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Large housing estates: ideas, rise, fall and recovery

The Bijlmermeer and beyond

Frank Wassenberg

TU Delft Delft University of Technology

Challenge the future

Large housing estates: ideas, rise, fall and recovery

The Bijlmermeer and beyond

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Delft University of Technology
Jaffalaan 9
2628 BX Delft
The Netherlands
Phone +31 15 2783005
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Preface

This PhD-study is about large housing estates. There are probably no other types of urban areas that people have a stronger opinion about. Most people who read this text, probably will not live here, do not like to come here and in fact hardly ever come here. Large housing estates: for some, these are three words that all refer to a way cities preferably should not be built. Large is wrong, because many people prefer a living surrounding that reflects the human scale. Housing is wrong, because lively and vital urban areas should not be mono-functional but be a mix of functions that create activities, vital use and practical contacts between people. Estates are wrong, as people do not live within a particular area that is developed for them but without them. Large housing estates, especially high rise blocks, are very symbolic outcomes of the way a city should not be planned; this corresponds with conclusions of famous urban thinkers like Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch.

This having said, we do have, however, the legacy of decades of urban planning, resulting in mass housing estates. Features, statistics, opinions and policies all show that many large housing estates are not the most popular parts in town, and that is an understatement. It depends how large housing estates are defined, but millions of people all across Europe do live in such large housing estates. It depends on the definition of large housing estates, whether we want to include 1980s suburbs and more recently built housing areas among the large housing estates. These do share some similarities indeed: the (large) size, the (single) function and the (overall) way of planning.

Large housing estates need attention, simply because these are there. It is simply not enough to state that, with the contemporary knowledge, cities have been planned the wrong way, which might be the case, but the real challenge is how to deal with all existing large housing estates. What could or should be done with those estates? What options do exist, what experiences have been undergone, what local, national or contemporary conditions determine what kind of approaches? Every case is unique, as some state, but this observation is no reason not to try to learn from experiences elsewhere, under other conditions.

This project is the result of years of conducting a variety of research projects dealing with all kinds of large housing estates in a range of cities and countries. It is a reflective study, not dealing with one particular survey or data set. One particular area however is leading in this project, which is the Amsterdam Bijlmermeer high-rise area, one of the clearest examples worldwide of a well-planned neighbourhood, followed by tremendous problems, finally resulting in the largest urban restructuring area in the country and probably in Europe.

In my early career I started with a research project in a problematic area in the Bijlmermeer – actually in an area with low rise flats being built as a reaction to the many high-rise developments. It turned out to be the country's speediest housing disaster: within one and a half year a complete renovation was necessary. My last research project in the Bijlmermeer was a residents' consulting project in another low rise flat area – adjacent to the fast renovated one. Once again the demolition question was raised here. In the twenty years in between both projects, I have conducted a range of research projects in the area: twenty two in total: one per year on average. The Bijlmermeer area developments are the main case, but this area is not the leading topic throughout this book. That is my wondering about the exciting developments in these kinds of areas. The Bijlmermeer high-rise is the connecting thread, which I compare with other large housing estates.

Acknowledgements

Although a PhD thesis is for the most part an individual activity, I could not have succeeded without the help, inspiration, motivation and contribution of many others. In particular I would like to thank my supervisor Hugo Priemus. I have been on his long list for many years, and despite the long time and the absence of visible progress, he remained optimistic and encouraging. Even after I left OTB in 2009 to go to Nicis Institute (that became part of Platform31 in 2012), he stayed optimistic: "Frank, you have done so much work, you are almost finished without realizing it". But it would still take more sweat, energy and time to complete than I anticipated. I want to thank Hugo for his never-ending optimism, his cooperative attitude, his prompt and useful comments on all texts, and his unflagging encouragement and patience. The length of time it took me to complete my thesis means I am the last PhD candidate in his long career.

I am also grateful to the members of my dissertation committee, who provided such useful comments: Sako Musterd, Pieter Hooimeijer, Wim Hafkamp, Jan van der Schaar, Marja Elsinga and Peter Boelhouwer.

This thesis is based on some published articles and also a long series of practical research in large housing estates. Many of these projects were carried out together with others. I cannot mention everyone here, but you can find them in Attachments 2 and 3. Thank you all for your fruitful and pleasant collaboration!

I would like to thank OTB for giving me the opportunity to work on this thesis, in particular after I started working at Nicis Institute/Platform31 in 2009. Since that time I have been a guest researcher at OTB, and will continue this in the near future. An inspiring environment to do research! I enjoyed being part of the Urban Renewal and Housing research group at OTB, with (I mention only the colleagues of the last couple of years): Alexandra Curly, André Ouwehand, Carlinde Adriaanse, Christien Klaufus, Eva Bosch, Gelske van Daalen, Gwen van Eijk, Helen Kruythoff, Lida Aminian, Leeke Reinders, Maarten van Ham, Marco van der Land, Mariska van der Sluis, Reinout Kleinhans, Ruta Ubareviciene, Sanne Boschman, Saskia Binken, Suzanne Davis, Talja Blokland, Ton van der Pennen and Wenda Doff. Besides these I also worked with and had inspirational discussions with many other colleagues, both at OTB and Platform31. I cannot mention you all, but I do want to thank you! A special word of thanks for the people behind the screens: Martine de Jong, Ineke Groeneveld and Truus Waaijer at the secretariat, and Dirk Dubbeling and Itziar Lasa Epelde at the publication office.

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This PhD-study is based on fieldwork. Thousands of inhabitants filled out questionnaires, hundreds of them participated in interviews, working groups, etc. and at least as many practitioners contributed to the results. I hope they may profit from my findings.

I am also very grateful to my family and friends for their support, even although many of them never thought I would actually finish my PhD. But most of all I would like to thank my beloved Jacqueline, Eva and Daan.

Part I Introduction

1 Research background and theoretical reflections

1.1 Research background

Problems on large housing estates have now been an issue for research and policy interventions for many years. This is curious, as most of these neighbourhoods were built with hopeful prospects and glorious idealistic ideas during the post-war decades. Modern and attractive dwellings, well planned and designed, in spacious green areas with plenty of common amenities in carefully designed neighbourhoods: tomorrow's housing for today's population. Large housing estates differ locally, varying from long rows of single-family housing to numerous blocks of walk-up flats and massive high-rise estates. A common characteristic is their size: large areas with hundreds, and sometimes thousands of housing units: large as seen in their local context. This PhD dissertation focuses on large high-rise housing estates.

We all know that the idealistic dreams did not come true and that many large housing estates became problematic. The problems ranged from becoming second-choice and temporary housing, to turning into sink estates and stigmatized ghettos. The targeted population did not arrive, and their places were taken by people with limited prospects. This is notwithstanding the fact that there are also large housing estates that function well in the local and regional housing markets. Many large housing estates have been the subject of renewal programmes, some on a smaller scale, others resulting in the demolition and rebuilding of complete areas.

In this book, I deal with renewal approaches to problematic large housing estates. Which measures and strategies work under which conditions? What are the successes, what are the failures and what are the impacts? What can be concluded about the prospects for the numerous large housing estates all across Europe?

Transferable knowledge

This project puts the Dutch developments into a wider international context. I do not stop at the (correct) conclusion that every situation has to be considered within its own local or regional context, but formulate some conclusions that might be transferable to other large housing estates situations elsewhere.

Considering the remark about contextual factors, every transferable policy, idea, lesson or practice should be considered as inspiration and not as a blueprint to be copied. Moreover, the more closely the local context resembles the Dutch situation, the easier it will be to transfer the results. For this reason, the generalisations from this study might be more applicable to Europe and Western democracies with similar housing cultures.

Formulation of the problem

It fascinates me that so many large housing areas in Europe were built after the second world war based on idealistic and optimistic societal ideas, and that living on those estates proved to be so problematic, often only a couple of years later. Something went very wrong. Moreover, many large-scale urban renewal schemes focus on these estates. Whereas other areas function for decades and show more gradual, organic adaptations to changing circumstances, many of these large housing estates appear to react both rapidly and massively. My main research question was:

Why did the developments of many large housing estates prove to be so problematic, and what is being done and what else can be done to convert these problems into successes?

It is important to note that not all post-war housing was built as large housing estates, and that not all these housing estates are in trouble. In every country, and in every city, better and worse estates can be found. In general, however, surprisingly many of these rather new housing areas have become problematic, often without severe technical or physical shortcomings, and are now the subject of major renewal schemes.

Research sub-questions

I divided my main research question into three sub-questions:

1) *What were the ideals and motives behind these large housing estates, and how were they realized?*
2) *Why did large housing estates turn out to be problematic so soon after their realization? What went wrong, and why? What kinds of measures were applied to tackle the problems, and what were the results?*
3) *How are large housing estates involved in today's integrated renewal policies, what are the effects, and what are the prospects for a fruitful recovery of large housing estates?*

These questions led to policy options for improving problematic large housing estates and to questions for further research.

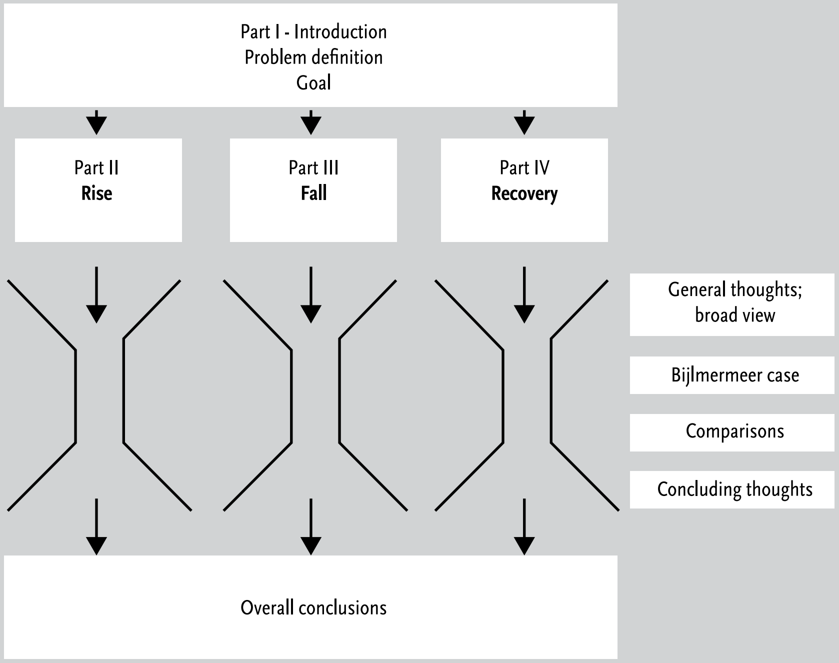
Structure

The three research sub-questions form the main structure of this book, which is divided into three parts:

- Glorious estates: The ideas behind and the rise of large housing estates: ideas, ideologies and expectations about future society.
- Sink estates: The fall of large housing estates. Growing problems after inhabitants showed (mostly with their feet) that they did not appreciate the provided mass housing. Several small-scale measures have been taken, but without results.
- Recovering estates: The regeneration of large housing estates, often by integrated area-based approaches, preparing them for the future.

Each part starts by presenting the general developments and backgrounds. Part II describes the idealistic thoughts that resulted in mass housing estates. Part III deals with the disappointing post-realization developments, the serious problems and the numerous insufficient small measures. In Part IV the

Figure 1.1 Structure of the book



significant urban renewal schemes are dealt with. Then each part focuses on the same specific case: the Bijlmermeer high-rise area in Amsterdam. However, I put this district into perspective by comparing it with other relevant areas.

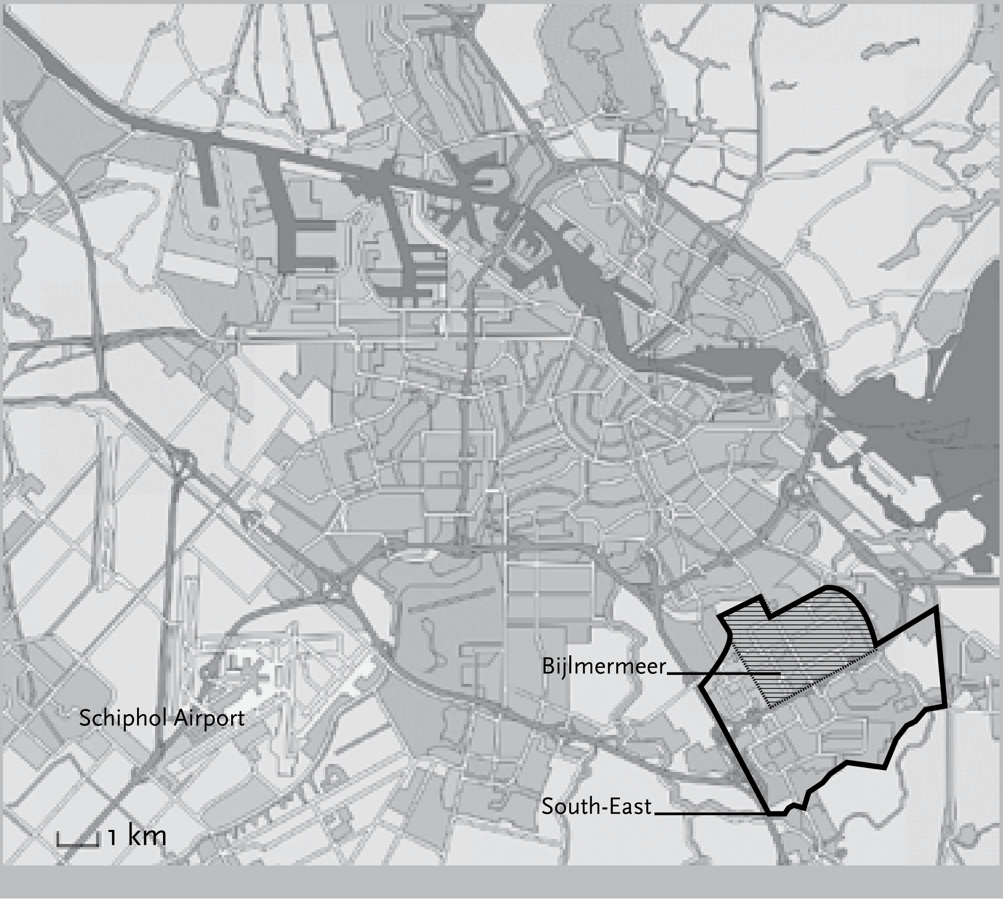
After those external qualifications, I then widen my scope. Figure 1.1 shows the structure with the three phases, the three 'funnels': the rise, the fall and the recovery.

The character of this PhD study

In some respects, the character of this PhD study differs from that of most PhD studies. It started not with the research question formulated above, or with a similar one, but as a series of surveys and research projects, many of them within just one area and about a similar issue, and over a long period of time. It is not a research project to test a single theory. It is essentially explorative research, analysing eventful developments within a particular area, using several existing theories and trying to generalize to other situations. The area is the Bijlmermeer, which is probably one of the most well-known large housing estates in the world (see Figure 1.2).

After years of work in the Bijlmermeer, and many other areas in the Netherlands and abroad, on issues of neighbourhood regeneration, among many other issues, the ambition arose to bundle this experience. Most of the original results have been already published in Dutch. For this reason, I have bundled my experiences in this English-language book, which can be considered a reflective study. It combines old and new material, and consists of some articles published in international academic journals, provides an overview of material previously published in Dutch, and gives a helicopter view of the whole issue of the ideas behind large housing estates, and of their rise, fall and recovery.

Figure 1.2 The Bijlmermeer, situated in the south-east part of Amsterdam



The hybrid form of this PhD study

The form of this PhD study also differs from that of most other PhD studies, which are written either as books or as collections of published articles. A book has the advantage of being a complete scientific essay, composed of successive chapters. There are no overlaps, and all text sections are in a logical order. In contrast, PhD studies based on articles usually consist of a series of published articles, preceded by an introduction and ending with conclusions. Such collections of articles inevitably contain overlaps. The knowledge presented in such works overlaps like roof tiles, with duplication in the presentation of theory, the literature review or in particular research contexts.

In this PhD study, I have chosen to combine both of these forms. Such a hybrid character is perhaps uncommon, but not unique. The published articles alternate with new chapters. The main reason for doing so is the desire to deliver a reflective study, combining articles that have already been published with a selection of research projects that I have conducted during my history of research. The design of this study is therefore intended to provide broad overview of research that has been conducted in this field – my own work as well as that of other scholars.

Although the hybrid form clearly has several advantages, it also has several disadvantages. For example, the form may be perceived as overly complicated, as it would have sufficed merely to present the articles, accompanied by a preceding and concluding chapter. Another disadvantage is that the writing style in the older texts (the articles) differs from that in the new chapters. This difference is intentional. The practical experience that I wished to add to the articles (including the leading case involving the Bijlmermeer, see Chapter 5) is written in a more informal style, in order to make it more accessible. The new chapters are not intended as future articles, but as a reflective overview of thoughts and work that has yet to be done.

The hybrid character places the 'new' chapters between the 'old' chapters (i.e. those containing the published articles). Each of these chapters opens with an indication of where it has been published, and the difference is further emphasized by including a grey line to the side of the page for each chapter contains a published article.

