case municipalities do not adhere provincial stipulations. This process is depicted in Figure 5.2.3.1.

Figure 5.2.3.1 Process of drafting regional housing vision according Province of Zuid Holland



The process of aggregating development plans in municipal housing programs towards a regional project list is carried out in the *bestuurlijk overleg Ruimte en Wonen*. In these administrative meetings, responsible alderman on spatial planning and housing of each municipality guide the elaboration and implementation of joint regional objectives (Regio Midden-Holland, 2015). One of these objectives is a regional housing program, or a project list as requested by the province of Zuid Holland. This project list should meet with the assessment of regional housing needs. The first time that this process has taken place has been in April 2014, and coincided with the adoption of the provincial framework. During the interviews, this process was outlined and discussed in detail. From the interviews, the following can be said about the course of this process. The

assessment of which development plans are included to the regional project list (*Regionale Projectenlijst Wonen*) has a bottom-up orientation. In the first place, municipalities are allowed to add development plan to this project list that provide in a need on the local level (*eigen woningbehoefte*). In the second place, remaining developments plans are evaluated, and added to the project list as an added value for Midden Holland. In this evaluation, the risk of competition among developments regarding target groups and origin of households is assessed. If this is not the case, the *bestuurlijke overleg Ruimte en Wonen* can decide to add these plans to the regional project list making development plans part of the regional programming of housing. Given the objections on centralized decision-making of the former ISMH, this approach has its advantages. Development plans of individual municipalities are not directly exposed to regional decision-making for two reasons. First, municipalities are free to decide which development plans are included to administrative meetings. Second, it is not necessary to be transparent about the development plans included in the municipal housing program. The way in which municipalities of Midden Holland approach regional housing provision allows for the protection of the core values of individual municipalities.

By means of the *Regional Agenda Wonen 2013-2019*, municipalities within Region Midden Holland agreed on the stipulation to get municipal housing programs in accordance of local needs (*eigen woning behoefte*). In accordance to the *Regional Agenda Wonen*, municipalities had to reduce municipal housing programs in order to comply with the changed local housing needs due to the economic downturn in 2008 (Gemeente Gouda, 2013). In reaction to the economic crisis and the excess number of dwellings municipal housing programs, municipalities decided to only execute development plans that have a social and financial urgency. Whilst the municipality of Gouda reduced its housing program, neighbouring municipalities did not. Municipalities within *Regio Midden Holland* became competitors of each other. The interviewees indicated that municipalities have interpreted the definition of social and financial urgent projects differently. Opportunism and risk of administrative harm were also mentioned during the interviews as possible explanation for why some municipalities maintained development plans in municipal housing programs. Apparently, there is no reward structure that could prevent these circumstances, or the *Regionale Agenda Wonen* does not have obligations towards municipal housing programs. As previously mentioned, there are no requirements for the development plans that should be included to the regional project list. The interviewee of the municipality of Gouda indicated that Gouda only includes development plans of which construction works will start soon. The inclusion of all development plans, regardless of status, might have an apparent certainty towards property developers and developers. It is hard to get rid of development plans that are included to the regional housing list, whilst there is no room for present-day development projects. This in turn may lead to insufficient housing provision, when new developments are blocked.

Institutional

By means of the *Regionale Agenda Wonen*, municipalities within *Regio Midden Holland* initially constructed a regional framework aiming to realise the goals stated in the *Regionale Agenda Wonen* in 2013. This *Regionale Agenda Wonen* has no legally binding status. Municipalities are thus not obliged to adopt regional policies in municipal decision-making. Non-binding agreements on housing provision between municipalities were considered inadequate by the province of Zuid Holland, indicated during the interviews. Regional agreements in the *Regional Agenda Wonen* were made on a voluntary basis, which might cause a non-committal attitude on the degree of delivering agreements by individual municipalities. In addition, municipal cooperation should be maintained in periods of prosperity and thriving of the housing market. By means of the stipulations from the *Visie Ruimte en Mobiliteit*, *Verordening Ruimte* and *Programma Ruimte* mid 2014, the province of Zuid Holland triggered interaction among municipalities within the regions. In reaction to those provincial policies, *Regio Midden Holland* therefore extended the *Regionale*

Agenda Wonen by a *Regionaal Afwegingskader Woningbouw* and *Regionale Projectenlijst Wonen*. The function of these instruments was discussed in detail during the interviews. The instruments actually have two functions. First, municipalities within Regio Midden Holland comply with provincial stipulations: providing a regional project list for housing that has to be ratified by the province. Second, the instruments established cooperation, in which municipalities constructively deliberate and share information of proposed developments for housing, under the condition that projected developments do not exceed regional housing needs. By means of the *regionale afwegingskader*, the risk of competition among development plans on new housing developments is evaluated.

From the perspective of Regio Midden Holland, the way the province of Zuid Holland interfered is considered bureaucratic and narrowly focussed on housing production in quantitative numbers. The interviewees indicated that due to the application of provincial policies, there is little room for flexibility regarding the exchange development plans among municipalities. This was illustrated by the following example: housing shortages in one municipality could be enhanced by the exchange of an excess number of projected dwellings elsewhere, under the condition that the regional housing program remains balanced. At this moment, housing provision among municipalities is given shape in a rigid process, whilst municipalities must be able to move about freely. This is in line with the new mode of cooperation in Regio Midden Holland. *Inter gemeentelijke Samenwerking Midden Holland* (ISMH) ceased to exist due to insufficient administrative capacities for individual municipalities at that moment. The idea in region Midden Holland is that municipalities do not act for their own benefits only, but act in favour of the region. Thus, they serve the benefits for all municipalities in Regio Midden Holland.

As mentioned earlier, the province of Zuid Holland requests a *Regionale Projectenlijst Wonen* from municipalities within a region, next to a *Regionale Woonvisie*. The municipalities within Midden Holland update this project list each year and send to the province of Zuid Holland for approval, according to provincial stipulations. The Regio Midden Holland carries out the process of regional programming of housing and project list. However, individual municipalities deliver development plans that are included to this list. Municipalities are free to decide which development plans will be provided for the regional programming of housing. According to the interviewees, there are no additional requirements about content, types and legal status of the development projects that have to be included to this list (*zachte/harde plancapaciteit*). The result is the inclusion of a variety of development plans in different stages of the development process. It might therefore be unsure to what extent the projected developments will actually be executed, and thus contribute to the provision of housing in the region. For instance, the municipality of Gouda has decided to only include projects when there is a real certainty that construction works starts shortly. Gouda believes that short-term programming offers more flexibility for new initiatives regarding socio- and economic developments and thus for the provision of housing (Gemeente Gouda, 2015). The feasibility and predictability concerning the programming of housing is limited regarding a society and economy that is constantly subject of change: housing programs can even change during the year. Development initiatives that can emerge or change during a year are excluded from the municipal housing program and regional project list. In case initiatives pose no objections and the initiatives will be realised in the short term, Gouda will include such initiatives to their housing program. Due to such municipal actions, there is a discrepancy between the regional project lists that are approved on a certain date by the province, and project lists of Regio Midden Holland. The *Regionale Projectenlijst Wonen* is static for the province of Zuid Holland, since it will be updated once a year, whilst municipalities alter this list during the year when new initiatives emerge. Such changes are visible for the province one year later.

The interviews revealed that development initiatives that may arise during the year will be reviewed based on this regional project list. This review aims to avoid competition among development plans within or among municipalities. Because municipalities have the exclusive right to adopt land use plans and grand building permission, new development initiatives will arise on the municipal level. Although initiatives are assessed on the basis of the regional project list, it was mentioned that the Regio Midden Holland does not have any role in this process. Municipalities within Midden Holland jointly designed and adopted the *Regionale Afwegingkader Wonen* for the evaluation of proposed developments concerning possible competition regarding neighbouring municipalities. In case of potential risk of competition on housing developments between two or more municipalities, the municipality of Gouda will consult with affected municipalities. During such dialogs, development plans of one or more municipalities could be altered. Target groups can be changed, in such a way that the risk of competition among municipalities is minimized for instance. This means that development initiatives can still be realised and thus contribute to the regional provision of housing. During the interviews, emphasis was given to the inclusion of housing quality in regional arrangements. The interviews indicated that *Regio Midden Holland* does not play a part in in the process of creating a balance on housing provision from a qualitative perspective. It is up to municipalities to commence the dialog on qualitative housing provision. However, the attitude of other municipalities across the region is unclear on this aspect. In this case study interaction among municipalities on housing provision is created by means of the *Regionale Projectenlijst Wonen*. Although the province requests this regional project list the list is also used to increase interaction among municipalities.

Substance

Municipalities within region Midden Holland use different instruments for the regional provision of housing. The province of Zuid Holland also uses their instruments to shape the course of decision-making among municipalities in the region of Midden Holland. In the *Regionale Agenda Wonen* municipalities of Midden Holland presented their common framework to shape municipal cooperation on housing provision. This regional agenda was created during the ISMH-epoch, which makes it unclear how this creation-process was shaped. The *Regionale Agenda Wonen* is the regional vision for housing as requested by provincial ordinance. The province of Zuid Holland provides no requirements on how to draw regional visions or about content of such regional housing vision. The province of Zuid Holland will thus obtain different regional visions from each region that have been established in a different way. In addition, the regional vision requested by the provinces cannot be considered as a housing vision according the *Woningwet*. Without such a vision, housing associations are not allowed to make any offer towards municipalities. In 2015, the municipality of Gouda adopted a municipal housing vision, in which qualitative housing aspects were rather emphasised then quantitative housing (Gemeente Gouda, 2015). It is unclear to what extent municipal qualitative housing aspects are incorporated in regional housing policies among municipalities in Midden Holland.

Upcoming developments in society are already identified in the *Regionale Agenda Wonen*, like the division of housing and health. However, the interviewees made clear that the implementation of these qualitative housing aspects is still subject to municipal decision-making, and to decision-making among municipalities. The province of Zuid Holland started shifting their housing policies in such a way that qualitative housing has become more importance. The province shifted from controlling housing production towards policies on housing stock development and thus on housing quality. However, on the regional level and among municipalities, there is little information available on the qualitative aspects of housing provision. At this moment, municipalities within Regio Midden Holland are looking for opportunities to incorporate housing quality in joint housing policies. At this moment, it is unclear how these joint housing policies will be shaped. Nevertheless, municipalities are transparent and open concerning proposal for

housing development and about land portfolios, especially during the yearly update of the *Regionale Projectenlijst Wonen*. Municipalities are also open and transparent about municipal housing programs and land portfolios. Such aspects are related to quantitative housing provision. However, when it comes to coordination among municipalities concerning the implementation of housing quality, municipalities are less transparent. *Zachte plancapaciteit* is often no part of the *Regionale Projectenlijst Wonen*, which is just subject of discussion. In turn, regional agreements on housing can affect municipal budgets due to municipal land portfolios.

5.2.4 Summary

Due to its geographical position, Regio Midden Holland is an attractive region for the settlement of households and companies. Prior to the economic downturn of 2008, municipalities within the region Midden Holland adopted multiple developments plans, resulting in an excess number of projected dwellings in municipal housing programs. The projected housing production exceeded the future regional housing demand by about 10.000 dwellings. The province of Zuid Holland interfered to get the number of projected dwellings in accordance with regional housing demand, like to all regions in the province. By means of their hierarchical powers, the province of Zuid Holland obliged municipalities to jointly draw a regional vision for housing and provide a regional project list of housing projects. By this regional approach, the province created cooperation among municipalities in Regio Midden Holland. Along with the adoption of provincial stipulations, municipal cooperation within Regio Midden Holland has shifted from a formal municipal-partnership for the execution of operational tasks (ISMH) towards a more voluntarily partnership (Regio Midden Holland). Municipal cooperation no longer deals with drafting joint policies, but with the alignment of municipal policies to strengthen the position of the region and thus for all municipalities. Concerning the provision of housing, municipalities in Regio Midden Holland jointly developed a common framework that is called the *Regionale Agenda Wonen*. Essence of this framework is that competition among municipalities should be prevented, and that municipal housing provision should not exceed municipal housing needs. Municipalities share municipal housing projects with a regional project list that has to be approved by the province annually.

5.3 Parkstad Limburg

5.3.1 Background and contextual information

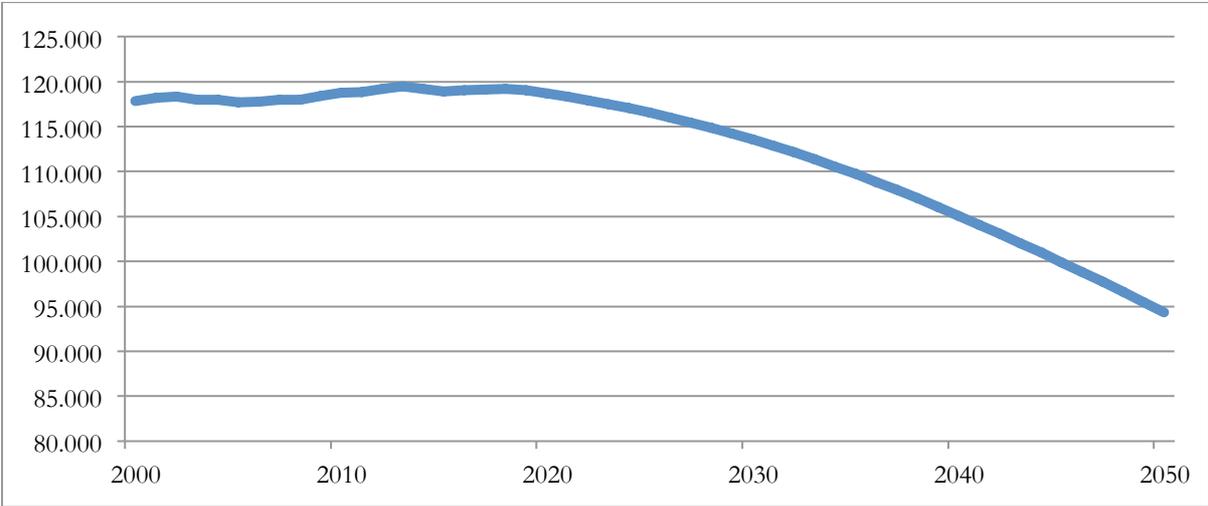
The southern part of Limburg is well known for its mining industry, which had a significant role for the Dutch economy. Due to the discovery of new energy sources, like the gas fields in Groningen, the mining industry was put under pressure. The demand on coal decreased significantly, and mining seemed to be no longer needed. Hence, the central government decided to close both private and public owned mines during the '60s and '70s of the previous century (Parkstad Limburg, 2016a). This decision of the central government negatively affected the southern part of Limburg. Prior to getting rid of the mining industry, the central government promised job replacements in the proximity of existing employment. This promise was not met. Thus, many employees moved across the country to get employment elsewhere (Nicis Institute, 2009). The Southern part of Limburg has still to deal with those events of 40 years ago. Since employees and their households started leaving the southern part of Limburg, cities, villages and neighbourhoods are prone for deprivation. Limburg is still dealing with the issue of demographic decline (Neimed, 2016).

5.3.2 Problems, solutions and participants

The problems, proposed solutions and participants involved concerning the problems and solutions at stake are reviewed in this section.

The development of households moving elsewhere from the southern part of Limburg still continues since closing the mines. According to demographic forecasts, the development of number of households will reach its maximum in 2018 (Neimed, 2016). The number of households within Limburg will decline from 2018, especially within the region of Parkstad Limburg. The expected number of households between 2000-2016 is depicted in Figure 5.3.2.1. It is expected that the middle and northern regions of Limburg will be subject to this development. Households leaving the southern part of Limburg will have two consequences. First, dwellings become unoccupied. There will be no increase in the number of alternative households to bolster vacancies. Second, there is an excess supply of dwellings granted in land use plans (*overcapaciteit in planvoorraad*). Land use plans adopted in the past allow for the construction of additional dwellings. Regarding future forecasts on household developments the construction of new dwellings seems no longer needed. Additional dwellings might result in an excess supply on the housing market, or even vacancies in the existing housing stock when households decide to move to new dwellings.

Figure 5.3.2.1 Expected development of number of households until 2015, adapted from (Neimed, 2016)



In the years 2006/2007, existing land use plans projected for the construction of about 12.000 dwellings in the region of Parkstad Limburg, including *harde en zachte plancapaciteit*. In the recent years, the effects of these developments have become visible. Several dwellings are unoccupied across the streets, and sometimes heirs do not accept legacies in fear of getting the burden of an unmarketable dwelling. The problem of unoccupied dwellings might become bigger in the future. Around 60% of the housing stock in the southern part of Limburg is owner occupied. Just this private group of home ownership is hard to grasp for governmental intervention in order to prevent for an increasing number of vacancies. Increasing vacancies might result in neighbourhood deprivation, resulting in downward spiral that is hard to break.

Prior to the economic downturn of 2008, property developers and investors issued a large number of development projects across the region. Due to demographic decline and economic crisis the construction of new dwellings seemed no longer needed (Parkstad Limburg, 2011). Nevertheless, developers started construction works of development plans that already have been granted by municipalities. As a result, the number of dwellings in the housing stock of municipalities across the region increased whilst additional dwellings are no longer needed concerning future perspectives. In addition, as the interviews indicated, the supply of newly built dwellings has a lack of distinctiveness to comply with future demands corresponding to demographic forecasts. Developers have a preference to build single-family dwellings purely from a financial perspective. Interventions to ease already granted development projects is however difficult. In such situation property developers and investors will be harmed in their (financial) interests.

The provision of housing was regional coordinated by the *plusregio* Parkstad Limburg until 2014. Simultaneously with the abolishment of the *plusregio* Parkstad Limburg, the administrative level that was legally allowed to take decisions concerning municipal-border aspects also disappeared. In that situation, Parkstad Limburg had an official organization and decision-making process that was carried out by the Parkstad-council (Parkstad Limburg, 2016b). Concerning the practises of *plusregio* Parkstad Limburg, the following experiences were mentioned during the interviews. Municipalities participating in Parkstad Limburg had little impact on decisions taken by the Parkstad-council, neither in the process of policy making. In their practices, Parkstad Limburg was narrowly focused on a reduction of the number of dwellings included in development plans to prevent for oversupply. Little attention was given to underlying aspects on developments plans granted by municipalities. The Parkstad council had the exclusive right to adopt a regional housing program. However, the impact of adjustments in a regional housing program goes beyond the provision of housing. The interviewees indicated that decisions of the Parkstad-council on the regional programming of housing affected agreements between municipalities and developers.

Policy interventions are desirable regarding the decreasing number of households, increasing the number of vacant dwellings and superfluous dwellings granted in land use plans. In 2005/2006 *plusregio* Parkstad Limburg started with a regional housing program. The Parkstad council decided to reduce the number of dwelling in existing development plans, as such large numbers of new dwellings are no longer needed regarding demographic forecasts. Adopted land use plans for housing allowed for the construction of 12.000 new dwellings while according to future forecasts only 2000 new dwellings were needed that moment (Parkstad Limburg, 2011). Unfortunately, this intervention did not counteract the situation in Parkstad Limburg. The total number of vacant dwellings increased in the southern part of Limburg (Parkstad Limburg, 2012). For that reason, the province of Limburg banned the municipal adoption of new development plans for housing by provincial ordinance in 2013. By this ordinance, the province prevented for unlimited construction of new dwellings in the southern part of Limburg. Although this ban on new

development plans initially had a temporally nature, the province extended this ban and included to the new provincial ordinance of 2014. In this ordinance, the adoption of development plans is combined with demolition of existing dwellings in order to prevent oversupply (Provincie Limburg, 2014).

Alongside these developments, Parkstad Limburg stopped as *plusregio* and abandoned its personal organisation including the Parkstad council. However, participating municipalities in Parkstad, Limburg decided to continue this regional partnership on a voluntary basis. In this new mode of municipal cooperation, policy-making and implementation are separated. Policy-making is the main concern of Parkstad Limburg, whilst decision-making is subjected to individual municipalities (Parkstad Limburg, 2014). In this situation, the responsibility of decision-making is subject to aldermen of participating municipalities on these subjects in which the municipal mayor and aldermen have the exclusive right of decision-making, instead of the municipal council. Aldermen of participating municipalities are represented in the *bestuurscommissie wonen* of Parkstad. The committee on housing is responsible for the continuation and establishment of a regional housing program and is allowed to adjust this housing program by adding or removing new development plans for housing on or from the program. By means of this regional housing program, the committee attempts to ensure for the development of the right dwelling on the right place.

As policies on housing provision strongly focus on the quantitative aspects in development plans, the qualitative aspects of existing dwellings remains unaddressed. Housing quality is of importance, as the existing housing supply is one-sided and does not comply with future demands on housing quality (Parkstad Limburg, 2013a, 2013b). Transformation of existing and vacant properties seems a more suitable solution, since the construction of new dwellings is no longer needed. In approaching these solutions, emphasis is given to an integrated perspective on neighbourhood restructuring instead of solely tackling the consequences of municipal congregation. In that sense, spatial planning concerns restructuring projects and urban redevelopment in inner cities.

The on-going process of unlimited construction of new dwellings, and an increasing number of households moving from the southern part of Limburg to elsewhere, can have a negative impact on society. Just a few vacant dwellings can be the stepping-stone for large-scale neighbourhood deprivation. This is an undesirable situation from a societal perspective, and therefore cross-municipal interventions might be needed. In the process of establishing regional arrangements on housing provision, several parties can be identified. Governmental parties are directly affected by regional arrangements. New policies did not involve all affected parties in the decision-making. These affected parties are governmental parties, and others. As there is no legal administrative level between municipalities and provinces, Parkstad Limburg has to be considered an intermediate municipal partnership.