1.2 Theoretical reflections

Studies about large housing estates

I begin this section by presenting several thoughts regarding the theoretical framework. This PhD study is not the elaboration of any particular theory, aiming instead to consider the application of theories. It is eclectic, as it considers the practical suitability of several theories within the context of large housing estates in general, and within the context of the Bijlmermeer high-rise district in particular. The study presents a range of theories, some explicitly and others more briefly. This reflection does not include all possible theories, focusing instead only on those that are most relevant to the study.

This PhD study on large housing estates is certainly not unique. Nor is it unique in addressing the Bijlmermeer district, high-rise housing, deprived areas, urban renewal, neighbourhood approaches, deprivation theory, contextual factors, housing policies or comparative research. Many scientific studies have been published on all of these issues, many of which have been incorporated into this study. Without any pretence of being exhaustive, several of these authors are introduced in order to demonstrate the potential benefits of my study.

Many authors have published about large housing estates. Topics that have been addressed include the comparison of estates in several countries (Murie *et al.*, 2003), explanations for different paths of estates (Van Kempen *et al.*, 2005), the analysis of 29 European estates (Rowlands *et al.*, 2009) and explanations for the different positions of mass housing in seven distinctive world cities (Urban, 2012). Other studies have compared estates within specific countries. Examples include a study of the EU by Czischke and Pittini (2007), a study of estates in five West European countries by Power and colleagues (1993), and examinations of East European perspectives by Schwedler (1998) and by Lowe and Tsenkova (2003). In addition, a study by Turkington and colleagues (2004) analyses high-rise housing in 15 countries throughout all parts of Europe.

Large housing estates, social rental housing and state influence are strongly related, as clarified in Part II of this study. Dunleavy (1981) describes the policy process on high-rise housing, while Whitehead and Scanlon (2007) compare social housing estates in nine countries. Some authors have focused on policies for improvement, For example, Hall (1997) considers policies for peripheral estates, Wassenberg and colleagues (2007) analyse strategies for upgrading 50 disadvantaged areas across Europe, De Decker and colleagues (2003) compare urban development programmes in nine countries, and Krantz and colleagues (1999) focus on North-West European policies for large-scale housing estates.

Reflections on theories concerning the creation of post-war neighbourhoods

The literature on the creation of large housing estates is abundant, including studies conducted in the early days, as well as in retrospect. Part II provides an overview of this literature. Three planning theories (or sets of ideas) are presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, focusing on the creation of large housing estates: the estate as a garden city or new town, the estate as a modern housing provision and the estate as a planned neighbourhood unit. All of these theories proceed from the assumption that characteristics of the built environment have the potential to increase the happiness of residents; in other words, they assume that better neighbourhoods create a better life. When carried to the extreme, however, such an assumption can lead to the ideas of physical determinism, referring to physical circumstances as the primary – or only – explanation for phenomena. This is discussed later.

The basic idea of garden cities (originated by Howard in 1898) involves the creation of a new town at some distance from a donor city, in order to relieve urban pressure (see Hall, 1988). These new towns are well planned. In some cases, they are constructed in vacant fields, while others are built adjacent to small towns, thereby multiplying their population. In general, they are intended to be self-supplying. Some of the new towns are more like suburbs, not far from the donor city, while others may be located 30-40 kilometres away. Such new towns have been built in all countries, many during the 1970s or 1980s. Even today, many such suburbs (i.e. 'Vinex locations) are still being built in the Netherlands, albeit closer to the donor cities. In rapidly developing countries (e.g. China or Indonesia), new towns are being planned on a large scale as well. The Bijlmermeer has clearly been developed according to such new-town ideas. It is separated from the donor city, newly designed from scratch, and with self-sufficiency as an ideal, although such would ultimately be achieved only on a minor scale and several decades later. The Bijlmermeer had indeed been planned as a garden city (e.g. with the collective parks), but it quickly became apparent that the housing type that it provided would not fulfil housing demands.

The second group of planning theories originate from modern architecture, as developed in the CIAM movement (Turkington *et al.,* 2004). The high-rises that were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s can be considered as the culmination of modernism. The Bijlmermeer area offers one of the best examples. As revealed in this study, many modernistic high-rises (particularly in the Bijlmermeer) obviously failed to achieve the intended success. They offered the wrong dwellings to the wrong customers, in the wrong place and at the wrong time. The Bijlmermeer design was arguably ahead of its time. Living in a high-rise is now much more common and accepted than it was a generation ago, when they were targeted towards families with children, who tended to prefer single-family housing. Since then, however, the number of households without children has increased drastically, although most one-person and two-person households prefer central locations. The relative popularity of high-rise dwellings could be related to culture as well. High-rise urban estates have been shown to be more highly valued and appreciated in a wide range of countries (e.g. Singapore, Korea, Brazil, Italy and China; see also Yuen *et al.,* 2006) than they are in countries the Netherlands or the UK or similar countries.

The third group of planning theories involves the development of the neighbourhood unit. This group of theories involving the well-planned and well-calculated consideration of space within the town originated with Perry and the geographers of the Chicago school during the interbellum period: (see Chapter 4). The basic idea involves designing a neighbourhood that could flourish on its own. Important characteristics include the separation and hierarchy of functions, as visible in the Bijlmermeer in the clear division of functions and the hierarchy of shopping centres. Another feature involves the notion of the neighbourhood as a solid base against threats of society. During the years following the Second World War, the neighbourhood was considered a safe base for individuals within the large, crowded and anonymous city life. This idea has returned in recent years, with the neighbourhood sometimes seen as a safe and solid haven, offering a counter-weight to globalism. Amidst the advance of worldwide forces, many people are experiencing a need for a sense of security.

Each of these groups of planning theories gained momentum in the early post-war decades, and they provided the grounding principles for the design of the Bijlmermeer high-rise, as well as for many other large housing estates that were constructed in the 1960s. Placing the Bijlmermeer area and all high rises within a wider perspective, therefore, it is important to consider factors that could be considered as drivers behind the development of large housing estates.

Reflections on drivers behind the development of large housing estates

In Part II, we analyse seven motives behind the construction of large housing estates, including high-rise estates. In this regard, it is also relevant to consider the forces driving these motives.

The first theory mentioned emphasizes the historical and relational context. A key point with regard to historically oriented or path-dependent theories is the influence of earlier developments on later developments. This historical path is accentuated in Part II. The first large estates date from more than a century ago (see the following chapter). The historical context is addressed at several points during the discussion.

The central government has obviously been one driving force. At crucial moments in history, the state has taken the lead in housing issues (see e.g. Power, 1993; Harloe, 1995). Important factors include the concerns and fears that emerged in the late 1800s with regard to urban misery, diseases and overcrowding. These concerns eventually resulted in the enactment of housing legislation in all Western countries, thus establishing the base for regulated housing construction. Such tasks never had never before been an issue for the national government. The next moment occurred several decades later, at the end of the First World War. Fears of social revolt and communism led to a spectacular rise in the construction of large housing estates of a type that is still valued today, many of which have now been designated as monuments. Beginning in 1945, developments following the Second World War again constituted a driving moment for central governments. Throughout Europe, tremendous housing shortages made housing an important political priority during the subsequent decades all across Europe. Large housing estates (particularly high-rise housing) offered a welcome answer to these political needs. The final moment to be considered emerged later, at the end of the 20th century, when central governments took responsibility for urban renewal processes.

This driving force for the state was accommodated by the three planning theories distinguished above: new towns or garden cities were expected to provide a solid base within a growing and increasingly anonymous society; well-considered neighbourhood planning was expected to create an orderly society, and modern CIAM architects were expected to provide living spaces for the population of the future. Each of these perspectives served as a driving force in the creation of large housing estates.

Reflections on theories concerning negative developments in neighbourhoods

Numerous publications have addressed problems and failures arising in large housing estates, mass housing or high-rise blocks. These developments are addressed in Part III, raising issues with regard to how such problems emerge and how they are related to and reflect each other. In this regard, we consider studies of neighbourhood change, both positive and with regard to changes that lead to urban problems (Skifter Anderson, 2003). In Part III, we address models of decline (Prak & Priemus, 1986; Grigsby, 1987), as well as theories about neighbourhood change (Hortulanus, 1995), the impact of management

(Power, 1997), policy influences (Temkin & Rohe, 1996) and image construction (Dean & Hastings, 2000).

Problems, decay, deprivation and other negative developments in neighbourhoods have been explained according to a wide range of theories. In this PhD study, we do not attempt to explain why some estates experience problems while others do not. Instead, we focus on estates in decline. Factors explaining the decline of large housing estates can be distinguished at the micro and the macro level (see Chapter 10). It is impossible to alter the course of macro or megatrends (e.g. demographic, economic, cultural) at the estate level. Such trends simply emerge, and the only strategy for addressing them is to anticipate as quickly as possible. The same applies to general policies (for housing, as well as for other purposes), which also affect the micro level of the estate. Factors operating at this level determine the supply of and demand for housing, each influencing the others in a complicated web involving the causes and effects of problems.

Several scholars have modelled such factors of decline (see Chapter 11): Prak & Priemus (1986); Grigsby and colleagues (1987); Hoenderdos (1989); Heeger (1993); Temkin & Rohe (1996); Power (1997); and Skifter Anderson (2003). Perhaps the most comprehensive is the model of decline developed by Prak and Priemus, containing three circles of decline: social, physical and economic. The Bijlmermeer can be considered as a clear example in which nearly all of these factors became negative, influencing each other into three spirals of further decay. The only positive factor was the initial quality of the dwellings themselves, which were spacious and luxurious, although high rents contributed to a poor price-to-quality ratio. Moreover, the dwellings were of the wrong type, according to the intended families, who quickly revealed their preference for alternative single-family housing. For example, the case of the Hoptille estate (in Chapter 9) illustrates how such a process of decline can occur rapidly. Studies by Grigsby and by Temkin and Rohe accentuate the influence of external factors that were important in the Bijlmermeer as well. Power highlighted the role of management (or the failure thereof). This clearly contributed to the decay that took place in the Bijlmermeer in the early years, when each housing association had its own policies for allocation, maintenance and control. Later in the study, we conclude that the local management had hardly any other choices.

Although critics of the model developed by Prak and Priemus argue that all of these factors make the model overly complicated, this complexity was illustrated quite well in the Bijlmermeer experiences. All spirals of decay – physical, social and economic – were working at high speed. The price-to-quality ratio was poor for residents who did not receive housing allowances, the planned collective and semi-public spaces were soon transformed into dirty and dangerous spots, and those who were able moved out of the area, leaving vacancies that were increasingly filled by new inhabitants who had no other choices on the housing market. The costs of management were extremely high, due to continuous repairs, high turnover and allocation costs, vacancies and unpaid rent.

Another criticism of the model developed by Prak and Priemus is that it does not offer a clear view of the origin of the circles of decline (for cases in which problems do not begin immediately after construction). The sequence of problems is elaborated in Chapter 11 (see Figure 11.1) and in Chapter 16, in the context of image construction. Both figures demonstrate that decline does have an identifiable beginning and that further decline is dependent upon previous factors. This could be called a 'path dependency of decline'. Deprivation begins at the estate level, with poor features of the housing, environment and location generating an unfavourable price-to-quality ratio. Unfavourable characteristics of the initial inhabitants can exaggerate this process, as can inadequate management. When such micro-level factors coincide with external factors (e.g. a broadening housing market, the decreasing popularity of particular housing types, economic changes), decline is at hand. The Bijlmermeer was launched under very unfavourable conditions, at least with regard to its intended residents, who quickly stopped flowing to the area.

Once it has been set in motion, the circle of decay may continue, although several factors could stop decline (e.g. interventions or changes in external conditions). Deterioration strengthens deterioration, however, as proposed in the 'broken windows theory' developed by Wilson and Kelling (1982) and presented in Chapter 11. The Bijlmermeer experience supports this thesis. In the Bijlmermeer, pollution, vandalism, crime, graffiti, the misuse of collective spaces all served to attract additional decline.

Another theory that is supported by the Bijlmermeer experiences is Oscar Newman's theory of defensible space. In 1972, Newman argued that it should be clear to all participants who should be responsible for taking care of any place in the area. For example, residents are responsible for caring for their own private spaces (e.g. the dwelling and possibly a garden); property owners are responsible for the high-rise blocks and their external surroundings, and the local government is responsible for streets, parks and other public spaces. The areas between these well-defined realms prove problematic, however, as illustrated by the Bijlmermeer experience. As noted in Chapter 13, residents complained the most about the semi-public or collective spaces (e.g. entrances, elevators, staircases, storage rooms and interior corridors) – the no-man's land between the home and the street.

Physical improvements in the built environment (as advocated by Oscar Newman and, before him, by Elizabeth Wood) would provide the foundation for the strategy of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). According to this strategy, the environment is expected to deter at least petty crimes, a thesis that elaborates on the work of Jane Jacobs (see Chapter 6). The ideas underlying CPTED are described well in Van der Voordt and Van Wegen (1991).

We now return to the theory of physical determinism in order to consider whether it is its design that causes the problems. A random look at one of the grands ensembles (large housing estates in France) easily confirms that living in such a design does not contribute to a cheerful life. Alice Coleman (1985) levels a bold accusation against the architects of bad estates, blaming them for all conceivable problems that occur within them. Because it overemphasizes the role of design and fails to consider mitigating details, however, this accusation has generated a storm of protest, ultimately creating only opposition. Several studies have shown that similar buildings do not follow similar careers (see Musterd *et al.*, 2009). Other factors always play a role as well, at both the micro level of the estate and the macro level in general. These factors are the same as those mentioned earlier in the context of neighbourhood development and decline models, although they appear to operate in a different fashion. Although conditions can never be identical, this does not eliminate the influence of physical factors. If dwellings, blocks and environments fail to satisfy many of the residents (or aspirant residents), they are likely to accelerate the decline of an estate (see Van der Voordt & Van Wegen, 1991).

Negative developments easily contribute to a negative reputation or image, known as a stigma (see Chapter 15). A negative image is both a result and a cause of further decay. Many studies simply state that stigma plays a role within deprivation, while leaving the exact manner in which this occurs unclear. Once it has been established, a stigma becomes even more difficult to eliminate. The framework presented in Chapter 16 differentiates between internal and external participants and strategies. Different situations call for different strategies. In the Bijlmermeer, the strategy began with improvements that visible and credible to all parties inside the area. Even after many years of intervention, however, it continued to be difficult to reverse the area's negative image (see Chapter 18). It is conceivable that a stigma could endure longer than the developed area to which it refers.

Reflections on theories concerning neighbourhood recovery

None of the well-intended early measures that were taken in the 1980s and 1990s was able to halt the deprivation of the Bijlmermeer. The area was not unique; local governments throughout Europe were struggling with 'the crisis of the city' (similar connotations were used on a large scale), with recovery not beginning until the 1990. Even then, however, some areas lagged behind. Not surprisingly, these were disadvantaged areas with multiple problems.

Multiple problems call for integrated area-based policies in which actors from a variety of fields work together, sectors are combined, interventions in one area do not interfere with the neighbouring area and long-term measures are alternated with day-to-day measures. Part IV addresses interventions and strategies for approaching problems, with a focus on drastic approaches and integrated renewal interventions.

Scholars of public administration (Rosenthal *et al.*, 1982; Janis, 1982) use three arguments for policy interventions: legitimacy, effectiveness and efficiency.

Legitimacy

The legitimation argument is presented earlier in this chapter. The major role played by the central government in housing estates has been legitimated in terms of responding to societal needs. Arguments for the large-scale provision of housing estates include the need to mitigate misery and precarious urban conditions, resolve conflicts between competing political systems and alleviate housing shortages, while references to the waning quality of living are used as an argument for realising the recovery of the same estates. The large-scale interventions in the Bijlmermeer were largely legitimated in terms of the major liveability problems, as well as the many vacancies, the numerous partial measures that had generated only limited effects and the area's decayed image. There was actually no other choice; as argued, it was 'a matter of civilization'.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the interventions in the Bijlmermeer can be seen in the Bijlmermonitor (see Chapter 18). The early measures taken in the 1980s and 1990s proved successful only at the level of the block, but not at the level of the entire Bijlmermeer state, as discussed in Part III. Evidence that the drastic integrated approach had been successful became visible during the 2000s. The Bijlmermonitor tracks progress along 26 dimensions. Although there has been clear progress, some goals have yet to be achieved. The greatest attention is needed for the socio-economic goals, while the area's poor image has remained remarkably persistent. This supports our conclusion that it is hard to change a stigma, once it has been established.

Efficiency

The third argument for intervention involves efficiency. This argument combines aims with financial resources. In 2002, the total investments for the Bijl-mermeer operation were calculated at €1.6 billion (see Chapter 19). This figure includes only the physical costs of the high-rise area, thus excluding investments in offices, the football stadium, the metro, the shopping centre and other features. At that time, the part of this amount that had generated no returns was calculated at €450 million. It is not clear how the economic situation has affected these figures since then. Revenues could have been higher during the relatively prosperous period between 2002 and 2008, when a large share of the total plan was realised, presumably generating more profits than had initially been calculated. On the other hand, production has decreased or stopped in the past several years, resulting in non-anticipated losses.