According to the province of Limburg, a central vision and central management concerning the future developments in Limburg is needed (Provincie Limburg, 2014). Future forecasts have shown that current issues in the southern part of Limburg will lay out over the whole province in the upcoming years. During the interviews, it was mentioned that the southern part of Limburg is just the first area subjected the issues of decline as described in the section. The municipality of Heerlen was encountered with the consequences of on-going housing production by municipalities. Heerlen and neighbouring municipalities therefore requested central coordination concerning housing provision. The Parkstad council was responsible for regional coordination on housing provision. Because Parkstad Limburg became a voluntary partnership, the municipality of Heerlen was able to increase its influence on policy-making and implementation on regional

subjects. The committee of housing of Parkstad Limburg did not pay attention to underlying aspects that had led to a narrowed manner of administration until then. From this moment, the construction of additional dwellings was no longer needed. Policies should therefore be focused on urban restructuring and development projects. Property developers and investors will be affected since their projects laid down in existing development plans will be turned down to reduce the number of dwellings in development plans. Besides, in urban redevelopment, existing dwellings of other properties will be transformed which are privately owned and therefore hard to include in interventions, which is around 60% in Limburg.

5.3.3 Course of decision-making on regional housing provision

In this section, the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities regarding the establishment of regional housing provision is discussed. This discussion is separated in the deployment of strategies, institutional measures and substantive factors.

Strategic

In 2012, the province of Limburg started with the development of a new *Provinciaal Omgevingsplan Limburg* (POL). Municipalities and other stakeholders across the provinces were involved during the process of creating a new vision for the province of Limburg (Provincie Limburg, 2014). By this procedure, all parties involved were triggered to think, and starting a discussion regarding the current and future perspective for the whole province of Limburg. The interviewees indicated that during this process, parties observed that traditional approaches used in periods of prosperity are no longer effective with respect to the development of demographic decline. Bolstering economic growth by attracting new households to municipalities is no longer applicable for the southern part of Limburg. Hence, alternative approaches are required. Whereas the POL was in preparation, the province stressed the importance of acting together by banning the adoption of new developments for housing by provincial ordinance in 2013 (Provincie Limburg, 2013). Without prior intentions, the provinces of Limburg continued banning new housing developments as a way to connect municipalities to each other. By its hierarchical powers, the province of Limburg bans any new land use plan for housing when municipalities have not drawn a regional vision for housing. This regional vision includes the southern part of Limburg. Hence, municipalities are interdependent for any new development. Indirectly, the province created an interdependent relationship among municipalities within a region from its statutory power.

The POL 2014 resulted in a provincial vision in which varying themes and related programs are defined to link parties and programs together. The POL is elaborated in regional visions and results in agreements between municipalities on different distinctive themes without further provincial intervention (Provincie Limburg, 2014). More concretely, this means that for each theme like housing, economy or energy regional structure vision will be drawn. The province commences this process, however these structure visions are developed together with municipalities and relevant stakeholders of each distinctive region. The interviews on the preparation of these regional structure visions indicated a minor role for the province. Although the province commences the adoption of a structure vision, the adoption will take place by municipal councils and not by the provincial council. For housing provision, this process of establishing the *Regionale Structuurvisie Wonen Zuid Limburg* started alongside the adoption of the POL 2014 and ban of any housing development. During this process, municipalities got the knowledge and experience from the former *plusregio* Parkstad at their disposal. Hence, municipal cooperation was familiar ground for Parkstad Limburg. Municipal cooperation regarding regional housing provision, demographic decline and oversupply applied by Parkstad Limburg was exemplary for other sub-regions within Southern Limburg. This process was successful, as municipalities and sub-regions in southern Limburg adopted the practices as used by Parkstad

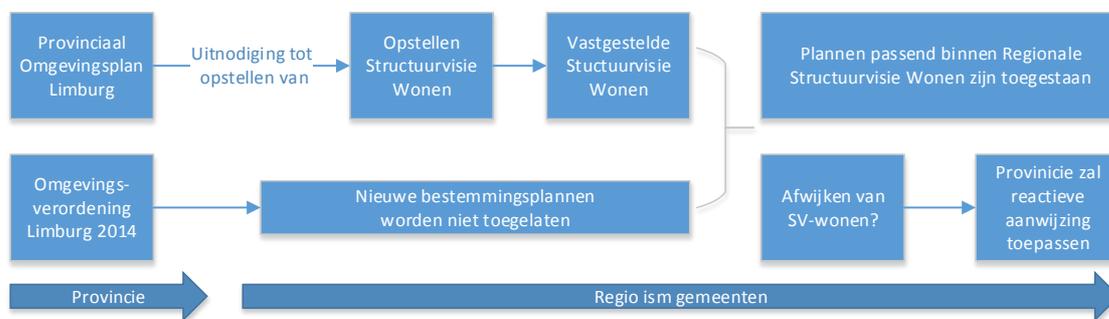
Limburg as *plusregio* until 2014. The *Regionale Structuurvisie Wonen Zuid Limburg* was adopted by each individual municipality in December 2016 (Provincie Limburg, 2016). Although Parkstad Limburg is just a sub-region within the southern part of Limburg, and the interviewees indicated that the practises of Parkstad Limburg were exemplary to apply to all sub-regions in the southern part of Limburg.

After the status of *plusregio* has been abolished, Parkstad Limburg evolved its practices as a network organisation connecting private and public parties within and outside the region of Parkstad Limburg. Although lobbying is not one of the core responsibilities, Parkstad Limburg again stresses the importance of lobbying in its *Jaarplan 2017* (Parkstad Limburg, 2017a). For instance, the exemption of property tax (*verhuurdersheffing*) for social housing associations purchasing dwellings in areas of demographic decline is one of the results of networking (Parkstad Limburg, 2017b). This example shows that Parkstad Limburg is able to put interest of developers and investors on the national agenda, which creates trust between developers, investors and Parkstad Limburg. This was the case for social housing associations. The interviewees added that Parkstad Limburg uses its ability to get in touch with property developers and investors. Like municipalities, property developers and investors have trans-border interests. Municipalities are not always able to obviate regional perspective towards investors, whilst Parkstad Limburg is.

Institutional

As previously mentioned, the province of Limburg uses its hierarchical power derived from the *spatial planning act* to bring municipalities together. The spatial planning act prescribes provinces to adopt a *structure vision* and *provinciale verordening*. A structure vision is only binding for those who drafted the structure vision, whilst an ordinance has an effect to municipalities and its citizens. Since the adoption of the POL in 2014, existing of a vision-document and binding ordinance, municipalities are obliged to draw a *Regionale Structuurvisie Wonen Zuid Limburg*. This regional structure vision is only binding for the administrative body that has established and adopted the structure vision. By means of this joint regional structure vision, municipalities created a common perspective on their respective region regarding future housing development. In case a municipality does not want jointly develop and enact this regional structure vision for housing, the province will ban the adoption of development plan for housing of that municipality. By means of a *reactieve aanwijzing*, the province abolishes any development plan of a municipality that has not adopted a regional vision on housing. The relationship between provincial ordinance and regional visions on housing is depicted in Figure 5.3.3.1. Municipalities in southern Limburg enacted this structure vision for the first time in December 2016.

Figure 5.3.3.1 Process of establishing regional structure visions for housing



Although municipalities are not allowed to adopt new development plan for housing when a regional structure vision for housing is absent, the province applies a more stringent regulation

for the adoption of new development plans. Besides preventing for an oversupply of dwellings, the province of Limburg actively tries to reduce the housing stock by the demolition of existing dwellings. By the adoption of provincial ordinance 2014, any new development for housing has to be compensated by the demolition of existing dwellings or cancellation of existing development plans. This way, the province tries to reduce the total number of dwellings in development plans (*planvoorraad*). This demolition regulation became more complex for the situation in Limburg in relation to new developments, as was observed during the interviews. Developers do not necessarily own the properties that are to be demolished, resulting in an interdependency between developers and the owner-occupied sector.

Alongside the transition from *plusregio* to municipal partnership, Parkstad Limburg transferred powers of the board of mayor and aldermen from the municipality towards committees within Parkstad Limburg. In the former situation of *plusregio* Parkstad Limburg, decision-making on housing provision was performed by an autonomous Parkstad-council. Policy preparation and policy adoption was subject of the organisation of *plusregio* Parkstad Limburg. In the current situation of Parkstad Limburg as municipal-partnership, decision-making is performed by a representative of the municipal board of mayor and aldermen. The interviewees considered that in this approach, municipal aldermen are more closely involved on the regional level. In addition, administrative responsibilities are placed where it should be, on the level of municipalities. In the situation of municipal-cooperation, decisions on regional housing are jointly taken by participating municipalities in Parkstad Limburg. This is only applicable to topics in which the consent of the municipal council is not obliged. This new way of practice meets the objections against the former situation of Parkstad Limburg in which individual had minimum impact on decisions taken by Parkstad Limburg. Currently, Parkstad Limburg still carries the process of policy preparation due to its experience on housing in a regional perspective. Nevertheless, municipalities are consulted more frequently in the new situation to create support on the municipal level. Depending on the topics at stake, municipalities jointly draft new policies or evaluate existing policies. These consultations are not formally institutionalised.

Substance

Together with upcoming policies on demographic decline in 2005/2006, *plusregio* Parkstad Limburg has started with the implementation of regional housing program. At that time, participating municipalities in Parkstad Limburg made all development plans (*harde en zachte plannen*) public towards the Parkstad council. After a first identification of the total number of dwellings in land use plans, the Parkstad-council ratified a reduction from 12.000 to 3.500 dwellings. Currently, Parkstad Limburg still uses this regional housing program. Any adjustments, removing or adding developments, on this housing program are of the exclusive right of the housing committee of Parkstad Limburg. Although emphasis is given to the number of dwellings to be built, the qualitative aspects like no housing quality will be part of the program in the near future.

Parkstad Limburg and its municipalities currently work on a regional vision for housing. In this vision, it will be made clear to what extent municipalities of Parkstad Limburg differ on housing provision in terms of housing quality, target groups and types of dwellings. This regional vision for housing can be considered as a first step towards the implementation of qualitative aspects in the regional programming of housing. Local and municipal knowledge is an essential precondition for regional housing program refinement. This might close the gap of including local circumstances that are often insufficiently recognized by the housing committee of Parkstad Limburg.

5.3.4 Summary

The region of Parkstad Limburg deals with the issue of demographic decline. After the mines were closed during the '60s and '70s of the previous century, households moved elsewhere. This process still continues, although to a lesser extent. Until the second half of the '90s, municipalities within this region adopted multiple land use plans allowing for the construction of new dwellings. However, regarding the development of the decreasing number of households, there was a real risk for oversupply in the regional housing stock. Parkstad Limburg started reducing the number of dwellings in 2006/2007, by eliminating about 12.000 dwellings granted in land use plans. From this moment, regional arrangements on housing provision were realised. By the abolishment of *plusregio* Parkstad Limburg, the regional programming of housing moved from the Parkstad-council towards *bestuurscommissie wonen* of the municipal partnership Parkstad Limburg. Although regional arrangements on the provision of housing already existed, the province of Limburg interfered by means of their hierarchical powers. According the province, there was insufficient awareness of the need for regional approaches regarding the pace of demographic declines in the region. The province of Limburg temporally banned the adoption of new housing developments, and started drafting the *Provinciaal Omgevingsplan Limburg 2014* (POL) simultaneously. The process of drafting the POL created awareness among municipalities, developers and other relevant stakeholders regarding the issue of demographic decline. By means of provincial policies on housing provision, municipalities are implicitly enforced to municipal cooperation that allows for new housing developments.

6. Case study: interpretation & implications for design

The cases selected for this study are compared in this chapter. Whilst previous chapter were rather descriptive, this chapter aims to compare the cases by means of the analytical framework. This chapter is structured in accordance with the analytical framework. The first section deals with the question in what circumstances provinces and municipalities establish regional arrangements on housing provision. The second section elaborates on the manner in which provinces and municipalities have shaped regional arrangements. The third section will conclude by presenting principles that can be used in subsequent decision-making processes among provinces and municipalities on establishing regional arrangements on housing provision.

6.1 How do regional arrangements emergence?

In this section, the cases are compared by means of distinctive streams: problems, proposed solutions and participants involved on housing provision. After distinctive streams are discussed separately, the last subsection indicates when streams coincide and when they provide the opportunity for the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision.

Problem stream

Regions included in this study all deal with different problems regarding housing provision. In this section, problems are related to: (1) circumstances on the housing market, and (2) the spatial and socio-economic structure of the region to handle problems on housing provision.

Concerning the housing market, the region of U10 experiences increasing housing shortages because of a growing number of households. Municipalities within Regio Midden Holland jointly allow for the construction of a superfluous number of dwellings in municipal housing programs regarding future perspectives, whilst the Parkstad Limburg region deals with an increasing number of vacant dwellings due to demographic decline. In the latter case, both the existing housing stock of the region and the number of projected dwellings in housing programs has to be reduced. On spatial policies, municipalities within region U10 are tied to provincial spatial restrictions on urban extension. For this region, the construction of additional dwelling to handle upcoming housing needs is complicated because of spatial restrictions: there is little to no space for urban extension. Hence, emphasis on new housing development within the region U10 is related to the realisation of infill developments. This is challenging for municipalities in this region. There is no blueprint for the course of action to be taken on infill developments, as no infill development is identical. Due to different situations of private ownership and different business cases for investors, initiatives for infill developments have to be approached differently.

Municipalities within Regio Midden Holland allowed for the possibility to construct such a large number of dwellings that it is unclear whether municipalities reflected on the spatial impact of new housing developments. This is the opposite of the absence of building sites within U10. Even the economic situation of 2008, resulting in decreasing housing demands, did not prevent for a joint reduction of projected dwellings in municipal housing programs. Within Regio Midden Holland, the municipality of Gouda was the only municipality that reduced the number of dwellings regarding future housing demands. This is remarkable, as other (neighbouring) municipalities within Regio Midden Holland continued their projected production in municipal housing programs, irrespective of future housing demand and upcoming demographic developments. These municipalities did not reduce the housing production at that moment. The case for the region Parkstad Limburg is odd in respect of the region U10 and Regio Midden Holland concerning additional housing developments. The possibility to construct additional dwellings alongside an increasing number of vacant dwellings in the housing stock will decrease the number of vacancies in the region. The spatial aspect for Parkstad Limburg is embedded in

the risk of neighbourhood deprivation as a result of increasing vacancies in the housing stock. Municipalities in the region of Parkstad Limburg, however, continued the programming of new housing developments. The programming of housing is for all regions in this study used as a means to realize municipal growth and achieving socio-economic objectives. In view of recent housing market and demographic developments, including decreasing housing demand and demographic decline, the continuous production of additional dwellings does not appear to be realistic.

Municipalities continued the programming of housing in each of the cases in this study. Economic and demographic changes regarding projected housing developments principally seem no ground for a revision of municipal housing programs. Economic consequences for individual municipalities involved with the programming of housing and relationship between municipalities and developers apparently eclipse the assessment of actual housing needs. Apart from quantitative housing needs, an integrated assessment of housing preferences is rarely included in developments initiatives by developers. Traditionally, developers provide dwellings for single households that are constructed on building sites near existing cities and villages. In case of one-sided housing supply, municipalities compete with each other for the regional housing demand. The absence of regional arrangements on housing provision might be prone to opportunistic behaviour of individual municipalities. This was shown in the case of Regio Midden Holland, in which the municipality of Gouda decided to decrease their housing production whilst neighbouring municipalities did not.

Solution stream

Municipalities within all three regions included to this study have established cooperation on housing provision. However, the mode of and extent to which cooperation across these municipal partnerships takes places varies. The regions of U10 and Parkstad Limburg are former *plusregio's*, in which municipal cooperation on housing provision was enforced by the central government in exchange of financial support. Municipal cooperation in Regio Midden Holland was initially constituted in the *Intergemeentelijke Samenwerking Midden Holland*. Although municipal cooperation for U10 and Parkstad Limburg stopped, due to the abolishment of the *plusregio's* by the central government, these municipalities decided to continue municipal cooperation. For U10 and Parkstad Limburg, new partnerships emerged because of the abolishment of the former *plusregio's*. Municipal cooperation in Regio Midden Holland also stopped for another reason. Municipalities participating in the *Intergemeentelijke Samenwerking Midden Holland* experienced less autonomy and flexibility to realise municipal objectives over time. Municipal cooperation in *Intergemeentelijke Samenwerking Midden Holland* was more related to the joint implementation of municipal responsibilities than to shared municipal objectives. Nevertheless, municipalities in Regio Midden Holland (like U10 and Parkstad Limburg) also decided to continue municipal cooperation in a new partnership.

Municipal cooperation within U10 continued on a voluntary basis. Municipalities are free to decide if cooperation continues, and how cooperation is shaped among them. Unlike the former Bestuur Regio Utrecht, cooperation in U10 concerns debating about the desired future of the region. The implementation of regional policies, decisions and agreements is subjected to the municipal councils of participating municipalities. Each policy domain or policy problem requires a different approach by a different group of municipalities. Due to these differences, municipalities within U10 believe that a regional administrative body by delegated power from municipalities may not exist. The extent of cooperation is dependent on the issues perceived by municipalities. For instance, no joint agreements are made on the quantity and quality of dwellings to be built, whilst municipalities adopted a joint *buisvestingsverordening* for the allocation of households to (social rental) dwellings in the existing housing stock. The question whether or

not municipal cooperation is useful, is dependent on the problem experienced by municipalities. Whilst cooperation in U10 was established on voluntarily basis, municipal cooperation on housing provision in Regio Midden Holland was underlined by interference of the province of Zuid Holland. Although municipalities within Regio Midden Holland already constructed a cooperative structure aiming to align and reach consensus on future perspectives of the region, the extent of elaboration of this structure was not considered enough by the province of Zuid Holland. According to the province of Zuid Holland, existing agreements were too superficial and non-committal among municipalities. The province of Zuid Holland provided a regional framework by which municipalities are legally enforced to match the number of dwellings in municipal housing programs to regional housing needs. This regional framework includes the following aspects. Each year, municipalities within Regio Midden Holland jointly provide a regional vision for housing and a list of projected housing development towards the province. Subsequently, the province assesses whether the proposed housing developments comply with future forecasts. The province of Limburg interfered with the case of Parkstad Limburg, while municipalities in this region decided to continue cooperation along with the abolishment of *plusregio*. By means of a provincial ordinance, the province of Limburg temporarily banned the adoption of development plans for housing. This ban expires when municipalities in the southern part of Limburg adopt a joint structure vision for housing. This provincial measure indirectly enforces municipal cooperation.

Considering the regions included in this study, municipalities do not always recognize the value of an extensive relationship with municipalities on housing provision. Existing municipal partnerships are primarily focussed on drawing future perspectives for the region, rather than reaching detailed agreements on housing provision in terms of housing quantity and quality. Apparently, municipalities do not recognize the added value of cooperation on housing provision, since possible positive effects of cooperation might not be directly noticeable for municipalities. Besides, municipalities express a negative attitude towards regional arrangements, as it might affect the autonomy in decision-making by municipal councils. However, although municipalities consider the direct consequences of regional arrangements as negative, the positive effects are indirectly noticeable by means of the housing market. Regional arrangements should therefore address the dichotomy between direct negative consequences for municipal councils and indirect positive consequences on the housing market. By taking the cases of this study into account, municipalities were not able to address this municipal transcending aspect. Interference of the province of Zuid Holland was needed to prove the difference between the number of dwellings recorded in municipal housing programs against housing stock forecasts, whilst the province of Limburg confronted municipalities with the problem of demographic decline by banning the adoption of any new housing development by municipalities.

Participant stream

Whilst the observed streams of problems and solutions vary among cases, the participant streams show similarities among the selected cases in this study. The central government assigned locations for new (large) housing developments up until the beginning of twenty-first century. From that moment, decision-making and governing housing provision became subject to the administrative levels of provinces and municipalities. By the elimination of assigned construction sites for large housing developments and object subsidies for the construction of social dwellings, municipalities became increasingly dependent of (private) investors or developers for the provision of housing. Because private initiatives are less easy to guide, municipalities made attempts to strengthen their position regarding the achievement of municipal objectives on housing policies. For instance, the realisation of infill developments in Nieuwegein for the case of U10 requires a cooperative attitude from private property owners or social housing associations owing a relatively large share of the inner-city housing stock. In addition to infill developments,

municipalities are looking for ways to govern private proposals for housing developments on privately owned building sites. Proposals of private parties are not always consistent with municipal housing policies, because financial motives of private parties often go beyond municipal interests on housing provision. However, the cases showed that regional entities can play a role in bridging the gap between private and municipal interests.

The case of Parkstad Limburg showed the potential value of municipal cooperation by a regional entity on the approach of private parties. Parkstad Limburg is, like the cases of U10 and Regio Midden Holland, able to stress the regional importance towards private parties that might be affected by the provision of housing in one way or another. It can be hard for municipalities to approach a private property owner on requesting cooperation towards infill development, and transforming their properties into dwellings to comply with actual housing demand. The realisation of municipal interests on housing provision often prevail in the dialogs between municipalities and private parties. The possible added value for private parties on cooperation however, which will be indirectly noticeable by the housing market, remains under the surface. The relationship between municipalities and private parties is prone to turn in a deadlock when the interests of either municipalities or private parties are not addressed. Regional entities like U10, Midden Holland and Parkstad Limburg are more independent than municipalities in approaching private parties like property owners, investors or developers. Regional entities do not have legal instruments enforcing cooperation, resulting in an informal ambience between regional entity and private party. Regional entities serve to underpin the regional and added value of municipal interventions on housing provision towards private parties. Regional interests go beyond municipal housing policies, and therefore might create a more cooperative attitude from private parties. In turn, regional interest might strengthen the marketability or lettability of private properties that are in the interest of private parties. In that sense, regional entities do not resolve tensions, should not focus on solving tensions between municipalities and private parties. Instead, it is about making tensions visible and tangible and then looking for interaction among them.