We could therefore question whether the tremendous investments have been worth it. Placing the figures in perspective, there were originally 13,000 high-rise dwellings in the Bijlmermeer area. The €1.6 billion in investments thus break down into an average €120 000 per dwelling. Similarly, the costs (i.e. financial losses) of €450 million correspond to an average of €35,000 per dwelling – a tremendous amount of money, which would call the repetition of such an enormous intervention into question, particularly given the present economic austerity. To continue with the partial approaches, however, would generate very limited success. Problems would persist, inhabitants would be marginalized, housing would remain unpopular and people would continue to flee whenever possible, further blighting the lives of others still living in the estates. Partial approaches would maintain the area's status as a national sink estate. Not intervening was simply not an option, as the direct and indirect costs of this option would have generated even higher costs for which there was no revenue.

In light of current knowledge, however, it is intriguing to speculate about what might have happened if these drastic interventions had not been carried out. In present times, the money would simply have been short. The risk would have been that a partial intervention (e.g. demolition of a few blocks or low-level renovations) would not have changed the area's poor position at all.

The benefits of this PhD study

In the past several decades, many studies have been written on various aspects of large housing estates. This PhD study contributes to this knowledge in four ways:

- It is an in-depth study of one of the clearest examples of developments concerning a particular large housing estate. This case is one of the most elaborated and well-known examples of such an estate anywhere in the world. The literature currently contains no exhaustive study of the developments, interventions and impacts in the Bijlmermeer.
- It provides an overview of a long-ranging series of research projects that have addressed many successive phases of the rise and fall of estates. Although they can enhance the value of reflection, such long-term research overviews are rare, as most researchers are not in a position to follow developments and projects for such a long period.
- It does not elaborate any particular theory or hypothesis, instead providing an eclectic reflection on several theories, with a focus on how these theories work out in practice. The study proceeds from actual developments, as discussed from several theoretical perspectives. One consequence is that the study does not provide an exhaustive elaboration of all possible theories, as doing so would exceed the scope of this research. Connections between theory and practice are drawn between the chapters, as well as in the concluding chapter.
- The study considers several issues and actors in large housing estates, perhaps most strongly reflecting the perspective of the inhabitants, consid-

ering how they were involved in the making of large housing estates, how they reacted to the increasing problems and the various solutions that were offered and how they have undergone and utilized renewal activities.

The benefits of the practical conclusions are not in terms of actual application in practice. This is not surprising, as the published articles have already been incorporated into the international literature, and most of the practical experiences have previously been published in reports and journals in Dutch (see Appendices 2 and 3). In many cases, the conclusions have already been implemented in practice.

1.3 The Bijlmermeer high-rise estate as a leading case in this book

The Bijlmermeer high-rise housing estate in Amsterdam is one of the world's most famous and well-known examples of large housing estates. It also attracted worldwide media attention in October 1992, when an El Al cargo Boeing crashed into an apartment block, causing many casualties.

The Bijlmermeer, or simply the Bijlmer, was the leading case for my project. It was designed to be a glorious housing area, future housing built for the people of those days, but it soon proved to be rather disastrous. All kinds of measures were taken to tackle the problems, but with limited results. The Bijlmermeer became the worst neighbourhood in the Netherlands, and remained so for many years. Over the last decade, it has been the subject of the largest urban renewal project in the country. The results of this large-scale renewal are promising.

I have been doing a range of research projects in the Bijlmermeer for 20 years, and I have seen the area change. When I started at OTB Research Institute for the Built Environment, my first project was to analyse the debacle of the Hoptille estate, which is adjacent to the Bijlmermeer high-rises. Since then, I have been involved in over 20 other research projects in the Bijlmermeer, conducting evaluations of proposed or realized measures, exploring policy options, advising actors and conducting surveys on residents' opinions about the future of their flats. One research project followed the other, resulting in researches in the Bijlmermeer almost every single year between 1988 and 2009. During those years, I was active in almost every flat block in the Bijlmermeer, talked with tens of workers in the area and with hundreds of inhabitants, and carried out surveys among thousands of inhabitants. Box 1.1 provides an overview of my activities in the Bijlmermeer. Appendix 2 contains an overview of the resulting publications, mainly in Dutch, and some in English, French or German.

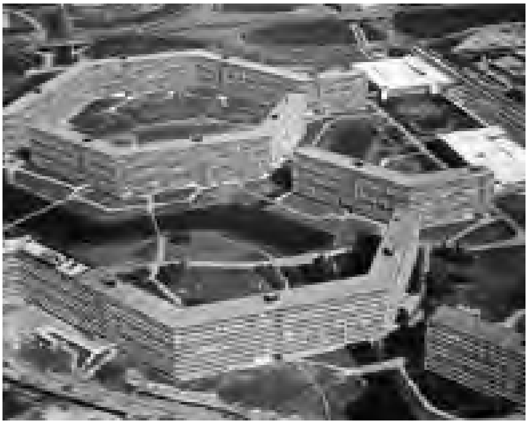


Photo left: Areal view of the Bijlmermeer during construction. Notice the characteristic honey-comb structured high-rise.

Photo right: Areal view of the Bijlmermeer halfway the demolition and restructuring process.

Background on the Bijlmermeer area

The Bijlmermeer high-rise district is one of the most written-about areas in the Netherlands in many respects. For example, Mentzel (1989) conducted an exhaustive study of the genesis of the project, and this PhD study can be considered a continuation.

The construction of the Bijlmermeer began in 1966; the first dwelling was occupied in 1968, and the last was occupied in 1975. Most dominant in the district were the large high-rise blocks. All blocks were built at a high speed, and after completion in 1975, the Bijlmermeer housing estate contained 13,000 dwellings in 31 similar very large apartment buildings. Each block had 300-500 dwellings, and were 300-500 metres long and 11 storeys high – the maximum capacity the building cranes could handle (Feddema, 1982). Sixteen housing associations each owned one to three blocks, sometimes even a part of a block. All 16 had their offices in the centre of Amsterdam. The walkway-access apartments were laid out in a honeycomb pattern, something one could easily see from the air and on the scale models used for the presentations.

The area was developed as a single large garden city, with high-rise blocks situated amidst large green spaces. The area was designed according to well-considered plans, and it was implemented in a consistent manner. Automobile traffic was separated from pedestrians and cyclists by roads and paths on different levels. Parking spaces were not on the streets, but in large garages, connected to the blocks by covered passage ways. Facilities were provided in three smaller neighbourhood centres and one main centre, and employment areas were situated outside the housing area.

The dwellings themselves were, and in some respects still are of high quality. They had a large floor space (100 m^2 on average), and are still among the largest social-rented apartments in the Amsterdam area. Moreover, the dwellings were luxurious, and when built they were equipped with amenities like central heating, comfortable sanitary fittings, easy chutes on the walkways to dispose of rubbish bags, and large private store rooms on the ground floor (easy to park bicycles).

All 13,000 high-rise dwellings were in the social-rented sector, though not in its least expensive segments. The aim of the planners was to attract households with children and an average income, because the city of Amsterdam already had enough dwellings for low-income groups like starters on the housing market, according to Amsterdam's then alderman of Housing. None-

'Gooioord', one of the renovated flats of the Bijlmermeer.

theless, with a housing allowance, low-income households could, and still can afford to live there.

Contrary to the long-term process of the individualization of home life, the Bijlmermeer Plan emphasized collectivism (Mentzel, 1989). The designers imagined that the new social spaces would compensate for the limitations of high-rise living. Using communal facilities would encourage neighbourliness and collective life (Blair & Hulsbergen, 1993).

Although the Bijlmermeer serves as the leading case in this book, I put it into perspective by introducing other striking examples from the Netherlands and abroad, where there are also large housing estates.

The construction of large housing estates dominated cities in the decades following the Second World War, but most of these estates are not Bijlmermeer high-rise style. In many cities there are large areas with long blocks of 3- or 4-storey walk-up flats, or with long rows of single-family housing. All of these were built in large quantities and were top-down planned: these are also considered large housing estates. Some of them exhibit the same features: idealistic planning in the 1950s and 1960s, increasingly problematic and unpopular from the 1980s onwards, and now being part of renewal schemes.

Housing in the Netherlands

As the Bijlmermeer is the leading case in this book, it might be useful to provide some basic information as background. I will do this only briefly, as it has already been done in other publications. One of these is a forthcoming publication together with Marja Elsinga (a revised update of 2007).

Table 1.1 shows some characteristics of the dwelling stock in the Netherlands in 2009. There are about 7 million dwellings, which have some striking characteristics compared with dwellings in many other countries:

- A third of all dwellings are in the social-rented housing sector; almost all of these are owned by housing associations.
- Three quarters of all rented housing is in the social sector.
- 70% of all dwellings are single-family houses; of these, 50% are terraced houses (three or more houses in a row) and 50% are detached or semi-detached.
- 30% of all dwellings are flats (two dwellings or more on top of each other).

Table 1.1 Dwelling stock and tenure in the Netherlands

Type	High-rise flat	%	Low-rise flat (1-4 floors)	%	Single-family houses	%	Total	%
Social rented	295,600	58.1	999,700	59.0	1,064,000	22.2	2,359,300	33.7
Commercial rented	65,700	12.9	251,400	14.8	199,600	4.2	516,800	7.4
Owner-occupied	147,000	28.9	442,800	26.1	3,530,600	73.6	4,120,400	58.9
Total	**508,300**	**100**	**1,694,00**	**100**	**4,794,200**	**100**	**6,996,500**	**100**

Source: Elsinga & Wassenberg, forthcoming; using data from the Housing Demand Survey (2009)

- There are 500,000 high-rise dwellings (5+ floors), representing 7% of all housing.
- A third of all the housing was built in 1945-1975.

Compared with other Western countries, the Netherlands is dominated by single-family houses, not only in the countryside but also in medium-sized cities. Almost half (45%) of the social-rented stock comprises single-family houses, often terraced. The rest are low-rise flats (42%) or high-rise flats (12%). Dutch social housing is not generally built in distinct estates; most neighbourhoods consist of a mix of housing types.

These figures indicate that people who are dependent on social housing do not automatically end up in a high-rise block or another large housing estate, as might be the case in some other countries (e.g. France). It also shows that the Bijlmermeer estate is an exception in the country, which might be good to keep in mind.

Defining the issue

The subject of this book – large housing estates – needs some more exploration. First, I will define the terms ‘housing estate’ and ‘large housing estates’. The ideas behind them and their rise and fall are dealt with in Parts II and III. Part IV deals with the recovery of large housing estates.

The ‘Housing estates’ article has been elaborated in the International Encyclopedia of Housing and Home (Chapter 2). Being a part of this encyclopaedia, it gives a general introduction to issues concerning housing estates. In this article, first housing estates are defined, including their specific variation and contexts, and general features. Commonalities are the glorious expectations, and the rational, functional and ideal way of planning. Successes and failures also have remarkable similarities, despite developments along different paths. Some estates have been the subject of intensive renewal programmes, others still function rather well in the local housing market, while a third category still needs regeneration. Glorious planning, changing developments and renewal efforts are dealt with in later chapters. First, the elaboration on housing estates.

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Box 1.1 Personal involvement in the Bijlmermeer high-rise district, 1988-2009

I have been involved in a range of research projects in the Bijlmermeer for over 20 years. In total, I was involved in 22 projects, that is, on average one a year. These can be divided into three groups. I refer to the appendices for an overview.

1. Evaluating four experiments in the Bijlmermeer (with an ex ante and an ex post survey), altogether eight surveys:

- The appointment of caretakers (1989-1991). Later on, these would continue as estate guards, and even later as security guards.
- The involvement of inhabitants with the daily management in their block (1992-1994).
- Camera control (CCTV), the first within housing in the country (1995-1996).
- Intensive personal involvement with children, local observers and people with debts (1998-1999).

2. Eight surveys among inhabitants about their opinion on the future of their premises. These were conducted at several moments during the renewal process in the Bijlmermeer, namely:

- Immediately after the publication of the first renewal plans, including the plans to demolish blocks of flats, in 1990. In this research a general opinion was asked about future prospects of the Bijlmermeer.
- In 1995, to involve inhabitants in making plans for their own blocks of flats in one particular part of the Bijlmermeer (the ‘F area’).
- In 1999, with a similar goal for inhabitants in the G area.
- In 1999 and 2000, inhabitants in areas around the Bijlmermeer high-rise blocks were asked for their opinions about renewal. These surrounding areas were

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involved as the high-rise area was supposed to open up to the wider area, thus connecting the high-rise area with the wider environment. In 1999 an adjacent low-rise area with single-family housing was interviewed, in 2000 nearby high-rise blocks, but in owner occupation.

- In 2001, a major project in which the remaining half of all Bijlmermeer high-rise flats were surveyed. All 5,500 inhabitants were asked about their opinions on several renewal options:
  - some blocks of flats would not be demolished but [refurbished. These inhabitants were contacted once more in 2003;
  - inhabitants of the Heesterveld estate were asked in 2008 about their opinions on the future of their estate. Heesterveld is situated next to both Bijlmermeer and the Hoptille estate.

3. Six studies were made into particular issues in the Bijlmermeer area. These are:

- Some estates have deteriorated very rapidly. An example is the Hoptille estate in the Bijlmermeer area, which had to be totally rehabilitated after only 18 months. A record. This study explains why (1988).
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2 Housing estates

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2.1 What are housing estates?

No overall definition
A universal definition for housing estates does not exist. According to the popular free encyclopaedia Wikipedia, a housing estate is a group of buildings built together as a single development. The British urbanist Anne Power defines estates as groups of housing built in defined geographical areas that are recognised as distinct and discrete entities. Patrick Dunleavy, referring to mass housing estates, talks about estates of uniform housing quite distinct in form compared to the kinds of housing provided by market mechanisms. Van Kempen et al. mention that housing estates are artificial areas in that they are selfcontained, planned developments rather than organically developed neighbourhoods. Common in these definitions are the grouping of buildings (with dwellings), the uniform and distinct character, the similar and planned construction, and the geographical concentration. Combining the definitions, we define a housing estate as a group of housing quite distinct in form built together as a single development.

The British phrase 'housing estate' is not easily and equally translated into other languages, providing different connotations. In Germany and Austria we can find many '*Siedlungen*' or '*Wohnsiedlungen*', but these have a connotation of socialist advocates of the 1920s. The French '*cité's*' or '*ensembles*' associate with remote postwar constructions in the notorious banlieue. The Dutch 'complex' associates with the administration unit of the owning housing associations. In Spanish, the term 'housing estate' as such does not exist; '*polígonos de vivienda*' is the closest, which is clearly associated with Franco's dictatorship strategy to build large housing estates for blue-collar workers in major cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, or Bilbao.

Housing estate is more British English, as in the United States and Australia, 'housing developments' and 'tract housing' are more widely used. Moreover, housing estates differ not only between countries, but also within countries, depending on local circumstances.

Features of housing estates
Housing estates are most common in Britain, in the continent of Europe, and in developed and populated countries such as Hong Kong and Singapore. Keeping in mind the working definition of housing estate mentioned earlier in this article, we distinguish eight features of housing estates:

- Planned development: A housing estate is the result of urban planning, not of the organic growth of cities. Estates contain thousands of dwellings, depending on the local context; so an average housing estate in Moscow or London will be larger than one in the provinces. However, a housing estate has a quite large scale in the local context. We will deal with large housing estates later in this article.

- Urbanity: Housing estates can be found in urban or suburban areas, including new towns in developed countries, where houses have been built in relative or absolute large quantities.
- Appearance: Housing estates are usually built by a single contractor in a limited period of time and according to one prevailing design, resulting in a uniform and distinct appearance.
- Building periods: Although the history of housing estates starts in the 19th century, most housing estates were built in the post-Second World War decades.
- Housing types: Housing estates vary from single-family developments to large-scale housing constructions, like high-rise blocks. However, modern constructions with detached or semi-detached housing in new suburbs are considered housing estates as well.
- Tenure: Housing estates can be owner-occupied, public (or social) housing, and private rented housing. A mix is possible. The focus often is on monotenure estates, usually social housing.
- Function: Housing estates usually contain houses, dwellings. Only in large developments are supporting functions like neighbourhood centres, community services, and schools included. Often, the function of housing is clearly separated from other functions.
- Location: Most housing estates are developed outside the then existing city limits, where sufficient territory was available and affordable. Some of these once peripheral spots become central within cities, while others remain in isolated locations.

2.2 Ideas, expectations, and historical notions behind housing estates

There are many kinds of housing estates, but most of the focus nowadays is on the post-Second World War housing estates in trouble: large-scale estates, monotenure social housing, low-rise or high-rise flat blocks, inhabited by the least well off and built mainly during the postwar decades. This has not always been the case. On the contrary, when those currently abused housing estates were built, the populations aimed at were the higher-working classes and the lower-middle classes, the ‘class workers’, not the poor and the underprivileged who live there so often at present.

Every time provides its own housing estates

During the 19th century, industrialisation attracted masses of job-seeking people to the urban areas, where new industries were concentrated. The cities were not equipped for these large flows of migrants, resulting in poverty, overcrowding, poor hygiene, diseases, and other miseries. Cities like Berlin, Paris, or Vienna tripled or quadrupled within half a century (see Lévy-Vroelant *et al.,* 2008, for an essay on the backgrounds of housing estates). The first housing estates were built on a small scale in the late 1800s by philanthropic aristocrats and utopian industrialists. The idea behind such dwellings was ensuring social justice, providing healthy workforces, controlling urban diseases, and preventing uprisings.