Municipalities are increasingly dependent of private parties for the effective provision of housing. Whilst municipalities have been able to guide housing developments to a higher degree by means of land positions or regulations granted in land use plans in the past, nowadays municipalities have to agree with new housing initiatives that comply with municipal regulations in existing land use plans. Municipalities have to grant building permission when new development proposals meet the criteria in land use plans. This can be problematic, since qualitative housing provision has become prominent in the development of new housing policies. However, qualitative housing aspects are not, or to a less extent, incorporated in land use plans, resulting in low level guidance for municipalities on qualitative housing developments. However, including more regulations in land use plans on qualitative housing could be counter-productive. Additional regulations on qualitative housing will probably reduce the opportunities and flexibility of new private initiatives. Interviewees in all case quoted the increasing importance of regional arrangements on qualitative housing. However, matching housing demand and housing supply from a qualitative perspective is currently subject of detailed elaboration. By supplying the right dwellings, municipalities are able to attract specific target groups in line with socio-economic policies. This in turn will strengthen the vital and competitive position of municipalities, and thus the region. By the absence of direct instruments meant to guide qualitative housing provision, it is questionable to what extent municipalities will be able to steer new housing developments on this aspect. At this moment, none of the regions in this study pursued policies on qualitative housing. They are looking for ways to shape this qualitative aspect however, because housing quality is important for the population composition of individual municipality. Nevertheless, municipalities jointly addressed this issue on the regional level, and started sharing experiences

and knowledge on this aspect among each other. Because this process is still in an initial phase it is unclear how this will be shaped.

Confluence of problems, solutions and participants

Whilst in previous subsections distinctive streams of problems, proposed solutions and involved participants were discussed separately, this section will explain when these streams coincide and thereby, according to Kingdon's stream model in the analytical framework of chapter 3, a policy window for the implementation of regional arrangements will occur. For the sake of clarity an overview of the observations in the distinctive streams is presented in Table 6.1.1.

Table 6.1.1 Overview of observed problem, solution and participant streams in selected case

Utrecht U10	Problem stream	The region experiences increasing housing shortages due to the growing number of households. Because of stringent spatial policies of the provinces there is little room for additional housing developments by means of urban extension. Infill developments are complicated due to situations of private ownership.
	Solution stream	With the abolishment of plusregio Bestuur Regio Utrecht, municipalities decided to continue municipal cooperation voluntarily. Cooperation within U10 goes beyond the provision of housing, in which other policy domains are also included. Decisions on the extent of cooperation on regional policies are the prerogative of municipal councils.
	Participant stream	Municipalities in the region are dependent on the realisation of infill developments in existing city structures. Because these structures relate to private properties, municipalities rely on private initiatives.
Regio Midden Holland	Problem stream	Municipalities allowed for the construction of a superfluous number of dwellings granted in municipal housing programs. In view of the economic downturn of 2008 and decreasing housing demand, municipalities of Midden Holland continued the housing production.
	Solution stream	Although municipal cooperation is established in this region, the importance of regional arrangements was underlined by provincial interference. By provincial ordinance, municipalities are imposed to collectively comply with regional frameworks set up by the province. Projected housing production must fit within the provincial bandwidth of housing production.
	Participant stream	Individual municipalities are insufficient in expressing disappointments towards higher level of government. Midden Holland functions as springboard to jointly take position against policies and regulations of higher government.
Parkstad Limburg	Problem stream	Demographic decline is a real issue in this region. A decreasing number of households might result in an increasing number of vacant dwellings in the housing stock. Municipalities in the region of Parkstad Limburg however continued the programming of new housing developments.
	Solution stream	Although municipalities continued regional cooperation after the abolishment of plusregio Parkstad Limburg, the province of Limburg interfered. By means of provincial ordinance, the province temporarily banned the adoption of new housing developments. This ban expires when municipalities jointly adopt a regional structure vision for housing.
	Participant stream	Housing policies implemented by municipalities might have an affect on private properties. The regional entity is able to independently propagate the indirect value of interventions.

Regional arrangements on housing provision have been established for a couple of reasons. By the abolishment of former *plusregio*'s, a void between the administrative levels of provinces and municipalities has emerged. Although municipalities continued cooperation in new forms of partnerships, detailed regional arrangements on housing provision remained absent. These new forms of partnerships are principally meant to align with municipal policies containing municipal transcending issues for which cooperation among municipalities is desired. Partnerships that emerged contain a certain degree of independence and informality in which municipal autonomy on decisions is respected. The case of U10 specifically showed that decision-making on the adoption of regional policies or agreements is subjected to municipal councils. The involvement of municipal councils reflects the democratic nature of decision-making, as regional arrangements will affect the municipal level. By means of housing provision, municipalities were free to plan new developments for housing, by which socio-economic municipal objectives could be achieved without municipal cooperation. New housing developments were realised in close consultation with developers or investors, and eventually ratified in agreements among them. Until 2015, municipal cooperation on housing provision was institutionalised by means of *plusregio*'s. This follows from the U10 and Parkstad Limburg cases. Regio Midden Holland has never been a *plusregio*. With the abolishment of the *plusregio*'s, municipal cooperation on housing provision also ceased to exist.

New housing developments came under pressure due to the economic downturn of 2008. Decreasing housing demand decreased the marketability of dwellings, whilst development agreements among municipalities and developers remained in place. A possible solution could be for municipalities within a region to jointly reduce housing production, since they all compete in the same regional housing market. However, the case of Regio Midden Holland showed that, although the municipality of Gouda has reduced the housing production or projected dwellings in municipal housing programs, other municipalities did not. Opportunistic behaviour of individual municipalities towards possible development agreements obviously prevails over joint action. Provincial interference was needed for bringing the problem stream and solution stream together. The provinces made the consequences on the absence of joint action visible, by providing a regional framework for municipalities encouraging the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. The province of Limburg used a collaborative design process to establish a new provincial structure vision in 2014. Along with this process, the province temporarily banned new housing developments. This approach resulted in the mobilisation of regions, municipalities and other relevant parties to get all signs point in the right direction. In that sense, the provinces created the urgency to take action on establishing regional arrangements on housing provision. The province of Zuid Holland opted for a different approach. Municipalities have to comply with the regional framework, including bandwidth of housing production imposed by the province. By making issues in the problem stream visible, the province pushed the problem streams and solution stream towards each other. Autonomous developments in the participant stream stressed the importance of regional arrangements on housing provision. Because of the decentralisation of competences and increased dependency on private parties, for instance the provision of health or infill developments, municipalities are entrusted to execute an increasing number of tasks. Municipalities are no longer able to act individually and therefore seek connection with other municipalities by sharing experiences, knowledge and propagating collectively in reaction to those developments. Although such modes and extent of cooperation among municipalities depends on and varies with the issues at stake, municipal cooperation is nestled in such connections. The introduction of an increasing number of municipal transcending issues affiliated to housing provision thus strengthened the need for regional arrangements. Problem, solution and participant streams have thus coincided.

On the basis of the description of the streams, it can be concluded that a policy window for the establishment of regional arrangement on housing provision arose. First, the excess number of projected regarding future housing needs is considered problematic. Second, regional arrangements on housing provision are considered a possible solution, regardless of the actual implementation of arrangements. Third, governmental decentralisation lead to an additional burden on municipalities, because of policies for which cooperation among municipalities is needed. The confluence of the problem, solution and participant stream resulted in the implementation of regional arrangements on housing provision among municipalities. Apparently, municipalities do not voluntarily establish regional arrangements on housing provision. Provincial interference was therefore necessary, but was limited to encouraging the initiative for municipal cooperation. The way in which municipal cooperation on housing provision has been shaped among and implemented within provinces and municipalities is discussed in the next section.

6.2 The role of provinces and municipalities on regional housing provision

In this section, the cases are compared by means of the explanatory variables, as were explained in the analytical framework in chapter 4. The aim of this chapter is to deduce lessons that contributed, positively or negatively, to the course of decision-making among provinces and municipalities on the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. An overview of the strategic, institutional and substantive factors applied in different cases is presented in Table 6.2.1. The application of these explanatory variables in distinctive regions is elaborated in the upcoming subsections. It is important to note that these variables are not deployed separately, but the course of decision-making is shaped by deploying them simultaneously. The following subsections nevertheless consider strategic, institutional and substantive variables separately.

Table 6.2.1 Overview of strategic, institutional and substantive factors applied in selected case

Utrecht U10	Strategic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The province of Utrecht uses both a facilitating and go-alone strategy. Vacant offices were considered problematic by the province, resulting in the adoption of a <i>provinciaal inpasingsplan</i> to reduce the vacancy rate of offices. This go-alone strategy also enabled municipalities to realise urban infill development, by transforming vacant offices into dwellings. This strategy can be considered as facilitating. - Municipalities apply a cooperative strategy: by sharing experiences and knowledge, municipalities obtain a stronger position relative to other regions.
	Institutional factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The province used their hierarchical instrument to facilitate the transformation of vacant offices, but does not intervene with processes among municipalities, except for proposed construction outside extension spatial structures. - Cooperation among municipalities is fully determined by voluntary partnerships. No regional arrangements exist that actively shape coordination housing provision. Neither do municipalities share development plans amongst each other.
	Substantive factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The province of Utrecht monitors the pace of realised and projected housing production. Municipalities however do not value this monitoring, because each municipality provides different information concerning the legal status of housing development projects.
Regio Midden Holland	Strategic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The province of Zuid Holland initially used a go-alone strategy, by imposing regional frameworks concerning housing provision towards municipalities. This framework however also contains a facilitating strategy. Municipalities have to cooperate and share proposed housing development amongst each other, in order to get the cumulative municipal housing production in accordance with the

		<p>bandwidth of housing production defined in provincial framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipalities jointly established the <i>Regionale Agenda Wonen</i> that serves as a common framework for future housing developments across the region. This framework principally entails a facilitating strategy because the mutual benefits of cooperation for municipalities are given priority. However, municipalities apply a go-alone strategy when it comes to sharing housing projects that are not accounted for within the <i>Regionale Agenda Wonen</i>.
	Institutional factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The province of Zuid Holland used their hierarchical powers to impose a regional framework for housing. This framework aims to encourage municipal cooperation and the establishment of joint agreements among municipalities. - Municipal interaction proceeds in case there is no collaboration, and joint policy-making of provincial consent of each individual development plan for housing is required. - Municipalities made joint agreements on housing provision in the <i>Regionale Agenda Wonen</i>. These agreements are voluntary, because agreements are non-binding on municipal level. Consent of the municipal council is required. - Municipalities share housing projects by means of the yearly updated regional project list, as requested by the province. However, municipalities have their own interpretation of the application of this list. Municipalities are free to decide which projects will be included to this project list. Municipalities jointly assess new housing development, by means of this project list. Municipalities thus exchange proposed housing developments beyond the regular procedure concerning the preparation of the project list.
	Substantive factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The <i>Regionale Agenda Wonen</i> as a common frame of reference concerning future the perspective of housing provision across the region. The frame has been translated to municipal practices on housing provision. Municipalities approach each other on proposed housing developments besides the regular procedures established by the regional partnership. - The yearly update of the regional project list, as requested by the province, also functions as monitoring system. This regional project list might however be inadequate as each municipality is free to decide which development projects is included in this list.
Parkstad Limburg	Strategic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The province of Limburg applied a go-alone strategy by temporally banning new housing developments within the region. This provincial approach did not respect municipal interests, because the further developments of municipalities were constrained. However, during the preparation of the <i>Provinciaal Omgevingsplan Limburg 2014</i>, the province took a facilitating role. During this process, municipalities and relevant stakeholders jointly became aware of the trend and consequences of demographic decline. This trend however will sprawl across other regions in the province, and also to other policies domains like retail and offices. - Within the region, municipalities already applied a facilitating strategy. Municipal cooperation has embedded in the culture of decision making during the <i>plusregio</i>-epoch. Municipalities recognize the added value of municipal cooperation and the role of Parkstad Limburg in bringing parties together in possible cases of conflicts.

	Institutional factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The province of Limburg used their hierarchical powers in two different ways: (1) to enforce the establishment of regional structure vision for housing. When a municipality does not adopt this structure vision, the province bans any housing developments of that municipality by means of <i>reactieve aanwijzing</i>. (2) By provincial ordinance, it is imposed that the development and construction of new dwellings is accompanied by the demolition of an equivalent number of existing dwelling or elimination of dwellings granted in existing land use plans. - Municipalities reached a procedural agreement, because the adoption of new development is subject to the housing committee of the regional entity Parkstad Limburg. In this housing committee, a delegate represents each municipality within the region.
	Substantive factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development plans for housing from all individual municipalities within the region are shown to the housing committee of Parkstad Limburg in order to get consent for the development. This has resulted in an overview and centralized monitoring system of realised and projected housing developments. - Currently, municipalities elaborate on a regional housing vision for the region Parkstad Limburg together. This housing vision aims to present a common frame on housing provision from a qualitative perspective.

Strategic

Both provinces and municipalities may deploy strategies in the process of establishing regional arrangements on housing provision. In this section, strategies deployed by those parties are discussed to grasp the strategic factors that have influenced the course of decision of making among provinces and municipalities.

The regions selected in this study all perform differently regarding the deployment of strategic factors. The case of region U10 is based on voluntary municipal cooperation, whilst municipal cooperation on housing provision was to a certain extent forced in the cases of Regio Midden Holland and Parkstad Limburg. In view of the trends of demographic decline and decreasing number of households existing, land use plans projected for an excess supply of dwellings across the region of Parkstad Limburg. The same situation is applicable for Regio Midden. Municipalities in this region projected an excess number of dwellings in municipal housing programs regarding future housings needs. The first aim of the provinces of Zuid Holland and Limburg was to get the excess number of dwellings granted in land use plans in accordance with future housing needs. The second aim was to encourage the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision among municipalities in order to prevent such of over-programming in the future. However, provinces can only impose regulations towards municipalities, since this administrative level does not exist. This means that provinces are not be able to directly impose regional arrangements for housing provision to encourage cooperation. Regional arrangements can only be achieved through individual municipalities.

The provinces of Zuid Holland and Limburg used their provincial ordinances to indirectly enforce cooperation among municipalities. Although provincial ordinances are considered as a go-alone or top-down strategy, the strategic aim of these provincial ordinances was to facilitate cooperation among municipalities. Because partnerships on municipal cooperation for housing provision already existed, from the period of *plusregio* Parkstad Limburg and the *Intergemeentelijke Samenwerking Midden Holland*, regional partnerships did not have to be established anymore. The way provinces deployed their strategies has resulted in an increased level of cooperation among

municipalities on housing provision. The provincial ordinances include a reverse-reward structure for those municipalities that do not take part in cooperative structures amongst other municipalities within the region. The province of Limburg achieved this by banning the adoption any land use plans for that municipality. Municipalities in Regio Midden Holland need to have provincial consent for new developments in case a municipality is no part of the regional agreements by municipalities within the region. Essence of the regional agreements in Regio Midden Holland is that projected regional housing production falls within the regional framework, including a bandwidth for housing production provided by the province. The effect of these interventions was twofold. First, provinces created a reverse-reward structure regional housing provision for which municipal cooperation is the only answer for municipalities. Second, provinces created incentives in which the progress of the process of establishing regional arrangements on housing provision was secured. The latter is discussed in more detail in the upcoming subsection.

Non-commitment towards regional arrangements will have negative consequences for individual municipalities. In case of non-commitment, provinces deploy their regulatory powers towards municipalities. Municipalities are free to decide how to shape municipal cooperation. All cases included in this study showed that municipal cooperation on housing provision is used as a springboard for municipal cooperation in other policy areas within or outside the region. For instance in the case of U10, different *bestuursstafels* collaborated for joint opportunities to reduce housing shortages in the social rental sector. For that reason, social housing associations across the region are involved in the regional processes. In the regional structures included in this research the autonomy of municipal decision-making is respected. Due to this autonomy, in which the core values of municipalities are protected, municipalities committed themselves to the processes of establishing regional arrangements, rather than municipal cooperation that will end up in joint agreements. Municipalities are even free to not participate on municipal cooperation on certain policy issue as was shown in the U10-region. By this approach, municipal discretion of decision is respected as well. Respecting municipal autonomy in regional arrangements does not mean that regional arrangements will be effectively implemented. Since the cooperative structures in this study go beyond the provision of housing solely, municipal commitment to regional arrangements contains also advantages for other policy domains. Incorporating and combining multiple policy domains in structures of municipal cooperation created the incentive for continuous corporation, instead of deciding to withdraw once arrangements have established. There is always something to gain for municipalities. Sharing knowledge and experiences on different policy domains among municipalities is just an example of possible gain. A regional organisation, like Parkstad Limburg, can support municipalities on the implementation of regional arrangements. Such a regional entity has a kind of neutrality regarding the information provided as input for decision-making among municipalities. Uniformity in the definitions applied in the programming of housing or monitoring of housing production will contribute to that.

Institutional

This subsection deals with the institutional variables deployed by provinces and municipalities.

The regions included in this research all approached the establishment, implementation and execution of regional arrangements differently. Except for the case of U10, the provinces within the cases of Regio Midden Holland and Parkstad Limburg have used their hierarchical powers to actively establish municipal cooperation on housing provision among municipalities within the region. This is already explained in previous section on the deployment of strategies by provinces and municipalities. Municipalities in the region of U10 do not deploy instruments to actively shape coordination on housing provision among municipalities, neither individually nor jointly.

Municipal cooperation within U10 concerns the alignment of municipal policies meant to strengthen the vital position and competitive position of the region U10. To this end, representatives of municipal boards deliberate around policy-specific *bestuurstafels* on subjects provided by the municipalities themselves. *Bestuurstafels* cannot take any formal regional decisions. Decision-making regional policies is restricted to municipal councils. Apparently, the continuous housing need and housing production in this region does not create an interdependent relation among municipalities for which coordination of housing provision among municipalities is required. The absence of regional arrangements on housing provision does not seem to be wise in respect of the other cases. The cases of Regio Midden Holland and Parkstad Limburg have shown that when regional housing demand decreases municipalities become direct competitors regarding the provision of housing. For this reason, the provinces of Zuid Holland and Limburg intervened to reduce the number of dwellings in land use plans. Moreover to the case of U10, the spatial restrictions of the province of Utrecht and limited available space of housing developments has not resulted in such pressure on the regional housing market for which regional housing provision might be a solution. At this moment municipalities within U10 are still able to absorb housing demand by new housing developments, whereby urgency for municipal cooperation is absent. Municipalities within U10, especially Nieuwegein regarding urban infill developments, are dependent on private parties for development initiatives on both extension areas and urban infill developments. Developers are however less committed to infill developments since the investments costs for such projects are much higher than traditional housing construction in the meadow. It is questionable whether provincial, regional or municipal policies might break through such nested market circumstances.

In respect of voluntary municipal cooperation within U10, the provinces of Zuid Holland and Limburg enforced cooperation within Regio Midden Holland and Parkstad Limburg respectively. Both provinces have imposed regulations by provincial ordinance towards municipalities within provincial borders. Although both provincial approaches have different aspects on municipal housing provision, they have the same effect. A violation of provincial stipulations by a municipality, will inherently lead to negative consequences for that municipality, resulting in an administrative burden for municipalities in the case of Midden Holland, and no allowances for new housing developments for municipalities in the case of Parkstad Limburg. Such consequences are of considerable importance, making municipal cooperation on housing provision inescapable. Provinces thus use their hierarchical powers to indirectly enforce cooperation among municipalities. Although cooperation have been institutionalised by provinces, even by requesting regional visions and lists including housing projects, municipalities within the regions already shaped voluntary municipal cooperation on the regional level simultaneously with provincial interventions. Municipal cooperation takes place according to provincial stipulations and not by provincial stipulations. In the latter approach, cooperation is considered a procedural action on provincial request, whilst in the first approach cooperation also takes place beyond procedural moments. For instance, the municipality of Gouda in the case of Regio Midden Holland, approaches neighbouring municipalities when housing developments on the regional project list might include competitive elements towards proposed housing developments of neighbouring municipalities. On the other hand, in the case of Parkstad Limburg changes in the regional housing program are at the discretion of the housing committee of Parkstad Limburg, consisting of responsible aldermen on housing of participating municipalities. In the approach of Parkstad Limburg, any changes in the regional housing, program including proposals for new housing developments, are subject to joint decision-making in respect of bilateral municipal decision-making in Regio Midden Holland. In the latter case, municipalities created a dependent relation as both housing developments served the same housing demand in which possible solutions can shared be vis-à-vis. This is not the case with Parkstad Limburg, in which decision-making takes place by municipal representatives who are

not able to oversee the impact of regional changes on the local level. The approach of the municipality of Gouda is the most appropriate solution in pursuit of municipal interests regarding one of the objections on municipal cooperation within a regional organisation deteriorating municipal autonomy in regional decision-making.

Municipal autonomy and involving municipal councils in decision-making processes on housing provision is an important consideration regarding the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. The cases showed that municipalities want to move freely among each other in the provision of housing. In comparison to the former regional partnerships included in this study, regional arrangements are no longer about governing a regional organisation. Regional arrangements are about further development of the region, and about what kind of effort is required from individual municipalities. Additional hierarchical regulations from provinces dictating the coordination processes among municipalities could obstacle the freedom of policy making by individual municipalities. Strict regional arrangements on housing provision among municipalities may have opposite effects as the objective of regional housing provision is lost from sight, by matching demand and supply.

Substance

Substantive factors will contribute to the course of decision-making processes alongside strategic and institutional factors explained in previous subsections. In this section, substantive factors that might be deployed by provinces and municipalities on establishing regional arrangements are discussed.

Keeping track on projected and realised housing production against future housing needs is essential for an effective provision of housing. By means of the programming of housing, the pace of housing production can be evaluated. The regions included in this study perform the programming of housing or monitoring of housing production differently. Within the U10 region, the province of Utrecht has taken over the monitoring of housing production regarding planned housing production from former *plusregio* Bestuur Regio Utrecht. Individual municipalities fuel this monitoring of housing production by providing information on projected housing production, as indicated in municipal housing programs. However, municipalities are free to decide which development plans on the municipal housing program will be included to this provincial monitoring. In most cases, only development plans that are already made public (*harde plancapaictiel*) will be included. The absence of requirements on inclusion of municipal development plans results in distorted insights on projected developments among municipalities, and thus on the regional level. Due to these variations, municipalities within U10 do not value this monitoring, resulting in inadequate substantiated regional arrangements on housing provision.