At the turn of the century, Housing Acts were passed in all European countries, with Belgium being the first in the world in 1889, incorporating government involvement for housing. Government support emerged in the early 1900s with municipal support for idealistic housing estates, but actual implementation took some time, hitting a peak after the First World War. This second generation of housing estates was initiated by local governments and had not only a housing function, but also a symbolic and moral function to uplift the working classes. Social housing became a key element of the emerging welfare system.

The great depression of the 1930s stopped government intervention in housing, and the private sector took the lead in the construction of housing estates. Most housing estates in this third period were market-oriented constructions, originally private rented, and often being sold now. Housing estates of these years have their own characteristics and distinction.

Housing for the millions

The three decades following the Second World War are often considered to be the golden age for social housing. In all European cities millions of houses were built, the majority in housing estates with the features mentioned earlier. Social housing was aimed not only at the working classes as before, but also at the middle classes, key workers, and otherwise, the lowest classes. Social housing policy allowed the majority of the population to share the wealth of the economic boom and was a key factor in establishing national welfare states, following the Scandinavian examples. Most housing from these days was built in distinctive housing estates. Unlike the case with previously built housing estates, in this fourth period national governments took the lead with the supply of large brick and mortar subsidies for the construction of housing estates.

A housing estate as a neighbourhood unit

The development of housing estates is related to the development of neighbourhoods. Housing estates are planned constructions, while neighbourhoods refer to a geographical part of a town.

Architects and urban planners had not only thought about better housing,

From left to right: High-rise in Europa
1. England (Birmingham)
2. Germany (Dortmund)
3. Ukraine (Lviv)
4. Italy (Rome).

but also about better living environments instead of the overcrowded, unhygienic, and gloomy slums.

Urban planning reformers thought about solutions, resulting in the garden city movement from Ebenezer Howard, the functionalist high-rise areas according to Le Corbusier and his CIAM-friends, and the neighbourhood unit planning ideas from the American planner Perry, elaborating on the enlightened ideas of the human ecologists of the Chicago school. Neighbourhood planning to support ideal living was being developed before the Second World War, but was implemented on a wide scale after the war. The urban planning of the postwar housing estates heavily leaned on these important neighbourhood planning ideas. Good neighbourhoods should provide a solid basis for people as a protection against the anonymous urban society, and as a defence against totalitarian regimes – Communism or Nazism.

Many postwar housing estates were built according to the ideas of the neighbourhood unit, a neighbourhood that would flourish by itself, where houses and all services needed were within the same unit or area. The postwar large housing estates were well-planned units, contrary to the chaotic urban planning that characterised the prewar years. The carefully developed neighbourhood planning ideas took shape before the Second World War, but gained momentum after the war.

High-rise housing estates

By the 1960s, a series of influences and pressures had coincided to build housing estates in larger sizes and with higher levels. High-rise became the expression of a new world, being the most uniform, the most dominating, the most direct, and the most visible result of postwar urban planning, as Turkington et al. call these estates. Postwar urban planning was very much influenced by the ideas of the CIAM-movement, the organisation of modern architects led by the famous Swiss architect Le Corbusier. High-rise estates in Western countries were built in a concentrated period, starting somewhere in the 1960s, and the building activity stopped rather suddenly some 10 years later – in England after a horrifying gas explosion, in the United States after a major debacle at St. Louis, in the Netherlands and Sweden after it became clear that the market demanded something else. However, in Eastern Europe the construction of high-rise housing estates continued until the fall of the Wall, and in Southern Europe but also in South America and South East Asia there has been a continuous construction of high-rise estates during the last sixty years. In all of these countries there hasn't been the aversion to high-rise, that flew over the Western countries throughout the 1970s. This is why more high-rise estates can be found in countries such as Spain, Italy, Ukraine, and Hong Kong compared with the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Britain, or the United States.

After a standstill from the mid-1970s to the 1990s, new high-rise housing is being constructed in Western countries, following Asian initiatives. At present, Asian high-rise, including the housing function, serves as an example for the rest of the world, including African, Australian, Latin American cities, and a revival of high-rise in Europe. The new high-rise housing in Western cities, however, is not built in large housing estates like the 1960s, but in tower blocks, promoted as residential parks or communities. Moreover, these are aimed at another population group, young wealthy or elderly urban-oriented citizens, not the working-class or the middle-class families as in the 1960s.

Booming housing estates during the golden years

After a period of relative standstill in the field of housing after the great depression, the Second World War and the decades following it turned out to be the golden years for the construction of housing estates. The French speak of les trentes glorieuses, the 30 golden years following 1945. Most urban housing was planned in these estates: largescale, uniform, monotenure, monofunctional housing constructions at the outskirts of most cities. This largescale planning boosted housing, 'mass housing', needed to solve the massive housing shortages. Building in concrete, employing large prefabricated components, establishing housing factories on site, and rationalising the building process stimulated building in high-rise. In both Sweden and Hungary famous 'million programmes' were launched to successfully develop one million new dwellings in mass-produced housing estates dominated by high-rise blocks. All high-rises in the nowadays problematic grands ensembles, the French large housing estates, belong to this programme.

Besides being based on technological progress and quantitative needs, housing estates were heavily ideological.

Many housing estates were developed according to egalitarian ideas, in which a modernist urban planning could deliver a more equal and fair society, opposite to the bourgeois narrow lifestyles of the 1930s. There was a strong belief that urban planning could control social development. The egalitarian ideas focused on the common use of facilities within the building (e.g., entrees, galleries, washing machines, and libraries) and in the surroundings (e.g., greens and playing facilities).

The outcomes: Many large housing estates

The outcomes of these golden years are evident. Housing production reached a peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s, not coincidentally the same years that high-rise housing peaked. Housing estates were built as mass housing, in large quantities and at high speed. In France, for example, the average time taken to produce a dwelling dropped from nearly 2 man-years in 1950 to 7 months in 1960. In France more dwellings were built between 1960 and 1980 every 4 years than in the whole of the 1920s and 1930s. Dwellings in housing estates were produced to uniform standards, with the use of prefabricated constructions in housing factories on the spot. In Germany and Eastern Europe the postwar estates are often referred to as *Plattenbau*, because of the concrete panels used. Influenced by the 1950s and 1960s planning model of 'towers in the park', in Toronto approximately 1,000 high-rise apartment towers were built, making it second on the continent, after New York. In Brazilian cities like Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and the newly built Brasilia, tempting condos in newly constructed high-rise blocks became the norm for modern urban living.

Many postwar large housing estates were built in easy and inexpensive locations, so at the then outskirts. The present location depends on the local urban development since then; some housing estates are still far out of town, while others are swallowed up by further urban expansions.

The postwar housing estates, culminating in the high-rise estates of the 1960s and early 1970s, represented the ideal housing of that era, egalitarian and modern dwellings which were spacious, comfortable, well designed, and often suitably located. However, these qualities would be questioned in the next era.

2.3 Developments once built

The postwar housing estates were by the 1970s a multiple of the ones built before the Second World War. Built in times of tremendous housing shortages, people were happy to get a dwelling in the new housing estates. The focus was on enlarging production numbers, developing speedy building techniques, and rationalising the building process to solve urgent needs. Once the housing market became more relaxed – after the peak productions of the early 1970s – people got more choice. Growing prosperity, greater mobility, and more household differentiation stimulated diversified housing demands. People made demands and did not take for granted the top-down supplied large housing estates as they did before.

After the housing estate boom, from the 1970s onwards developments started to be more diverse. We can divide developments worldwide into two groups: those where housing estates meant a normal way of urban housing and those where housing estates became synonymous with problems.

In Southern European countries, but also in Brazil, Argentina, and other South American countries, living in large housing estates was accepted as the normal urban style of living. In Asian countries like Japan, China, and Malaysia living in a city means living in a flat in a housing estate. Housing estates do not have the negative image they often possess in Western countries.

The countries in the former Soviet bloc represent a different situation: There was no choice in housing there until the 1990s. Until the fall of the Wall, millions of dwellings were built within cities, the vast majority built in similar housing estates.

Problems in housing estates

Many Western countries soon revealed construction problems and low housing demand concentrated in the newly built housing estates. Problems were aggravated when new attractive housing estates that better suited consumers' needs were built, that is, single-family houses. In the Netherlands half of all housing consists of single-family houses in rows with a garden at the back and in the front. Moreover, the hitherto neglected slums started to be refurbished or renewed from the 1970s onwards, soon providing more appreciated housing than the early postwar housing estates. Gradually, it became clear that the supplied housing stock of the large housing estates could not match the individual preferences of people.

Problems in housing estates are plenty and manifold. One classification of problems includes:

- Structural problems: poor-quality materials, poor insulation, asbestos pollution, deterioration, and so on.
- Internal design problems: small rooms, outdated floor plans, and no room for modern equipment.

- Spatial problems: high building densities, poor locations, and poor services
- Liveability: safety, crime, and antisocial behaviour.
- Segregation of low-income households and immigrants, social exclusion, social and racial tensions, and decreasing social cohesion.
- Concentration of deprived people, high unemployment, low education, poor schooling, many dropouts, homeless, and limited self-empowerment.
- Low demand and vacancies in the estate, caused by a low ranking in the local housing market.
- A negative image.
- Management and organisational problems.
- Legislative problems, especially in some Central and Eastern European countries, where the responsibility for public spaces in large housing estates is unclear.
- Financial problems: housing costs for inhabitants, large operating costs for landlords.

This classification covers most problems in the large housing estates owned by social landlords and built during the 1950s-1970s. These housing estates, and the dwellings within them, were once appreciated as modern, spacious, luxurious, and egalitarian, but now the same estates are often considered as monotonous, uniform, dull, and small. The middle-class families are grown old and have been replaced by low-class families, often from other cultures, with other habits, and speaking other languages.

However, some estates, especially large post-Second World War housing estates, suffer from a range of problems like the ones just classified. Moreover, problems tend to influence each other. In fact, spirals of technical, social, and economic decline influence each other. In most problematic estates more problems occur, which interfere. Some merely blame the physical layout; most famous among those are Oscar Newman (1972) and Alice Coleman (1985), who accused the designers of horrible postwar 'modernistic' architecture. Indeed, sometimes estates were miserably designed with clumsy and unsafe entrances, corridors, and walkways, creating semi-public spaces nobody felt responsible for. Sometimes new techniques were tested, bad materials were used. Thus, the physical deterioration is evident. However, often other factors are more important than only physical.

Some of these other factors are outside the housing estate itself, or even outside the regional situation. Economic relocations in old industrial cities, large immigration or emigration flows may cause oversupply in weak parts of the housing markets, not unusually the large housing estates. The development of attractive new housing nearby may cause deprivation in older housing estates. Sale of popular housing estates at low prices, like in England in the 1980s, or in some East European countries in the 1990s, may lead to a concentration of problematic households in the remaining stock, often large housing estates. However, in Spain, Italy, and Brazil, housing estates have been sold to inhabitants on a large scale, resulting in many cases in more social cohesion and less problematic neighbourhoods. Obviously, there is no single reason causing problems, nor is there a single solution to address (or prevent) the problems.

2.4 Redevelopment of housing estates: a policy perspective

Problems differ locally, depending on the local context, building and development histories, the local or regional housing market, and local and national policies. Renewal of housing estates will vary across local contexts as well. Redevelopment, renewal, regeneration, reconstruction, or other terms may differ slightly. In this text no difference is made between them.

It is important to state that many housing estates of all ages are doing satisfactorily to very well, and do not need any major redevelopment at all. This is true for the old pre-Second World War estates, brand new estates, as well as many postwar estates. Ordinary maintenance will do there. With the passage of time, every building needs refurbishing, such as fresh painting, a new kitchen, or a new roof – routine responsibilities for any homeowner.

Rising problems, however, lead to rising needs for redevelopment schemes. Most developed countries have policies to redevelop housing estates. Redevelopment of housing estates is dependent on a range of variables such as the seriousness of the problems, the housing market situation, available finances, and investing capacity and willingness among actors. In short, urgency and priority are key factors. Most vulnerable estates belong to the postwar era; among those are many flats belonging to the period from the 1950s to the mid-1970s, including the large high-rise housing estates. In other cases, the derelict prewar tenement buildings need redevelopment. The larger an estate, the more vulnerable it is when people's preferences change. Large postwar housing estates therefore appear to be more vulnerable, and are more prominent in contemporary urban renewal schemes.

Area-based approaches

In most countries a shift in urban renewal can be seen towards area-based approaches, which means a focus on the estate. The area or estate is a natural scale to create a good framework for concerted actions of the actors in the process. One of the strongest advantages of an area-based approach is visibility: It is clear for everyone when a former gloomy area has changed over time into an attractive area. Such an approach to redevelop a deprived estate may be a good platform to coordinate cross-sectional efforts, but issues like poverty, jobs, or bad schooling do not keep to the area limits. Solutions to those issues should be found at a higher-scale level. Another side effect of an area-based approach is that some problems cannot be solved on the spot, but will be transferred to adjacent areas, the so-called waterbed effects.

There are several physical options for redevelopment, varying from improving maintenance to upgrading or extreme makeover to a total demolition. With drastic measures, inhabitants have to be rehoused, which could be temporarily when they are going to move back, somewhere else in the estate (when dwellings are successively being renewed), or elsewhere in the city. The choice for the types of measures has to do with the seriousness of the problems, with the needs of the residents (if they are asked anything), with future market prospects, and with the overall housing market situation.

In areas with a loose housing market, oversupply, vacancies and decreasing housing prices, demolition is a quantitative way to lose dwellings. Major examples are the east of Germany and the Detroit area in the United States; northern England, southern Italy, and northern France have also experienced the results of major economic and demographic changes. In tight housing markets – which can be found in other areas within the same countries – there will be demand for even problematic housing estates.

Integrative approach

Redevelopment of large housing estates is not only a matter of restructuring of the housing stock, as housing problems go along with serious economic, employment, social, ethnic, and environmental problems. This means any redevelopment approach has to deal with these issues as well, resulting in an integrative approach. Only providing better housing while neglecting other problems leads to better housed people who remain deprived and socially excluded. We can state this sharper: Improving the housing situation without improving social and economic problems, is a lost chance; physical improvements open ways to contact people and to pull them into personal improvement.

At the start of any redevelopment scheme it is worthwhile to analyse the qualities of estates, which could be the open structure, the greens, or the logical layout of the neighbourhood. An existing estate is not a ‘tabula rasa’, an empty piece of land, characteristic of the planning habits of half a century ago. It is a challenge to redevelop an estate while maintaining its original qualities.

Sustainability plays a role as well. Most problematic housing estates do not know a history of successes. The redeveloped estates should better serve future demands and should be more sustainable. Energy spending is a major problem in many postwar housing estates, causing high expenses for inhabitants and adding to the worldwide climate change issues. Rising energy prices are causing major problems in all estates in Eastern and Central European countries, where costs for energy exceed the costs for housing.

The process of renewal

Measures and strategies cover the 'what' of an approach, while the 'how' is related to the way the several actors implement the process. Times when governments could decide about society are a long way behind: 'Government' has become 'governance'. Most housing estates that are subject to redevelopment at present were constructed in times when the government had a firm idea about what society in general, and living in particular, should be like. Many housing estates were developed not only to provide shelter, but to provide in a future way of living.

However, times have changed, and redevelopment is an issue for many actors: local, national, or regional governments, land and property owners, social and commercial investors, present and future residents, tenants and owner-occupiers, policemen, shopkeepers, and social workers. Partnerships between relevant actors are necessary; cooperation is more important than steering from the top. Citizens have a far more important role than their parents or grandparents, during whose time the original estates were planned; in those days planners and politicians were thought to know what was best for people, but today people want to be involved in their future.

Involving all vital actors; combining various measures and sectors; working at the levels of the dwellings, the housing estate, and the city; and combining future oriented policies with today's urban reality can make for successful redevelopment of housing estates.

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Part II Great expectations: glorious estates

Introduction to Part II

For most people in the 1800s, living in a city meant living in misery. Processes of industrialization made cities grow at a speed never seen before. The result was overcrowding and deteriorating housing conditions in all European cities. Governments were not involved with the housing situation; that was considered the responsibility of individuals and the private market. There were some initiatives to attack the grinding poverty, but these were scarce.

Around the turn of the 19th century, governments started to show support. New ideas arose to provide better housing conditions. Chapter 3 describes the prelude to the rise of large housing estates. Although this prelude started in the poor 19th-century conditions, it was not until the end of the Second World War that housing estates were built on a large scale. Contrary to the previous century, governments were leading in the process of providing housing for the millions, and large housing estates proved to be an adequate solution to the enormous shortages. Postwar mass housing was founded on ideas that emerged in the first decades of the 20th century. Ebenezer Howard developed the concept of the Garden City, a concept that would later evolve into new towns. Modern architects organized themselves in the CIAM group to promote new styles of living. Urban planners thought about better living environments in planned neighbourhood units. All these well-considered ideas would be implemented on a large scale in the mass housing estates of the postwar years.