In contrast to the case of region U10, the regions of Midden Holland and Parkstad Limburg take it one step further concerning the exchange of development plans among municipalities. In accordance with the provincial ordinance of the province of Zuid Holland municipalities within Regio Midden Holland yearly draw a regional project list including projected housing developments. This project list has to be approved by the province of Zuid Holland as was explained earlier. Part of this project list is a regional assessment framework aiming to evaluate potential competition among development plans of municipalities within this region. This assessment framework is only applicable for development plans that will exceed the number of dwellings needed for that single municipality (*eigen behoefte*), and might therefore be prone to competition. Although municipalities in Regio Midden Holland jointly established this assessment framework, the execution of the framework takes place by individual municipalities,

as was the case for the municipality of Gouda. The municipality applies this joint assessment framework thus also outside the cooperative structure of Regio Midden Holland.

The monitoring of housing production in the U10 case and establishing the regional project list in Regio Midden Holland have similarities. Also in Regio Midden Holland, municipalities are free to decide which municipal development plans are included to this regional project list. Due to such differences among municipalities and implicit regional arrangements on housing provision, a vacuum may emerge in which municipal autonomy is respected and coordination among municipalities is less required. In Parkstad Limburg, the adoption or adjustments in the regional programming of housing is not the exclusive right to municipalities, but belongs to the competences of the housing committee of Parkstad Limburg in which their alderman represents municipalities. Regional policies on housing provision in this region are strongly focussed on reducing the number of projected dwellings in housing programs, partly due to the trend of demographic decline. A decision eliminating development plans of the regional housing program is therefore exclusive to the housing committee of Parkstad Limburg. The downside of this approach is that municipal interest regarding agreements underlying development plans between developer and municipalities are rarely included to decision-making by the housing committee, in contrast to Regio Midden Holland. This might have negative consequences for individual municipalities when possible agreements with the developer do not follow through. Furthermore, housing provision by Parkstad Limburg is more about reducing the number of projected dwellings, rather than housing provision from qualitative aspects in which housing supply should match upcoming housing preferences of households. The cases showed that regional housing provision is focused on preventing competition rather than a quantitative perspective. However, development plans can compete on housing quality. For instance, this is the case when developments plans focus on the same target group. Although approaches are made and policies are in preparation, housing quality is still neglected in regional arrangements on housing provision.

All cases included in this study share the observation that a degree of uniformity in types of development plans included in regional housing programs or monitoring of housing production is absent. The result is an inadequate evaluation of projected and realised housing production within a region. The programming of housing and monitoring of housing production gain insight into a potential excess- or under projecting of dwellings to be constructed. At this moment, municipalities apparently attach little value to those regional housing programs or monitors. This is partly due to the fact that each municipality applies a different meaning to which types of developments should be included in the regional programming of housing. On the other side, regional housing programs are established at a certain moment in time, resulting in a static housing program. Whilst the programming of housing contains a dynamic element for municipalities, since new initiatives or adjustments in existing development plan may occur every day. Such changes will not be processed to regional housing programs immediately, and will therefore not be visible for other municipalities within the region. In that sense, improvements can still be made on the regional programming of housing.

6.3 Principles for designing regional arrangements on housing provision

In previous sections, the cases were analysed based on the analytical framework presented in chapter 4. In accordance with the research objective of this study, this section presents principles that can be used in subsequent decision-making processes among provinces and municipalities on designing and establishing regional arrangements on housing provision. For the construction of these principles, the explanatory variables mentioned in the analytical framework are reused. With these variables, it was determined which elements had a decisive or disruptive role in the regional programming of housing.

The following meaning was attached to the explanatory variables regarding upcoming decision-making on regional arrangements, see Table 4.4.1. From a strategic perspective, mutual dependencies are acknowledged by the deployment of a cooperative strategy. Process management techniques can increase interaction. Interaction, voluntary or imposed, can be increased by the application of procedural and informal institutions. Substantive factors like joint monitoring or visioning will contribute to the execution of regional arrangements.

The following principles are defined:

Regional arrangements should have a purpose

Cooperation among municipalities emerged for a reason, as was shown in the case study. Municipalities across the regions included in this study all deal with different problems for which cooperation among municipalities is desired. The degree of municipal cooperation and provincial interventions however varies among the different cases. In the case of U10 especially, regional arrangements on housing provision was absent due to continuous housing shortages and housing production. This situation does not create acknowledgeable mutual dependencies among them. For the deployment of cooperative strategies and regional arrangements, dependencies among provinces and municipalities need to be present. Regional arrangements will thus only exist if there are dependencies among provinces and municipalities. Mutual dependencies mean that there is a reason for interaction and cooperation. It is this interaction that is the essence of regional arrangements. Regional arrangements must therefore serve a purpose.

Serving regional interests

The case studies have shown that municipalities oppose to the way of decision-making performed in former *plusregio*'s. Municipalities experienced little influence on regional processes, the municipal councils especially. Regional arrangements on the provision of housing should therefore not infringe upon municipal decision-making, but should be in accordance with the regional interest. The direct negative consequences of regional arrangements overshadow indirect positive effects of municipal cooperation. Regional arrangements should therefore emphasise the added value for individual municipalities. The absence of financial support from the central government means that municipalities and developers have to resolve the provision of housing together. Municipalities and developers should therefore not invoke differences in procedures, but represent mutual added value by informal interactions. This issue can be resolved by a regional entity in which interests of neither municipalities nor developers prevail. Therefore, regional arrangements are about organising the region by informal institutions, rather than governing a regional entity by procedural arrangements.

Uniformity in the exchange of land use plans

The case studies revealed that municipalities attach different meanings to the exchange of development plans in both regional housing programs and monitoring systems. At this moment, none of the cases had a uniform or independent regional inventory on existing land use plans. The total number of dwellings granted in land use plans is thus unclear on the regional level. Considering the decision-making process from substantive factors, uniformity in the exchange of land use plans will contribute to the thorough execution of regional arrangements among municipalities. Uniformity in the exchange of land use plans among municipalities will contribute to the further elaboration of regional arrangement for the following reason. As shown in the cases, there is tension between housing construction in the meadow and urban infill developments. Housing developments in the meadow are more attractive than urban infill developments for developers from a financial perspective. The lack of an adequate inventory on the existing possibilities of urban infill developments in particular, it is likely that new housing developments in the meadow are proposed.

7. Conclusions & reflection

This last chapter concludes this study by answering the research questions, and by providing a reflection. This chapter is structured as follows. The first section presents the answers to the sub- and main research question(s). The second section reflects on this study, by discussing the limitations of the case study as main research method. The third section concludes this study, by presenting recommendations for further research.

7.1 Conclusions

First, the sub research questions are answered. Second, the main research question is answered, based on the sub question. The sub questions and main research question are answered as follows:

What role do municipalities and provinces have in the decision making process of housing development?

This study showed that the role of the provinces and municipalities has become prominent in the provision of housing since the beginning of the 21st century. The provision of housing was centrally coordinated by the central government, by assigning locations for housing development and granting subsidies. Along with the transition towards market principles, the legislative system has been altered. Municipalities obtained a key position in the provision of housing by adopting land use plans, whilst provinces became responsible for the supervision of the use of spatial structures. Legal instruments, that municipalities and provinces use to guide the provision of housing, are rooted in the Spatial Planning Act. With this system, provinces are able to impose additional conditions towards municipalities to proactively steer the local provision of housing by provincial ordinance. On the other hand, provinces are able to reactively reject adopted land use plans from municipalities. In this key position, municipalities are responsible for the provision of housing on a local level. Due to the application of market principles, municipalities became dependent on private initiatives for the provision of housing. The provision of housing transcends municipal borders, for which cooperation among municipalities is required. With the abolishment of the *plusregio's*, municipal cooperation on housing provision ceased to exist. Municipalities rely solely on themselves for the implementation of regional arrangements on housing provision. Provinces are only able to legally interfere by provincial ordinance towards municipalities. Provinces are not able to interfere with the way regional agreements are executed among municipalities. The deployment of regional arrangements is therefore dependent on both legal instruments, and voluntarily agreements among municipalities.

What role can the region play to deal with municipal-transcending issues concerning the provision of housing?

Since the provision of housing transcends municipal borders, the region can play a role in bringing together regional housing demand and cumulative municipal housing supply. Such approaches might affect municipal decision-making on local housing provision. For that reason, the region should address the dichotomy between direct negative consequences for both municipalities and private parties, and their indirect positive consequences for the housing market. Regions thus serve joint interest. Regions are primarily concerned with the coordination of municipal policies. Aligning policies should be in favour of regional interests instead of governing a regional organisation. In that sense, regions are distinctive to municipalities. As such, regions are another partner in the dialog between municipalities, property owners, and investors. Whilst municipalities act to municipal interests, regions act to the regional interests. Although both municipal and private interests are made visible and tangible, regions act beyond these interests. Regions are therefore able to address the indirect consequences of the decision-making, that are made on the provision of housing which otherwise would not be addressed. In addition, regions are used for multiple purposes affiliated with the provision of housing within and outside the region. The trend of decentralisation of governmental tasks resulted in additional burden to

municipalities. In case of upcoming developments, regions serve as a platform for sharing experience and knowledge among municipalities to tackle the future challenges for municipalities.

Which elements have a decisive or disruptive role in the development and execution of a regional housing program?

By means of a case study, different elements that positively or negatively contribute to the establishment and execution of the regional programming of housing are revealed. The following five elements are identified. First, urgency and dependencies are needed for the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. The consequences of a mismatch between regional housing demand and cumulative municipal housing supply needs to be made visible and needs to be expressed explicitly to create awareness and cooperation among municipalities. Second, an opportunistic attitude of individual municipalities regarding already granted development agreements with developers prevail over joint action on the provision of housing. Regional arrangements, including adjustments in the regional programming of housing, prevent for competition among municipalities, and may have consequences for already granted developments involving risk of damage for municipalities towards property developers. Third, municipalities that do not commit to regional programming of housing undermine the objective of regional coordination, i.e. matching supply and demand. A higher level of government is able to use their hierarchical powers to create a reverse-reward structure for municipalities that have established regional arrangements on housing provision, like banning the adoption of new housing developments. Fourth, municipalities must be able to move freely among neighbouring municipalities in the region, instead of getting in consultation with the region. The high pace of moderations in municipal housing programs is hard to capture in the regional programming of housing for which the consent of joint municipalities should be required. Municipalities should therefore discuss development initiatives on the basis of regional housing programs, and not during the procedures of establishing a regional housing program. Fifth, no uniformity in the exchange of development plans recorded in the municipal programming of housing is disruptive for an appropriate regional housing program to coordinate housing provision. Municipalities have different perceptions on which developments plans, referring to its legal status, should be shared among other municipalities. Inconsistency in the regional programming of housing does not reflect actual projected housing provision.

Based on these insights, the main research questions is answered as followed:

How can the decision-making process on housing provision among municipalities and provinces be improved by regional arrangements?

This study has shown that both provinces and municipalities have already started the establishment of regional arrangements on housing provision. This study found that the included regions have formulated and implemented regional arrangements to benefit the region rather than municipalities. Regional arrangements thus concern the organisation of the region instead of governing a regional-organisation for municipal cooperation. Municipalities want to move freely among other municipalities within the region, without being restricted by joint agreements on housing provision. This approach creates a vacuum in which municipal autonomy is respected, and coordination among municipalities is required less. This research showed that provinces are willing to apply their statutory power towards municipalities, by means of ordinances to counteract such non-committal relationships among municipalities. By this approach, provinces create an interdependent relationship among municipalities, in which the establishment of regional arrangements is encouraged. Provincial intervention may work for cases where the pace and extent of establishing regional arrangements lags behind to the pace of regional housing demand development in which municipalities are affected. This study showed that municipalities jointly design regional arrangements on housing provision. However, provinces lack the power to prescribe process requirements on the execution of regional arrangements. Such interventions

would intervene with the autonomy of decision-making by municipalities. Municipalities are thus interdependent for the execution of regional arrangements. Compliance to regional arrangements is therefore subjected to participating municipalities in regional partnerships. Provinces in turn can act reactively towards municipalities, who eventually violate joint regional arrangements.

7.2 Reflection

Research is always limited by the application of research methods, available time and scope. This section captures a reflection on the applied research methods and how this may have affected the research results. This research revealed the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities, by means of a case study with dossier examination and interviews. These research methods will not be discussed separately, since they are strongly related.

The application of case study as research methods involved several limitations. Yin (2014) describes several limitations to the application of case studies. The main concern on the application of case studies is related to the fact that a case study can never be considered complete. Besides limitations on available time and selected level of research demarcation, case studies do not allow capturing all aspects in the analysis. In this reflection, four limitations are identified on the application of case studies, dossier examination and interviews.

The first limitation is related to the generalizability of the research results. In this research, different regions were included that all have different socio-economic and demographic characteristics. In addition, all included regions established different regional arrangements in which both provinces and municipalities acted differently. Due to these differences, it can be concluded that each region, province or municipality is facing different problems and will thus use different policy agendas. Concerning generalizability, it is the question to what extent the case study findings can be applied to regions elsewhere in the country. This study was rather explorative, due to the actuality on the field of regional housing provision. Thus, generalizability of the research results has never been the aim of this study.

The second limitation is related to the availability and accessibility of information. For this study, policy documents, legal frameworks and interviews were used. This study covered a relative short timeframe, from the abolishment of *plusregio's* in 2015 until now. Within these two years, both provinces and municipalities commenced on the emergence and adoption of regional arrangements on housing provision. This study was not able to grasp the different policy alternatives suggested by provinces and municipalities. Due to this relatively short timeframe, regional arrangements on housing provision are not fully specified, or are still part of the pipeline. Therefore, this study did not reveal the multiple policy alternatives that might exist. This study did not even reveal why a certain regional approach is chosen, while another failed.

The third limitation is related to the chosen scope for this research. Due to the actuality of this topic, the case studies have been applied in an explorative way. Therefore, decisive or disruptive elements in the decision-making process on regional arrangements were grasped. Semi-structured interviews were used to reveal points of attention in the process of establishing regional arrangements. The application of semi-structured interviews allowed a degree of freedom to the interviewee in emphasising points of attention (Bryman, 2012). In addition, the interviews were prepared by means of dossier examination in which policy documents and legal framework of were explored. In that way, the interviews revealed the informal relationship between province and municipality to a lesser extent. The decision-making process that was discussed during the interviews was always retraceable to policy documents and the application of legal frameworks.

The fourth limitation is also related to the chosen scope of this study. Following from the case studies, regional structures pursue more objectives than just regional housing provision. Besides that, regional partnerships contain multiple policy domains. The partnerships are also used for lobbying towards higher level of government. Collective action of municipalities offers influence and increases effectiveness. However, this study concerned the relationship between provinces and municipalities. The observation of the purposes of partnerships then seems less obvious. As this observation was made in all cases, and reflected on the importance of this finding regarding the establishment of regional arrangements in the future, this should not be disregarded.

7.3 Recommendations for further research

This study provided insight in the decision-making process among provinces and municipalities on housing provision. Furthermore, this study provided recommendations that can be applied in upcoming processes on establishing regional arrangements among provinces and municipalities.

Due to the actuality of this topic, this study was conducted in an explorative manner. The selected cases varied widely regarding the objectives and circumstances on regional housing markets. The study approach could be fine-tuned by selecting regions with relatively similar circumstances on the regional housing market. This approach allows for a more in-depth cross-case analysis because regions have a shared point of departure that led to the establishment of regional arrangements. This study revealed that regional arrangements also emergence in non-demographic decline regions. A follow-up study could address the emergence of regional arrangements in such regions. Regional housing is less obvious in such regions where there is demographic decline.

The focus of this study was on the relationship between province and municipalities. The relationship among municipalities within a region was beyond the scope of this study. However, municipalities are dependent on each other for the implementation of regional arrangements, since the province does not play any role in the processes among municipalities. A follow-up study could address the relationships between municipalities concerning the establishment and execution of regional arrangements on housing provision. Such a study could reveal the process of how municipalities jointly act together towards the establishment and execution of regional arrangements on housing provision.

This study revealed two significant aspects for the regional provision of housing. First, private parties, property developers and investors are increasingly important for the implementation of housing policies on the local level. These parties are not included to this research. This study showed that regions address interests beyond municipal objectives. A follow-up study could grasp their relevance and contribution in regional processes. Second, coordination also takes place among regions, next to the coordination of housing among municipalities. A follow-up study could be conducted on how provinces, municipalities and sub-regions govern the allocation of housing provision among regions.

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Appendix A List of interviewees

The people interviewed for this research are listed in the following table. For the sake of completeness the organisation and position of the interviewees are included.

Case: Region U10			
Name	Organisation	Position	Date
Pim van den Berg	Province of Utrecht	Deputy of Spatial Development, Economy and Tourism, Housing and Urban Development and Energy Transition	24 October 2016
Micha Bekker	Utrecht U10	Secretary of the boards for Housing and Space	11 October 2016
Martijn Broersma Keetie van Rooijen	Municipality of Nieuwegein	Policy advisor spatial planning Account holder spatial planning	2 December 2016
Case: Region Midden Holland			
Name	Organisation	Position	Date
Annemarie Hatzman	Province of Zuid Holland	Senior strategic advisor of Housing and Urbanization	12 October 2016
Hennie Bouwens	Region Midden-Holland	Secretary and policy advisor for the program of Economy and Housing	14 November 2016
Brenda de Geus	Municipality of Gouda	Senior policy advisor for Housing	24 November 2016
Case: Region Parkstad Limburg			
Name	Organisation	Position	Date
Paul van Noorden	Province of Limburg	Senior policy advisor for Housing	26 October 2016
Suzanne Lipsch	Parkstad Limburg	Program manger for neighbourhood restructuring	1 December 2016
Gerard Meijers	Municipality of Heerlen	Policy advisor for housing and public housing	1 December 2016

Appendix B Example of interview guide

An interview guide that is used to conduct the interviews is presented below. This interview guide is an example for the semi-structured interviews that are conducted for this research. Because this research is related to regional arrangements on housing provision in The Netherlands the interview guide is written in Dutch.

Regionale afstemming en woningbouwprogrammering

Mevr. Suzanne Lipsch

Programmamanager Herstructurering Woonwijken, Parkstad Limburg

Donderdag 1 december 13:00 – 14:00

Structuur en cultuur van afstemmen

- Kunt u aangeven wat volgens u regionale afstemming inhoud?
- Welke rollen hebben de provincie, regio en gemeenten wat betreft woningbouwprogrammering?
- Welke rollen hebben de provincie, regio's en gemeenten wat betreft het reserveren van ruimte?

Parkstad Limburg

Aan Parkstad Limburg is in de periode tussen 2006 en 2014 de status van Plusregio op basis van de Wet gemeenschappelijke regelingen toegekend. Met het vervallen van deze status is besloten om op facultatieve basis verder te gaan.

- Kunt u aangeven op welke wijze samenwerking voorheen plaatsvond en waarom gekozen voor het vroegtijdig verlaten van de status Plusregio?
- Hoe beoordeelt u de facultatieve samenwerking in het licht van het opheffen van de Plusregio en daarmee een juridische grondslag voor samenwerking?
- Wat zijn de overwegingen waarom de provincie Limburg niet deelneemt binnen Parkstad Limburg?
- Op welke wijze worden, gelet op de ligging, bovenregionale en internationale aspecten meegenomen binnen Parkstad Limburg?
- Ten aanzien van het thema wonen werkt de bestuurscommissie met meerderheidsstandpunten en vind doorwerking naar gemeenten plaats. Hoe beoordeelt u deze werkwijze in het licht van de autonomie van gemeenten?

Rol van de provincie Limburg

De provincie heeft vanuit het POL 2014 ingezet op het opstellen van regionale structuurvisies wonen. De provincie ziet deze regionale structuurvisies als belangrijk uitgangspunt.

- Hoe beoordeelt u de verplichting tot het in regionaal verband opstellen van deze regionale structuurvisie wonen en kunt u daarbij ingaan op de gevolgen van de regionale structuurvisies voor individuele gemeenten?
- Op welke wijze is de provincie betrokken in het regionale proces met betrekking tot het opstellen van deze regionale structuurvisies wonen?
- Hoe beoordeelt u de eventuele inzet van instrumenten uit de Wet ruimtelijke ordening door de provincie Limburg om de plancapaciteit terug te dringen?

Het regionale woningmarktprogramma

Gemeenten binnen Parkstad Limburg hebben afspraken ten aanzien van woningproductie vastgelegd in de Regionale Woningmarktprogrammering 2013-2016. Essentie hierbij is de combinatie van sloop en nieuwbouw. Daarnaast beoogt het woningmarktprogramma uitvoeringsinstrument te zijn van de structuurvisies wonen.

- Kunt u de wijze van totstandkoming van deze woningmarktprogrammering beschrijven en kunt u daarbij aangeven hoe dit programma zich verhoudt tot de Regionale Structuurvisie Wonen zoals uitgevraagd door de provincie?
- Voor het opstellen van dit programma zullen kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve analyses naar de woningbehoefte benodigd zijn. Hoe komt deze informatie tot stand en op welke wijze is deze informatie geïncorporeerd bij het opstellen en jaarlijks actualiseren van het regionale woningmarktprogramma?
- Doorwerking van het regionale woningmarktprogramma is een bevoegdheid van individuele gemeenten. In dat verband zou het woningmarktprogramma een vrijblijvend karakter kunnen hebben. Op welke wijze wordt verzekerd dat het programma geen vrijblijvend karakter heeft?
- De verschillen in de (kwalitatieve) woningbehoefte tussen gemeenten worden zichtbaar in het woningmarktprogramma. Hoe wordt met dergelijke verschillen omgegaan teneinde overtollige plancapaciteit te voorkomen?

Ruimtelijke ordening en wonen

Woningbouwopgaven zullen ruimtelijk moeten worden ingepast. In dat verband bestaat er een relatie met ruimtelijke ordening.

- Op welke wijze wordt ruimtelijke inpassing en locatiekeuze voor sloop en nieuwbouw meegenomen in regionaal verband?
 - Het reduceren van de plancapaciteit is een belangrijk speerpunt in het regionaal beleid. Kunt u aangeven hoe dit proces juridisch-planologisch wordt vormgegeven?
 - Op welke wijze wordt er rekening gehouden met de mogelijke toekomstige (private) ontwikkelinitiatieven die thans nog niet in het beleid zijn voorzien?
-