Chapter 4 focuses on neighbourhood planning, using the Netherlands as an example. Contrary to the often chaotic and unstructured growth in older areas, new neighbourhoods were developed according to an intricate structure, with housing, facilities and traffic structured in an orderly manner. This chapter focuses on the amenities structure, and demonstrates how the carefully planned structure gradually had to be adapted to changing megatrends in society.

Central to Chapter 5 is the Bijlmermeer high-rise district, which was designed as the highpoint of modern living: the city of tomorrow for the people of today. The Bijlmermeer was to be a monument to city development, a showcase for the world.

In Chapter 6 we reflect on the ideals behind the optimistic expectations. We know that these ideals were not realized, but how can we understand them in the context of those days? Future value was a key concept for ‘glorious’ estates all across the Western world, not only in the Dutch Bijlmermeer, but also internationally. We elaborate on inspirations in and from France, Sweden and Canada. Chapter 7 provides more background. Seven motives are distinguished for building large housing estates across Europe, motives that resulted in common features and common outcomes.

Since we all know what has happened to many of the glorious estates, were there no critical remarks, no people warning of unrealistic expectations? Yes, there were dissenting opinions, but these were not heard, as Chapter 8 demonstrates.

3 The housing of tomorrow for the people of today

3.1 The origins of large housing estates

There are many kinds of large housing estates, but most of the focus nowadays is on unpopular housing estates, characterized by rented housing in blocks of flats, built mainly during the postwar decades and occupied by the least well-off. Although many large housing estates are not like these, this negative stigma prevails. This has not always been the case. On the contrary, when those nowadays maligned housing estates were built, the intended population was the higher working classes and the lower middle classes, the 'class workers', not the poor and the underprivileged who live there so often at present.

The origins of the large postwar housing estates date back to the second half of the 19th century. Lévy-Vroelant and colleagues reported about the backgrounds of social housing estates throughout Europe, focussing on continuity and change. The following two pages draw heavily on their article (Lévy-Vroelant, Reinprecht, Robertson & Wassenberg, 2008/2013). In other parts of this chapter, I draw on Chapter 1 of the book 'High-rise housing in Europe' (Wassenberg *et al.,* 2004).

Living in misery

Industrialization in the 19th century attracted masses of job-seekers to the expanding urban areas where the new industries were concentrated. The emerging cities were not equipped for such large migrant inflows, which led to poverty, overcrowding, poor hygienic conditions, diseases such as the 1832 cholera epidemic and a host of other social miseries. Speculators, factory owners and investors built high-density housing with poor heating and limited sanitary provisions (or none at all) for these newcomers.

The demographic change was startling: in Vienna, the population quintupled from 400,000 to 2 million over the second half of the 19th century. Here, the masses were housed in badly equipped blocks 'caserns' or barracks). According to the 1869 census, between 10 and 20% of the population (depending on the district) could be classified as Aftermieter or Bettgeher – sub-tenants who had access to a bed for only a couple of hours a day; in 1910, one quarter of the Viennese population lived in this type of sub-tenancy. Identical situations were to be found in most European cities. In Paris, the population reached 1 million by the middle of the 19th century, and more than 2.9 million by the eve of the First World War. Glasgow saw its demographic base increase between 1801 and 1861 from 77,000 to almost 400,000, before exceeding 1 million by 1911 (Mather, 2000). The failure of house construction to keep up with demand at affordable prices and the consequent marking down of existing property, ensured that overcrowding became far worse in the second half of the 19th century.

At the World Exhibition of 1851 in London, the architect Henry Roberts impressed enlightened architects abroad with the design of a model housing block for the working classes. Inspired by this, and acting on the orders of the king himself, the Dutch engineers' organization KIVI reported in 1853 about 'the dark caves of mankind' (De Vreeze, 2001; Van der Woud, 2010). However, new construction was limited and the masses flooded the cities. Existing houses were divided up into single-room housing for families – which were often large in size – and alleys, cellars and gardens were filled with sheds. In the Netherlands, the 1899 census shows that 30% of the housing stock comprised 1-room dwellings, and another 30% 2-room dwellings (dark storerooms and small kitchens were counted as rooms). Over half of the Dutch population lived in such dwellings, certainly in the cities but also in the countryside.

This applied to all European cities, as Van der Woud (2010) described. At the 1910 Architecture Exhibition in Berlin, it was calculated that up to 80% of the population in 17 major European cities had to live in 1- or 2-room dwellings, mainly in very miserable circumstances.

Housing institutions

Pooley (1992) defined housing strategies in Europe in 1850-1930 in broad terms (see Priemus, 2012). He described how gradually, but very slowly, governments became more involved in the housing issue. He identified four main types of housing strategy that could be observed. The first is the market sector, that acts for business reasons. Second are individuals and families seeking a home and using informal ways to provide shelter. Third are government bodies and fourth are non-profit or philanthropic organizations, like housing associations and cooperatives.

For a long time it was assumed by all governments that the demand for housing should be met by the private market and that individuals were responsible for solving their own housing needs. Therefore, in all countries housing strategies that were designed and implemented as alternatives to the free market helped only a small proportion of those in need of housing. It was not before the late 1900s that increased concern about public health, combined with the rise of socialist political parties, put housing on the local political agenda. National governments got involved only after the First World War. The building industry had collapsed, and moreover, there was fear of upcoming socialist parties, which were stimulated by the Russian revolution in 1917.

Philanthropic housing

The first housing estates were built on a small scale in the late 1800s by philanthropic aristocrats and utopian industrialists, in order to combat social injustice, provide healthy work forces, control urban diseases and reduce the risk of uprisings. Enlightened rich entrepreneurs provided good housing for deserving workers and their families. The Fuggerei, which was founded at the beginning of the 16th century by Jacob Fugger (one of the world's first capi-

Box 3.1 Agnetapark, Delft

One of the first industrialists in the Netherlands was Jacob van Marken, founder of the Delft Yeast Factory. In 1879, he developed a housing area, in English garden style, next to his factory, and declared (freely translated): “It is my beloved vision that there shall be a colony close to the factory, where our workmen with their families can live in friendly and healthy houses, and can be raised to wealthy, better citizens.” Both the factory and the neighbourhood, called ‘Agnetapark’ (after his wife), are still there. The neighbourhood has been accorded the status of national monument.

talist financers), is often regarded as the first such initiative. Later examples can be found right across Europe: Dale and Owen’s development in New Lanark, Scotland, is world-renowned, as are Salt’s development in Saltaire, near Bradford, and Lever’s Port Sunlight in England. Early French mine and factory landlords, such as Schneider at Le Creusot and Dolfus in Mulhouse, are among the more famous. In Austria, there was the Krupp estate in Berndorf. Dutch examples of enlightened industrialists are Agnetapark in Delft (see Box 3.1), Stork-Lansink in Hengelo and Philipsdorp in Eindhoven.

Government’s involvement with housing

However, these housing estates developments were marginal on the urban scale. The tenement blocks and terraced streets of Germany, Britain, Poland and many other European countries provided solutions to the need to produce urban housing in volume and at speed.

A combination of motivations and alliances led to housing acts being passed in all European countries by the end of the nineteenth or the beginning of the 20th century. The motivations were social (combating injustice), economic (protecting profits by keeping the workforce healthy), public health (disease disregarded the borders separating wealthy neighbourhoods from the poor) and fear (political uprisings). Belgium’s 1889 Housing Act was the first in the world; Britain came second with its Housing of the Working Class Act, 1890. The Dutch Housing Act (*Woningwet*) of 1901 was introduced in 1902.

Government support began in the early 1900s in the form of municipal support for idealistic housing estates, but implementation took some time with a peak after the First World War. These housing estates were initiated by local governments and had also a moral function to uplift the working classes. Social housing became a key element of the newly emerging welfare system. However, the great depression of the 1930s and the Second World War would prohibit the development of housing on estates on a large scale.

It is worth mentioning the Dutch process of ‘*verzuiling*’ (pillarization), that is, the compartmentalization of society along religious or socio-political lines,

Box 3.2 Municipal housing estates in Amsterdam – Amsterdam School

In the Netherlands – which remained neutral throughout the First World War – the national government intervened actively from 1916 onwards by providing large subsidies to stimulate house construction. In Amsterdam, many dwellings were built under the influence of the progressive alderman Florentinus Wibaut, the 'social entrepreneur', who was an important figure in social democratic Amsterdam for two decades after the First World War. The years up to 1930 were an important period in Dutch social housing, as many new estates were characterized by high architectural quality, spacious internal layouts (for those days), set within 'Garden City' styled local environments. The Amsterdam School gained international fame: more than 30,000 housing units were built there between 1915 and 1921. Municipal housing was not only built in the major cities, but also in towns throughout the country. The underlying principle was to uplift both the material and the moral condition of the population.

which was evident in unions, schools, neighbourhood centres, and housing. There were non-profit housing associations for Catholics, Protestants, socialists and generalists, producing streets or neighbourhoods of like-minded people. This compartmentalization would last until at least the 1970s and its effects are still visible in Dutch society.

3.2 Early housing ideas

Garden cities in new towns

The concerns about slum conditions stimulated the search for healthier urban and housing environments. Ebenezer Howard's influential 1898 plan for a 'Garden City' established the principle of combining the best of 'town' and 'country' in small and low-density developments away from the overcrowded city. The 'garden suburb' of the 1920s and 1930s constituted a genuine housing form, built in response to the excesses of unregulated urbanization. Renowned garden cities in England are Welwyn and Letchworth, which were built in the 1920s and 1930s.

Howard became the inspiration for the New Town Movement, a way of urban planning that had large impacts all around the world. These new towns were basically the same as the garden cities, but were built on a larger scale. A well-known example, also in England, is Milton Keynes, which was developed from the late 1960s onwards. Both the garden cities and the new towns were intended to be self-sufficient – not dormitory towns, but places with enough employment and facilities, and their own food supplies.

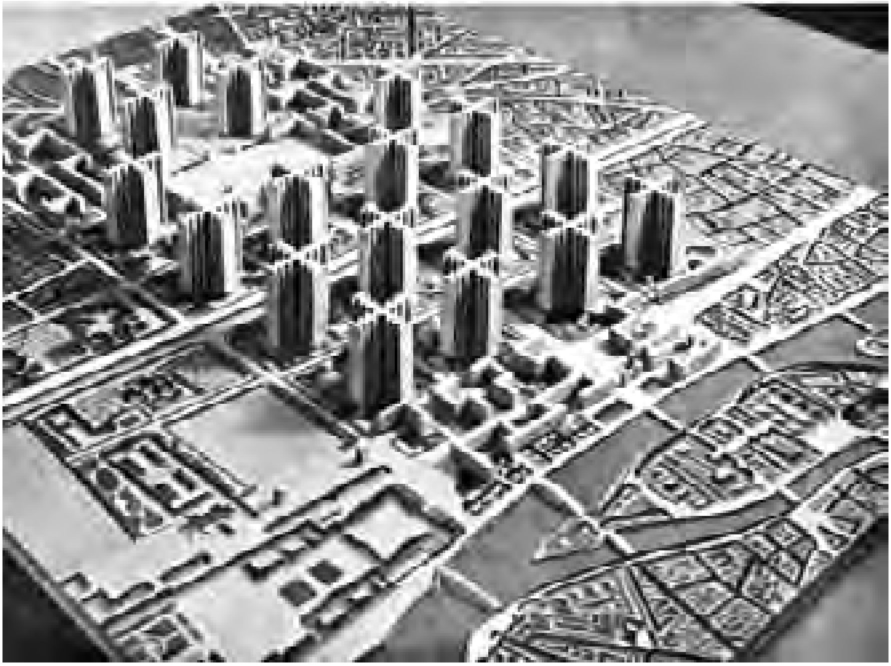
However, these features proved difficult to realize. The situation has improved, but even today the new towns are places where more people sleep than work: in the morning, people move out and return only in the evening. The basic idea behind new towns is to develop new housing areas at a greater distance from the core city. This happened, and is still happening, all over the world. In countries such as China, Indonesia, Egypt and Brazil many new towns are being developed at present, to relieve the pressure on the core cities (see e.g. INTI, International New Town Institute, and ENTP, European New Town Platform ENTP).

In the Netherlands, the *groeikernenbeleid* (‘growth pole policy’ or new town policy) gradually developed from the 1960s onwards. There have been between 15 and 25 of these new towns in the Netherlands, depending on the definition used. The official new town policy was abandoned in 1988, after its heydays in around 1980 (Faludi & Van der Valk, 1994; Van der Schaar, 1991; Pantus, 2012). In these new towns, housing was built on a large scale. The first new town in the Netherlands was Zoetermeer, near the city of The Hague, which developed from a village with 9,000 inhabitants in 1962 to a city with 120,000 inhabitants at present. In the first couple of years, mainly high-rise blocks were built, in conformity with the modern ideas of those days. This was the same period that saw the development of the Bijlmermeer, as a new town of the city of Amsterdam.

Modern CIAM architects

Most dwelling construction followed traditional ideas in the inter-war years, but by the 1930s a more radical philosophy had begun to emerge. *Das Neue Bauen* had its roots in Germany, but was to be of great international influence, especially in the USSR. Moreover, Stalin’s Soviet Union provided a model with collective rental housing for workers on a large scale. This model was used in European countries under Communism, and also provided an inspiring example for Western European architects and planners, both between the world wars and in the first years after the Second World War. According to the principles of Modernism, architects and urban planners believed it was possible to construct a new and egalitarian society by providing dramatically improved housing and environmental conditions for the working classes.

From 1928 onwards, the *Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) organized international congresses that were to have a major influence on the construction of large housing estates. Probably the most inspiring and prominent member of CIAM was the Swiss architect Le Corbusier. At the third Congress in 1930, Le Corbusier introduced his famous Ville Radieuse (‘Radiant City’) concept as a universal solution to the European housing problem. The free-standing high-rise block was promoted as the only way to realize modernist building principles, and at the fourth Congress in 1933, the concept of the ‘functionalist city’ offered the perfect environment for its construction



Ville Radieuse. Illustrations from Le Corbusier, Radiant City (Source: Hall, 1988, p. 208).

(see Declerck, 2004; Hall, 1988; Turkington *et al.,* 2004).

A housing estate as a planned neighbourhood unit

The development of housing estates is related to the development of neighbourhoods. Architects and urban planners had thought not only about better housing units, but also about better living environments. The nineteenth and early 20th century slums were rejected not only because of the small, overcrowded and unhygienic housing, but also because of the stuffy streets hidden from the daylight, where the inhabitants were likely to engage in disorder and revolution. Hall called the 19th-century slum city the ‘City of dreadful night’, after the late 19th-century poet James Thomson (Hall, 1988, p. 14). Polasky (2001) spoke of ‘teeming, chaotic and congested cities, where the ever increasing number of workers who huddled in blind alleys and rookeries threatened urban order’.

Urban planning reformers thought about solutions, which resulted in garden cities, new towns and modern CIAM ideas, as well as in the neighbourhood unit planning idea of the American planner Perry, who elaborated on the enlightened ideas of the human ecologists of the Chicago School. Urban planning of the post-war large housing estates leaned heavily on these important neighbourhood planning ideas. Good neighbourhoods should provide a solid basis for people as protection against the anonymous urban society, and as a defence against totalitarian regimes – Communism or Nazism (Nystrom, 2006).

Many post-war housing estates were built according to the idea of the neighbourhood unit, a neighbourhood that would flourish by itself, where houses and all the necessary services, like schools and neighbourhood centres, were within the same unit or area. The post-war large housing estates were very orderly and well planned, contrary to the chaotic urban planning of

Box 3.3 Functionalist housing

Most early post-war urban housing was built on distinctive housing estates, which were often large in their local contexts. The role of the state was central in financing and organizing house building, and national governments took the lead with the supply of large brick and mortar subsidies for the construction of housing estates. In these years, Modernist or Functionalist ideas gained their most widespread expression. Much state-subsidized housing from this period is characterized by early forms of mass production, and by the construction of low-rise blocks of flats and terraced housing, grouped in similar settings, ideally in open and sunny locations.

the pre-war years. The following chapter elaborates on these carefully developed neighbourhood planning ideas, which gained momentum after the war.

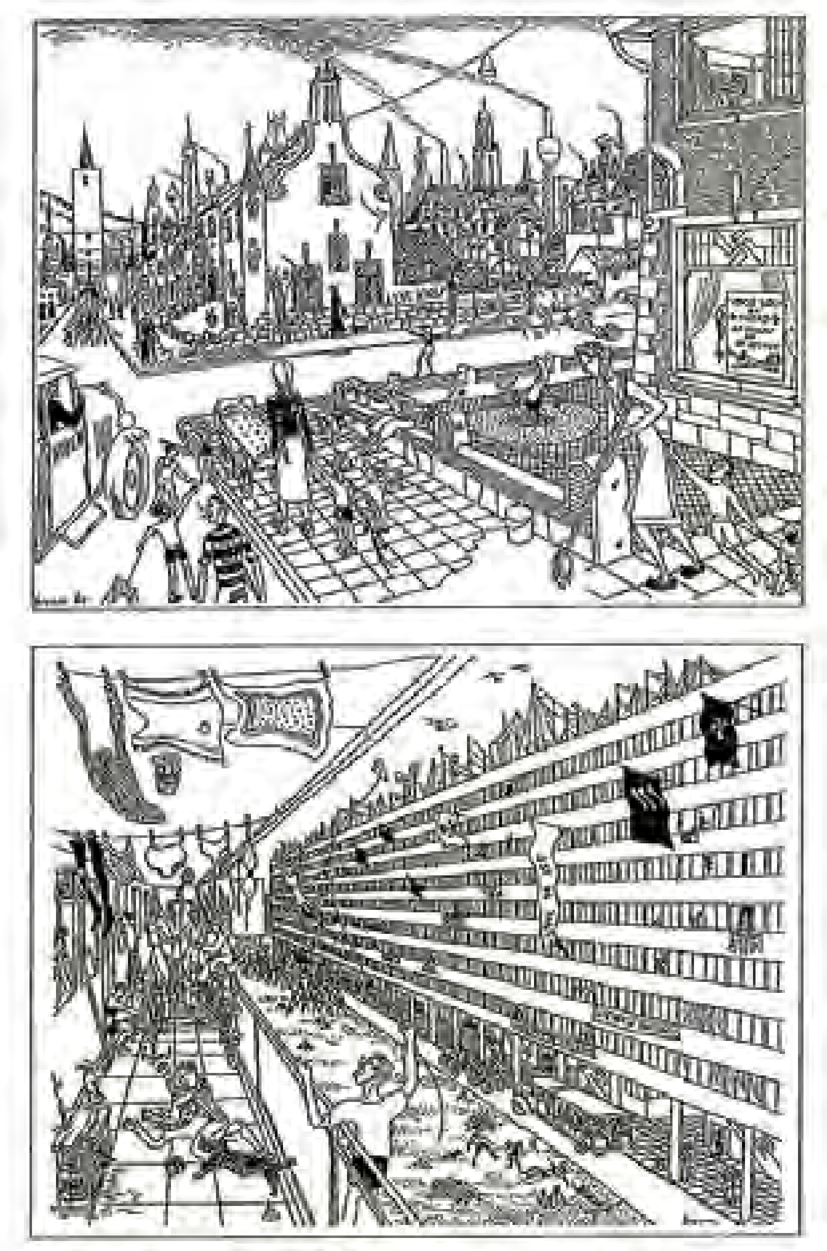
3.3 The result: mass housing for the millions

By the end of the Second World War, much of Europe was suffering from social, physical and economic chaos. Whole cities had been destroyed, their infrastructure wrecked and economies ruined. The lack of sufficient and adequate housing, a problem dating from the 1930s, was worsened by the collapse of construction and the war damage. Extensive population movements made the situation even worse. The redrawing of Europe's frontiers resulted in the migration of hundreds of thousands of people. Despite these pressures, the immediate post-war priority for most countries was to rebuild their national economy, but from the 1950s onwards many new neighbourhoods were realized that symbolized the fight against the 'housing enemy'.

The three decades following the Second World War are often considered the golden age of social housing, les trentes glorieuses, as the French call it. Millions of houses were built, the majority on large housing estates. Social housing estates were no longer aimed only at the working classes, but also at the middle classes, key workers and, otherwise, the lowest classes. Social housing policy allowed the majority of the population to share the wealth of the economic boom and was a key factor in the establishment of national welfare states, following Scandinavian examples (see e.g. Esping Andersen, 1990; Lundqvist, 1992; Danermark & Elander, 1994; Hoekstra, 2003; Whitehead & Scanlon, 2007).

It is interesting to note that the modern architects in Western Europe, elaborating their concepts, tested their first ideas in the colonies in northern Africa in the late 1940s and 1950s. Von Osten and colleagues (2010, p. 10) formulated it as follows: "Modern modes of mass construction which were tested in North Africa in the 1940s and 1950s soon migrated to the peripheries of West-

Figure 3.1 Catholic and socialist views of each others housing ideas



Source: Braem (1954) in: Declerck (2004)

ern European cities where the all-too-familiar suburbs arose to accommodate hundreds of thousands of people. In many cases, the inhabitants living in the outskirts of Paris and London originated from the former colonies. Colonial history thus returned home to the European metropolises.”

It is sad that many North Africans ended up in the modernist blocks, however not in North African cities, but in Western European large housing estates.

Technological innovations like building in concrete, the use of large prefabricated components, establishing housing factories on site and the rationalization of the building process stimulated building in large housing estates all across Europe.

Booming housing estates during the golden years
After a period of relative standstill in the field of housing after the great depression, the Second World War and the war damages, the post-war decades were the golden years for the construction of housing estates. Most urban housing was built on these estates: large-scale, uniform, mono-tenure, monofunctional housing constructions on the outskirts of most cities. These large-scale plans resulted in large amounts of housing, which were needed to solve the huge housing shortages. In both Sweden and Hungary, famous ‘million programmes’ were launched to successfully develop one million new dwellings on mass-produced housing estates, dominated by high-rise blocks. All high-rises in the now problematic grands ensembles (French large housing estates) were part of such a programme.

Besides technological progress and quantitative needs, housing estates were extremely ideological. Many were developed according to egalitarian ideas, in which a modernist urban plan could deliver a more equal and fair society, one that was opposite the bourgeois narrow lifestyles of the 1930s (see Figure 3.1).

3.4 Three conditions that favoured the development of large housing estates

Although housing is a major human need, this by no means implies that it is a government task. Only after the Second World War was there a coincidence of three major conditions that contributed to the construction of numerous state-supported large housing estates. These are:

- the political priority given to reducing housing shortages by supplying housing on a large scale;
- the possibilities to make houses on a large scale;
- the willingness to develop estates on a large scale.

The need to provide mass housing after the Second World War was caused by construction arrears after the war, demographic factors like high birth rates, migration from the countryside to the cities, international migration and growing prosperity.

The second condition is the increasing possibilities. Technical inventions, construction improvements, smarter process organization and fuelling finance constructions led to more, better and higher housing estates at lower costs. The introduction of elevators in social housing made higher housing possible.

The third condition was the increased political willingness to intervene in housing. Whereas in earlier years hopes were placed in the proper working of the market, after the war there was a general concordance that governments had to play a more active role, not only in creating an overall welfare state, but also in providing housing. A good society should no longer be determined by laissez-faire policy (let the market do its job), by people themselves or by some higher being: a good society could be made. In all developed countries the state increasingly provided social services, including housing. In some of these countries the role of the state turned out to be rather limited (in time period and the number of houses and services), whereas in other countries the welfare state was vital, and still is today. Regarding housing, ideas that had developed in the first part of the 20th century, gained momentum. It is under these circumstances that most large housing estates were developed.

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4 The Netherlands: adaptation of the carefully planned structure

Frank Wassenberg (2004), in: Built Environment 32 (1), pp. 12-31, http://www.alexandrinepress.co.uk/be_previous_issues.php

The facility structure in post-war areas of the Netherlands is probably one of the most intricate in the world, with facilities clustered in neighbourhood units that are functionally ordered across the cities. However, developments in society threatened the viability of the hierarchic structure and forced the adaptation or dismantling of neighbourhood centres at the base of the pyramid, a process still continuing. Economic viability competes with the social desirability of a neighbourhood centre as a heart of the neighbourhood.

As a reaction to the problems of pre-World War II urban areas, most post-war developments in the Netherlands, constructed during the 1950s and 1960s, were designed according to the principle of the neighbourhood unit, each with its own schools and shops within walking distance and, perhaps typically Dutch, larger centres at cycling distance to serve two or perhaps more of those neighbourhoods. City centres provided facilities at the highest level of the urban hierarchy. A neighbourhood was considered as both an area where individuals could live in safe and familiar surroundings and one that provided all daily facilities.

However, this well thought out structure for facility provision experienced viability problems in later decades, due to developments in society, and changes in population, in neighbourhood centres and within the facility structure itself. These developments led and will continue to lead to adaptations of the structure of facility provision.

In this article the history and development of post-war neighbourhood centres in the Netherlands is examined. The aim is to analyse the origins of the intricate facility structure, to determine what developments have threatened and changed this structure and what the future prospects of neighbourhood centres in the Netherlands will be.

The next section discusses the origins, the ideas behind the layout plans, the construction and the outcomes of the neighbourhoods and their centres. The following section deals with the developments of these centres up to the present day. General demographic, economic, societal, political and other developments have changed their positions, in general in a negative way as is described in the following section. Several strategies are being tried to adapt or revitalize these centres. This links with general policies to renew neighbourhoods. The last part goes into the future of these neighbourhood centres; a future that could be a change in function, for example into housing. Or it could be that other services fill in the gap, for example small firms. Moreover, future general trends and policies can change the local position of neighbourhood centres.

The article is illustrated with a case study of the South-West district of The Hague, an example of a large 1950s and 1960s development with an intricate structure of facilities. The original ideas, the development afterwards and future prospects are examined.

4.1 The origins of neighbourhood planning in the Netherlands

The high point of neighbourhood centre planning was in the post-World War II decades. This period can be characterized by both the battle against the everlasting housing shortages and a change towards a completely different planning concept that was based on the idea that a modern egalitarian society could be physically developed. The urban design of the post-war

neighbourhoods was strongly influenced by CIAM (*Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*). The modern architect had the task of supporting and creating a new, modern, and egalitarian society (Turkington *et al.*, 2004). CIAM had an enormous influence on the development of many post-war neighbourhoods. Standardization, repetition and functionality became the buzzwords of this period, resulting in neighbour hoods with many identical housing types and planning layouts.

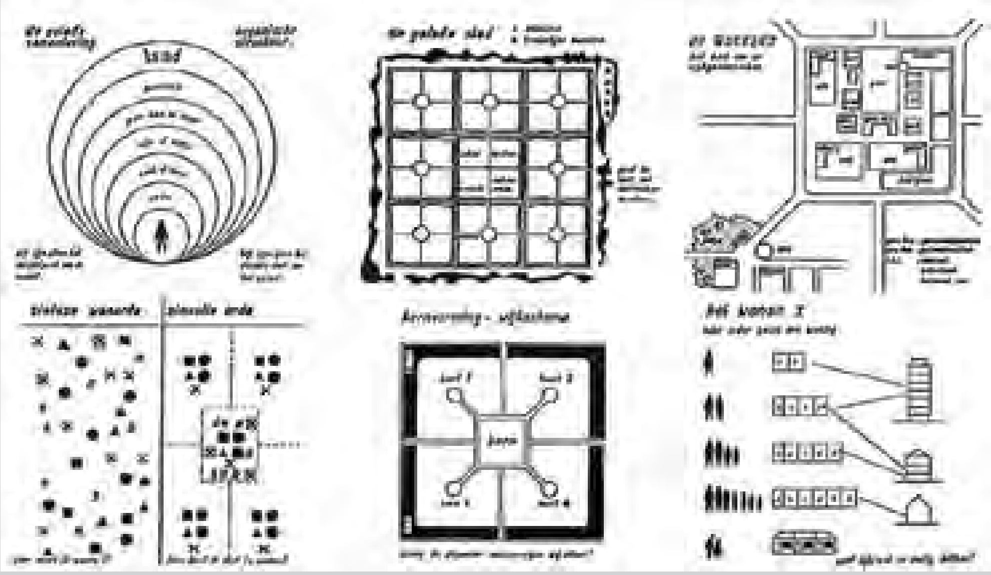
Some neighbourhoods from the 1950s and 1960s were built in a hurry to relieve the housing shortages and were not very well conceived, but quite a lot of others were very well thought out as ideal neighbourhoods. It is ironic that just these neighbourhoods are at present subject to large urban renewal schemes in the Netherlands.

The neighbourhood idea

After the Second World War, the material and social damage was enormous. Almost one fifth of all dwellings had been destroyed or damaged, while there had been a standstill in construction during the war years (de Vreeze, 1993, p. 250). Together with an increasing population, this was the cause of a housing shortage that continued much longer in the Netherlands than in most other countries.

Already during the war years architects started the post-war reconstruction of the Netherlands. In Rotterdam – the city so heavily bombed in 1940 – an influential study group was formed, chaired by A. Bos, director of the Rotterdam Housing Department. They published a report, *De Stad der Toekomst, de Toekomst der Stad* (The city of the future, the future of the city), in 1946. It was written as a programme for the rebuilding of Rotterdam after the war, but was of great influence on all post-war urban development in the Netherlands. The basic idea was that to structure the city into several neighbourhoods would stimulate a better society and therefore better personal well-being.

Figure 4.1 The segmented city

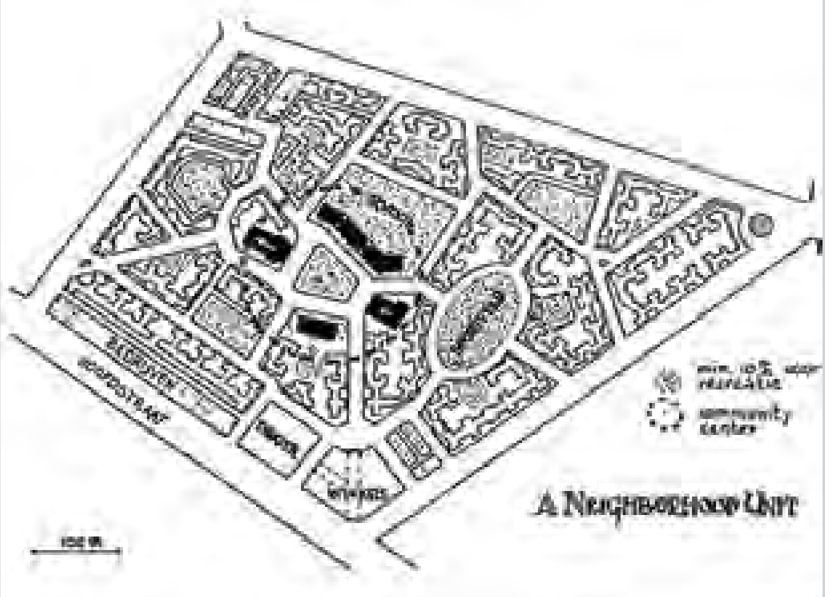


Above left: the family as both the centre and the smallest part of society.
Below left: Most prewar areas were not properly planned, which resulted in a random pattern of facilities and disorder (left side): where should I be? A structured city should be well ordered and organized.
Above centre: The structured city with nine areas (wijk) and the neighbourhood unit (buurt) as the smallest of the squares
Below centre: Enlargement of one of the nine areas (wijk) into four neighbourhood units (buurt). Each unit has a small centre, with a larger centre in the middle.
Above right: The neighbourhood centre as the core of the community. There are three schools, two of them next to a church, and shops concentrated on one side.
Below right: An appropriate dwelling for every kind of family.

According to Opbouw (1946), in: Blom *et al.* (2004)

A central concept in the report was the neighbourhood idea as an answer to the chaos of the war and the fear of the unstructured urban growth of the years before. Bos and his colleagues considered the city too large, too chaotic and too complex for healthy, individual development. The prewar city was considered an obstacle to healthy personal development and community life. The neighbourhood idea was the answer to the dangers of the anonymous city, and the report's authors believed that a well-developed new area would lead to better community life and a more democratic society. The key question would be, according to Bos (1946, p. 49), how to offer the urban inhabitant a convenient and reasonably sized living environment with which he could identify. The answer lay in the segmented structure of the city. The city of the future, in the words of Bos, should no longer be a chaotic conglomeration made up of rows of new houses, but should be ordered into a structure based on separate neighbourhoods, each with its own character and its own social and cultural sphere. The city would be made up of smaller, orderly social communities close to the individual residents. Figure 4.1 shows how the chaotic disordered urban planning should be transformed into organized cities, structured according to hierarchic principles.

Figure 4.2 Scheme of a neighbourhood unit, arranged around facilities in the centre*



* Note that there are two churches and two schools.

After Den Hartog (1946), in: Van der Cammen & De Klerk (2003)

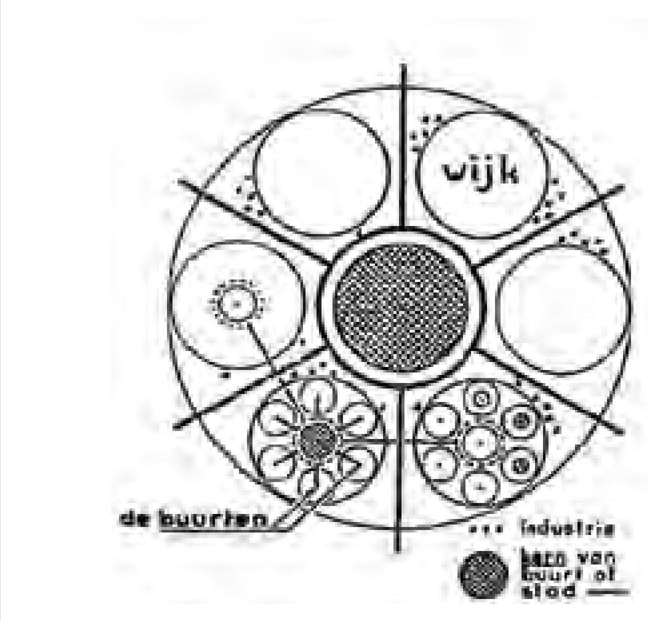
Origins of the Neighbourhood Unit

The neighbourhood idea was derived from the concept of the neighbourhood unit, originally conceived by the American pedagogue and urban planner Clarence Arthur Perry (Perry, 1929). Perry reacted to the influential Human Ecologists of the Chicago School (especially to The City, the 1925 study of the Americans Park, Burgess and McKenzie). The Human Ecologists were not as pessimistic as earlier researchers and argued, on the basis of research in booming Chicago, that urban neighbourhoods would flourish by themselves and that all kinds of spontaneous social contacts would exist.

Clarence Perry was less optimistic. He pleaded for active urban planning based on the neighbourhood unit. Perry in turn was influenced by Ebenezer Howard's garden city ideas (Hall, 2002; De Klerk, 1980). Howard developed completely new towns outside cities, which consisted of 'wards', areas of about 5,000 people, each of which would contain local shops, schools and other services. This, in embryo, is the origin of the neighbourhood unit idea (Hall, 2002). Perry worked this out for New York and developed the idea not merely as a pragmatic device, but as a deliberate piece of social engineering which would help people achieve a sense of identity with the community and with the place (Ibid., see Figure 4.2). Carefully planned neighbourhoods should provide a safe and quiet environment in which the individual development could flourish. A neighbourhood unit should contain:

- Safe traffic. In those days the United States had a car ownership rate that would not be reached in the Netherlands until 1970(!);
- A primary school;
- Daily amenities and its own community centre;

Figure 4.3 Schematic view of the city (the whole circle) in larger areas (wijk) and smaller neighbourhoods (buurten). The cores are greyed.*



* In 1946/1947 W.F. Geyl regularly presented this scheme of the structured city.

Source: Barbieri (1983) and Blom *et al.* (2004)

- An attractive environment with green spaces and playgrounds (De Klerk, 1980; Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 2003).

The ideas of Perry's neighbourhood unit as a starting point for urban development inspired the group around Bos in post-war Netherlands. Another influence came from England, where Forshaw and Abercrombie had just published the County of London Plan in 1943, 'a marvellous piece of work', in the words of Bos (1946, p. 351). The more well-known Greater London Plan (Abercrombie, 1945) crossed Bos' experiences, but certainly would have impressed him as well. Bos and his colleagues considered the redevelopment of war damaged London an example for their own situation in Rotterdam. Going further than Clarence Perry, an explicit goal in the London Plan was the creation of a heterogeneous society in every neighbourhood of the city. This idea was taken on board by the Dutch and has resulted in the mixed neighbourhoods that have been developed in the Netherlands in the postwar decades. In fact, mixed neighbourhoods have been an explicit aim in Dutch urban planning until the present day. Moreover, Bos and his colleagues added to Perry's four aims above and the London feature of heterogeneity, another goal, a political one. Bos wanted to decentralize the city and give political power to the neighbourhoods.

Segmentation of the city

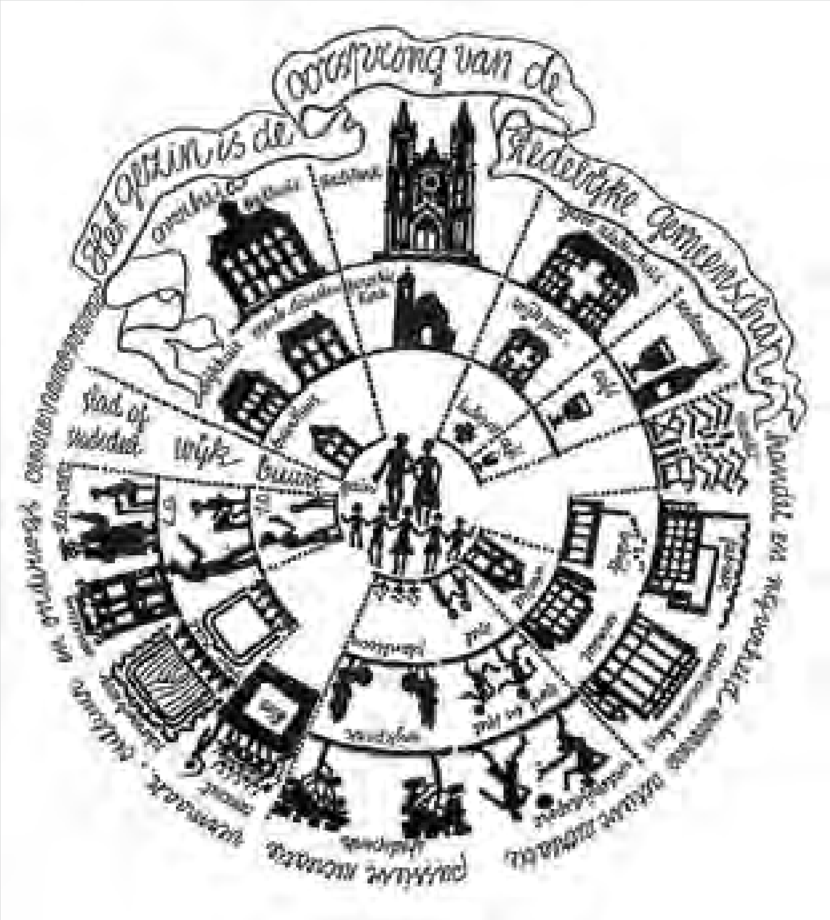
Structured neighbourhood planning fitted very well with both the modern ideas of CIAM (with famous Dutch architects such as Van Eesteren, Stam-

Beese, Van den Broek and Bakema) and those of more traditional architects and planners like Granpré Moliere and Kropholler. Although both streams were competing, they supported the idea of the neighbourhood unit, which made it a powerful urban planning concept. The neighbourhood was both a self-supporting geographical unit and a part of the functional hierarchy of the whole city. As a result, most housing development in the 1950s and 1960s in the Netherlands was arranged according to the principles of the neighbourhood unit. Bos and his colleagues gave a size to the ideal neighbourhood. They distinguished between two scales. A larger neighbourhood area (in Dutch: wijk) should average 5,000 dwellings with, in those days, around 20,000 inhabitants. The smaller neighbourhoods, more like daily communities (in Dutch: buurt) were a functional part of the larger wijk, each with 2,000-4,000 inhabitants. In the smaller neighbourhoods, facilities, such as shops for daily needs, communal playgrounds, a kindergarten and a small community centre, were required. Figure 4.3 illustrates the hierarchic segmented structure of the functional city. W.F. Geyl, a Rotterdam colleague of Bos, visualized the concept of the structured city in more detail. The urban planner had a clear role to plan the neighbourhood unit according to empirical rules as to required population and facilities, to provide all material conditions for a healthy urban community life.

The larger neighbourhood areas (wijk) would provide amenities such as a park, a central community centre, sports facilities and medical and cultural services. On this level also schools and churches were provided. After an international comparison, Bos (1946, p. 339) concluded that the average Dutch neighbourhood would be larger than in other countries because of a specific Dutch phenomenon: denominational divisions. Dutch society was very much split in those days according to ideological and religious lines. The consequence was that many new neighbourhoods were provided with two or even three primary schools and the same number of churches, community centres and cultural facilities, all centrally located in the area. The North American neighbourhood unit was clustered around the school as the central element, and consisted of around 5,000-6,000 inhabitants. In the Dutch situation facilities such as schools, churches, sports facilities, cultural and community centres were all located centrally in the larger neighbourhood area (wijk). Often two or three of each were present in an area: a Protestant one, a Catholic one, sometimes a socialist one and a public one, and sometimes even in sub-varieties.

In areas where denominational divisions were less of an issue, neighbourhood planning differed. In the Catholic southern provinces or the Protestant North, often only one facility of each kind was needed, so neighbourhoods could be smaller. In the Catholic south neighbourhoods were built with about 600 dwellings, arranged around the church and the school, and connected to the city with wide roads (Blom *et al.*, 2004). Figure 4.4 shows an illustration of

Figure 4.4 The neighbourhood idea according to Catholic builders*



* The family is the focus of society, the city is ordered in the direct neighbourhood (buurt) in the inner circle, the wider neighbourhood (wijk) and the city (outer circle). The church is most prominent.

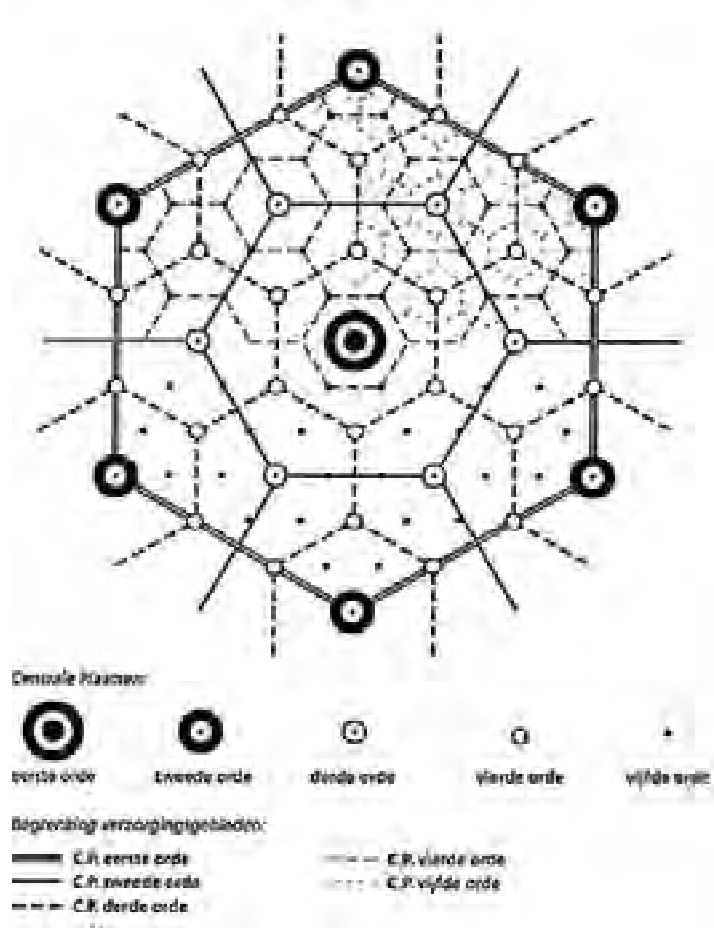
Source: Katholiek Bouwblad (1947)

the neighbourhood idea according to Catholic builders. The family is the base of the urban community, with facilities in the direct vicinity (the inner circle), the neighbourhood (with the primary school, pub and local church) and urban facilities in the outer circle. The church is positioned most prominently.

Functional hierarchy

Neighbourhood centres were planned according to a functional hierarchy. The arrangement of the urban hierarchy was based on distance and proximity. A range of centres can be distinguished at successive levels, comparable to a pyramid: the urban centre at the top, (in large cities an urban district centre), an area centre (wijk), a smaller neighbourhood centre (buurt), and scattered facilities, like shops in the old parts of town. This ‘classic’ hierarchy is based on the urban scale. The early post-war development of The Hague clearly shows this hierarchy (see below). More recently, large peripheral centres have

Figure 4.5 Functional hierarchic relationships according to Christaller


Centrale Plaatsen:
eerste orde
tweede orde
derde orde
vierde orde
vijfde orde
Begrenzing verzorgingsgebieden:
C.P. eerste orde
C.P. tweede orde
C.P. derde orde
C.P. vierde orde
C.P. vijfde orde

Source: Bolt (1995)

been developed, undermining this urban structure. These may be DIY or furniture retail warehouses built on inexpensive land in the suburbs or industrial zones, or they can be large stores such as IKEA. Shopping malls as found in the United States or hypermarkets as in France are scarce in the Netherlands, due to planning restrictions in the past, which have been gradually relaxed.

The functional hierarchy planning principles fitted well into the Central Place Theory of the German geographer Walter Christaller, who formulated his ideas in the 1930s (Christaller, 1933, 1966; see also Bolt, 1995). He determined a geographical pattern of functional hierarchic relationships, in which the larger centres are dispersed and surrounded by smaller centres of a lower hierarchy, each containing fewer services, and a smaller supporting area. This functional hierarchy is valid for both commercial services like shops and also non-commercial services, like schools, libraries and medical care. Leendert Bak has been one of the most influential researchers to support the shopping hierarchy in the Dutch planning system (Bak, 1971). Both post-war urban areas and new villages in the Netherlands are planned according to the principles of the Central Place Theory. A famous example of the latter is the design of the newly won land of the Noordoostpolder in the 1950s, with one central town (Emmeloord) surrounded by a ring of nine villages. Figure 4.5 shows Christaller's schematic view of hierarchic service areas, in which the neighbourhood units are easy to recognize.

Christaller's findings were based on an agricultural society where everyday journeys had to be made on foot. Car mobility has changed this pattern. However, as Bolt (1995) and Kooijman (1999) state, distances are still most important for acquiring necessary products including food. The intricate structure of facility planning in the Netherlands has been based on the distance relationships for ordinary products of the Central Place Theory. The question is what has happened, and what will happen, when mobility and products change again.

Critics of the neighbourhood unit idea

The segmented structure of the city promulgated in the neighbourhood idea was to become a widely accepted principle in the town planning of the 1950s and 1960s. The neighbourhood as a spatial and social entity took an important place in between the individual dwelling, the sphere of the family, and the city as a motor of cultural and societal development. It was a workable principle to order society and an answer to the threat of the massive and anonymous urban society (de Vreeze, 1993, p. 240).

However, the neighbourhood unit was criticized from two angles. Architects concluded that little came in practice of the socially desirable pattern of homogeneity and differentiation, because the focus was on the realization of large numbers of dwellings rather than on the communal facilities. Most residential schemes were mono-functional and widely seen as monotonous, due to the large numbers that were built of a given dwelling type and to the big areas and repeated geometric patterns. The uniformity led to monotony; in fact there was only one type of building that successfully evaded the scourge of uniformity: the church (Ibelings, 1996).

Another criticism came from sociologists, who argued against the territorial point of view of the neighbourhood units. Modern relationships should be based on functional relations, according to occupation, personal interest and motivation, rather than on the very local concentration of the direct environment (de Vreeze, 1993; WRR, 2005). Most prominent was the sociologist Van Doorn (1955), who condemned the neighbourhood unit as reactionary and artificial: social communities could not be shaped, and people would find their own relations, inside and outside their own neighbourhood. In fact, the debate about the role of the environment in the behaviour of inhabitants is still going on. The neighbourhood has never developed into the platform

Table 4.1 Development of population in selected neighbourhoods

	Building period	Dwellings	Inhabitants then	Inhabitants now	
Vlaardingen, Westwijk	Around 1960	5,600	20,000 (start)	11,700	2000
Tilburg, Stokhasselt	1960s	2,700	8,900 (start)	7,200	2000
Zwolle, Holtenbroek	1960s	4,500	14,000 (1970)	9,500	2002
Arnhem, Malburgen	1950s +1960s	7.500	21,000 (1980)	17,000	2002
Utrecht, Kanaleneiland	Around 1960	over 8,000	30,000 (start)	19,000	1999
Schiedam, Nieuwland	1950s	6,700	21,000 (1971)	16,000	2001
The Hague Zuidwest	1950s +1960s	31,000	100,000 (1970)	61,000	2002

Source: Wassenberg (2004)

on which most relationships are formed, but a well-functioning neighbourhood does contribute to the quality of life, as a recent influential report states (WRR, 2005).

Despite its critics, the neighbourhood unit functioned well throughout the 1950s and 1960s as a means to develop newly built areas, including an intricate structure facility (de Vreeze, 1993). An important reason why this structure had to change lies within other major trends in society, such as technological and demographic changes. These major developments are discussed in the next section.

4.2 Developments since the 1960s

Most neighbourhoods including their hierarchically ordered centres were very well developed in the 1950s and 1960s according to the functional and hierarchic principles of Bos, Perry, Christaller and others as discussed above. What happened once they were realized? This section goes into the developments since the 1960s.

The traditional structure has been threatened, and will be in the future, by a range of factors, which can be categorized in four groups. The first three are on the demand side (the consumers' side), such as a declining household size and increasing mobility. The fourth category has to do with the supply side, like the process of scaling up. The four groups are:
(a) demographic developments;
(b) technological developments;
(c) changed attitudes and behaviour;
(d) developments in the supply of facilities: shops and non-commercial facilities.

Demographic developments

The first demographic development in the post-war neighbourhoods is less people. The houses of the 1950s and 1960s were built for families with children. The Hague's South-West suburbs were developed for 100,000 people, but at present, there are merely 60,000. Table 4.1 shows some examples of developments in other Dutch neighbourhoods that were built in the decades following World War II. On the average, today's population is only two-thirds of the original. There are fewer people per house, and fewer people on the streets. All of these neighbourhoods are the subject of major renewal schemes today. One of the aims is often to enlarge the number of dwellings to

Table 4.2 Population according to building period, 2000

	1945-1959	1960-1969	Netherlands total
Low income*	47%	39%	35%
55 plus	42%	45%	35%
Single	39%	32%	31%
Dwellings (numbers)	785,144	989,496	6,505,253

* Priority groups for housing policy and housing allowances

Source: Ministry of VROM (2003)

keep up the population size.

The second demographic development is older people. The then young families have grown old, children left the house, but many people stayed. When people died or moved to newer neighbourhoods their place was taken by newcomers, often young singles or couples. At present in 65% of all Dutch dwellings there are no children. This used to be 57% in 1987 and 45% in 1970. In less attractive areas, with an austere housing stock or liveability problems, the exodus was more intense. In these more problematic neighbourhoods many newcomers are immigrant families, thus reversing the decrease in population.

The third demographic development is poorer people. Most newer suburbs were built at a higher standard, aiming at the middle classes. Every new house and new neighbourhood was just slightly larger, more luxurious and more expensive. Each new house resulted in the existing houses being less appreciated. This caused selective migration processes, meaning that the outmovers had higher incomes than the in-movers. The socio-economic position of the inhabitants of the post-war areas gradually decreased, while it had been above average at the beginning. Table 4.2 shows some characteristics of the population in the postwar areas. On average, in these areas there are now more elderly, singles and people with low incomes. Moreover, in these areas the proportion of low-income immigrants has increased sharply, as the case of The Hague illustrates.

Technological developments

Three kinds of technological development can be identified: mobility, household appliances and telecommunications.

In 1960 there were only half a million cars in the Netherlands – less than the level of car ownership in the United States in the early 1920s – while the number of cars had multiplied by ten in 1990, and today there are about 7 million cars, fourteen times as many as in 1960. That is on average one car per household, but well below that in countries such as Germany or Italy (or the United States) (Wassenberg, 2004; Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 2003). However, cars dominate every street scene. The empty streets we see in photographs from the 1950s are replaced by rows of parked cars. Another consequence is that most people can use a car to do their shopping in the discount stores further away or go to sports facilities on the other side of town. But declining urban neighbourhood facilities are a problem for those who do not have a car.

A second feature is the growth of household appliances. Most important are the refrigerator and, later on, the freezer. These made it possible to do the bulk shopping once a week, and diminished the need for daily shopping close by.

A third development is telecommunications. From the 1960s the television was introduced as the main entertainment centre in the living room, which was an attack on neighbourhood life in community centres. The influence of television has grown since then, nowadays accompanied by the availability of the Internet and mobile phones. All of these technological developments made people less dependent on activities and facilities in their own neighbourhood.

Social-cultural developments

Consumers in the 1950s and 1960s were fairly predictable. The average household consisted of a husband, who 'went out to work', a wife, most of whose social contacts were nearby, and children. Society was focused on the neighbourhood, where facilities were available; children kept the mother at home or in the close vicinity, and facilities and work were easily reached on foot or by bicycle. Shops were visited daily, or services such as the baker and the milkman delivered at home. Most of the income was, outside recurrent expenses, spent on food (Bolt, 1995).

Today consumer preferences are not as predictable as those of their (grand) parents. Traditional families are being replaced by a mix of household types, less people visit shops and other services on a daily basis. Women have gone out to work on a wide scale, family sizes have declined and time has become a scarce commodity, limiting the time for shopping as much as possible.

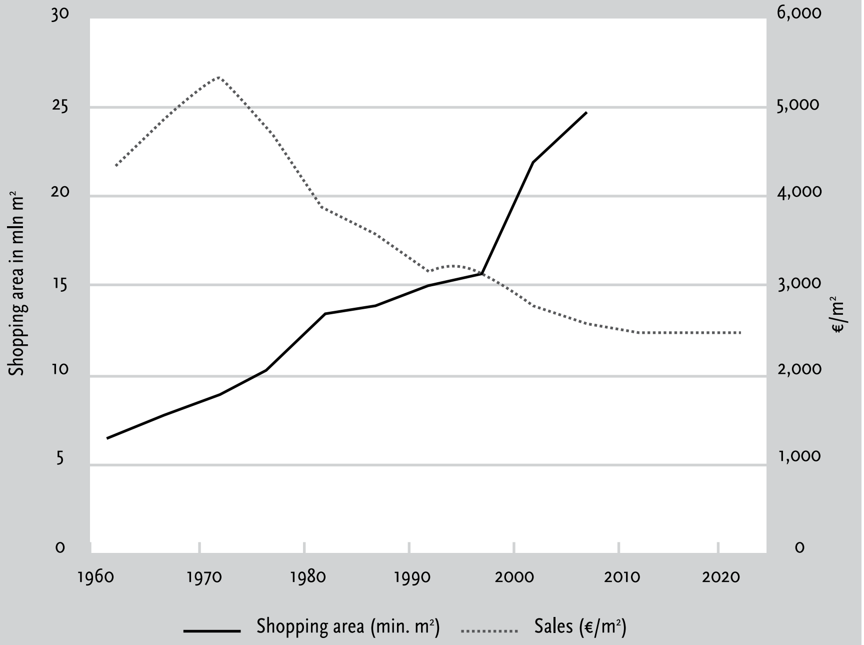
Today, people's scope has broadened. Globalization combined with technological possibilities has given people contacts all over the world. Friends and relatives do not live close by, as they had done for centuries, holidays have provided contacts with other cultures, immigration has made foreigners part of society. As a consequence, people are not as dependent on their local neighbourhood as they were in the 1950s.

Developments in the supply of facilities: shops

Facilities in the neighbourhood can be divided into commercial (mainly shops) and non-commercial, such as schools, care, sports, libraries and social centres. Both categories were planned carefully according to the principles of the neighbourhood unit, accessibility and distance dependency as described above.

Problems with declining shopping centres in the post-war areas are easy to see. Five or ten shops in a row, one empty, one with a closing-down sale, one brand new. It is never busy, turnover rates of premises are high and profit is low. Meanwhile on the other side of town, new large shopping malls arise, sometimes in peripheral locations, sometimes in a business park or near an existing district centre. Both developments are part of the same process of scaling up and economic rationalization.

Figure 4.6 Developments in retail in the Netherlands



Source: WPM Groep (2005)

The increase in scale is very evident from the data, most of which refer to shopping area (in m^2 floor space), and not to shops. While the total number of shops decreased marginally, the average area of a shop increased from 50 m^2 in 1960 to 100 m^2 in 1980 and 170 m^2 in 1998.

The Netherlands is a country where planning and building is subject to restrictions. Most of the debate in this field, however, is over restriction on housing plans. New businesses and shopping areas are much easier to realize. Figure 4.6 shows that there has been a large increase of shopping area over time. The total shopping floor area has multiplied by four since 1960 up to 25 million m^2 today (left axis). The rise was strongest during the last ten years. Plans for the next couple of years will add a further 3 million m^2 (NVB, 2005). The figure shows that at the same time the sales per square metre did not keep up with this trend. The process of economic scaling up leads to more shopping area, but lower sales per square metre of shop.

The total shopping area per person has risen from 0.6 m^2 in 1960 and 1.0 m^2 in the late 1980s, towards 1.5 m^2 in 2004. This means more floor space and more choice for the customers. In fact, the contemporary Dutch 1.5 m^2 per customer is the highest in Europe (NVB, 2005). ‘Nowhere in the world exists such an intricate structure of shopping facilities. The shopping area per square kilometre cultivated land is about three times that of the rest of Europe (EU-15), according to Bolt (1995, p. 42). A consequence of this growth is both more vacancies and a large and increasing competition. Vacancies in shopping premises rose by 34% during the period 2000-2004, or 1.6 million m^2, which equals 6.7% of the total floor area of all shops (Locatus, 2003; Dasselaar, 2004; NVB, 2005).

There is a big difference between shopping area and floor space. There are about 2,800 shopping centres in the Netherlands, defined as a minimum of five concentrated shops (Kooijman, 1999). Half of all shopping centres can be found in neighbourhood centres (buurt, 5-10 shops) and area centres (wijk, 10-25 shops). However, these comprise a mere 7% of all shopping floor space. The rest of the shopping floor space is divided among the central areas (40%), city district centres (8%) and scattered and peripheral shops (Bolt, 2003; Dasselaar, 2004). The fastest growth is found in the scattered and peripheral shops, which hardly existed in 1970, but at present make up some 45% of all floor space. Shops in neighbourhood centres are limited by size.

The conclusion from these data might be that the role of neighbourhood and area centres has decreased in shopping area, sales and position in the retail market. The processes of economic enlargement of scale have minimized the economic role of neighbourhood centres.

One could argue that most of the new shopping is non-food, thus development does not harm food stores in the neighbourhood. In retail literature, shopping is divided into three categories: runshopping, funshopping and thematic shopping (Bolt, 1995; Terpstra, 2002). The last two categories are less interesting for neighbourhood centres. Funshopping is in between buying commodities and leisure. City centres provide the best environment for the simultaneous combination of buying and leisure, but with competition from new large peripheral shops. Thematic shopping refers to larger purpose-driven purchases, for which customers want to compare shops.

Runshopping is the purchasing of daily necessities, characterized by a frequent use, and a small variety in quality, type or price. These are the commodities offered in neighbourhood centres. Runshoppers want to save time. Supermarkets serve this goal best. Kruyzen (in Terpstra, 2002) points out that most Dutch customers are not interested in their daily shopping. Three-quarters buy all food products, including all fresh items, in supermarkets. The large majority does this by car, and only once or twice a week. The number of products offered in supermarkets has increased fivefold since the 1960s (Terpstra, 2002). The assortment of supermarkets is broadening, the amount of non-food offered increases, the concept of ‘one-stop-shopping’ is elaborated and the enlargement of scale is continuing. Moreover, opening times for shops have been relaxed since 1996, a gesture that has favoured the major supermarkets.

Another feature is worth mentioning, especially in the neighbourhoods of the 1950s and 1960s, where immigrants start new businesses. The share of ‘ethnic entrepreneurs’ (born in non-Western countries) is growing. While the total number of all firms in the Netherlands was more or less stable during the period 1993-2003, the share of ethnic entrepreneurs almost doubled from about 5,000 to almost 9,000. Although a rather large part of them does not survive the first year (14% in 2003), this figure is slowly improving (28% in

1993) (Van den Tillaart and Doesburg, 2004). These ethnic entrepreneurs open a large proportion of new businesses in the post-war shopping centres. An obvious feature is that, despite their limited size, they 'sell everything', and moreover, they serve not only their own ethnic group, but all local residents.

Non-commercial facilities

Not only shops, but also non-commercial facilities have suffered, from the 1970s onwards, from the changes in society mentioned above. In the first years after completion the neighbourhoods functioned well. Schools, kindergartens, social services, playing facilities, libraries, and churches: all came more or less up to the expectations. However, children grew older, looking for places to play football or hang around instead of facilities for small children. Secondary schools grew while kindergartens shrank. Later on, the children left, making their parents 'empty nesters'. Meanwhile, the population decreased. The next generation of children lives in newer neighbourhoods farther away, leading to empty schools in the older areas. Some of the carefully planned neighbourhoods of the 1950s and 1960s went another way. In these areas turnover rates were high, selective processes of migration occurred, newcomers replaced a large part of the original population. In these less popular estates many immigrants entered, their children making the local schools into 'black schools'.

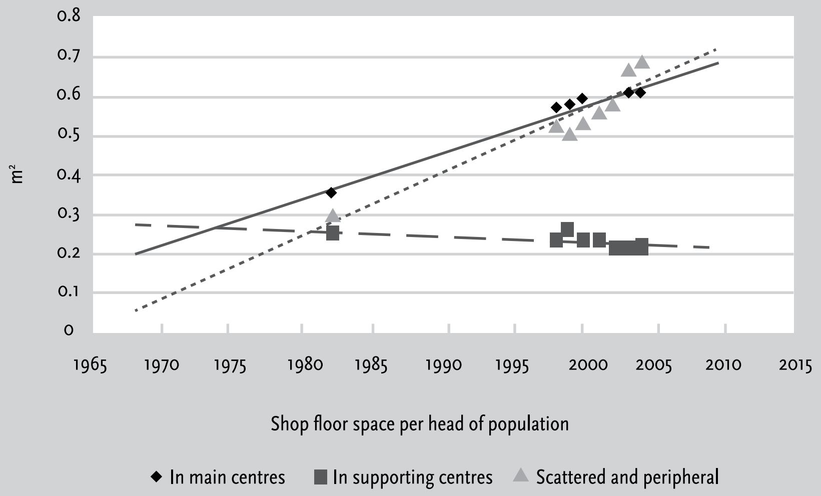
Sporting facilities went the same route. Originally, there were several sports clubs, but because of pull factors (most sportsmen live in the newer areas) and push factors (the green spaces were attractive places to use for other functions) many football, hockey and other sports clubs have moved. The case of The Hague illustrates this change, which also can be seen in smaller towns.

Churches often were the centres of the neighbourhood when built in the post-war years. However, processes of secularization, which began in the late 1960s, undermined their central position. Some churches have been pulled down, or transformed into housing or other uses (sometimes even mosques) or have broadened their scope with other functions such as social activities. Social centres mostly survived, although subject to cutbacks every now and then, relying on volunteers to organize social activities.

4.3 Consequences of the developments for neighbourhood centres

The previous sections showed how post World War II neighbourhood centres in the Netherlands were ordered and organized, according to a functional segmentation of the city, and what happened since the 1960s. This section will look at the consequences of these developments for several kinds of centre. We will divide them into winning and losing locations, joining Bolt (1995,

Figure 4.7 Development of floor space area per type of location



Source: WPM Groep (2005)

2003), Locatus (2003) and WPM Groep (2005). First, the winners. On top of the pyramid is the city centre, which has gained in importance. This may be unlike American cities, but is similar to many European cities. The numbers of shops and pubs in the inner cities have grown since the 1960s, while they have been lost in the non-central parts of town. After decline in the 1970s and 1980s, the population in most Dutch inner cities has grown in the last decade, due to intensive building schemes. Inner cities have been upgraded, restyled and beautified, to make them more attractive. The inner cities have proved to be very flexible in accommodating all kinds of facilities. Below the inner-city level in the pyramid are the major centres elsewhere in the city. They have gained as well, but often after major modification in the 1980s and 1990s. Furniture stores, media suppliers and garden centres have grown on peripheral boulevards. These larger district centres profit from the often difficult car accessibility and parking problems in central cities and have developed a regional function, as the case of The Hague shows. Providing a wide range of daily foodstuffs, non-food goods and leisure and offering easy and cheap accessibility, these district centres are competing city centres.

The losers can be found in the neighbourhood centres of the post-war decades, as well as facilities throughout the older, pre-war areas. There are less shops and non-commercial facilities at the bottom of the pyramid. Figure 4.7 illustrates this for commercial facilities and shows the change of floor sales area in the Netherlands since 1970, divided among three kinds of areas, and corrected for the growth of population. The total amount of floor space tripled from about 7.5 million m^2, or 0.6 m^2 per person, to 22 million m^2, or 1.5 m^2 per person (WPM Groep, 2005; NVB, 2005). More interesting is the development as to type of location. The city centres show a growing amount of shop-space since the 1970s. The shops in peripheral locations have grown even more and at present equal the total in city centres. The losers obviously are the neighbourhood centres and other local shops (WPM, 2005). More than half of all shops (in floor space) were found in these small neighbourhood shopping centres until 1970, but slowly they have decreased, both proportionally and in absolute numbers. While in the country the amount of shopping area tripled since the 1970s, it continuously decreased in the neighbourhood centres.

4.4 Renewing the local neighbourhood structure in The Hague South-West

The South-West district in The Hague is a good example of careful facility planning, unexpected developments afterwards and recent strategies to adapt the intricately planned facility structure. The South-West district contains most of The Hague's expansion from the 1950s and 1960s. The area originally was developed to house 100,000 people. The city of The Hague forms a part of the densely populated south wing of the Randstad with at present 470,000 inhabitants. The South-West district was developed according to modern ideas of urban planning. Wide streets divide the district into four to six larger neighbourhood areas (wijk), each of these being divided into several smaller neighbourhoods (buurt). Most of the houses were social rented flats in long four-storey blocks. Facilities such as schools, churches, community and medical centres were well provided, especially sports facilities (there were thirty-seven football pitches), but employment premises were kept low as a result of the division of functions. Originally there were twenty-eight shopping centres in South-West, carefully planned according to the principles of even dispersion and accessibility. Scattered shops were avoided, according to the planning doctrine of clear arrangements.

However, as a result of general developments in society, almost all of the twenty-eight centres experienced viability problems. First and probably most important, the population declined by 40% to only 60,000 inhabitants. Moreover, the socioeconomic status of the population dropped. Ouwehand (2002) describes this process: in the 1950s and 1960s the dwellings were inhabited by the middle classes: white collar workers, civil servants, teachers and better off working classes. In the 1970s and 1980s, new areas were built with affordable single-family houses and filtering processes in the housing market took place. Quite a lot of newcomers were poor inhabitants from the old neighbourhoods that were being renewed. South-West became synonymous for monotony and massiveness. The middleclass households from the 1960s were still dominant in the mid-1980s. A report from that time states that unemployment was about three-quarters of the city level, the number of migrants about half the city average, and half of the inhabitants were over 50 years old (a third in the city). Only 11% was under 15 years old, which has had consequences for schools and sports facilities (Gemeente Den Haag, 1987). Today, the situation has changed. The number of people over 65 years is still large

Revitalization and upgrading of the main centre Leyweg has given it a regional function.

(over 20% in 2003), but on top of that, most newcomers are young singles or couples, the number of children is rising again, the share of migrants (of non-Dutch origin) has grown rapidly from 30% in 1995 to 44% in 2001. The average annual incomes range from €17,200 to €18,900, well below the urban average of €21,400. South-West is one of the poorer parts of The Hague (Gemeente Den Haag, 2003).

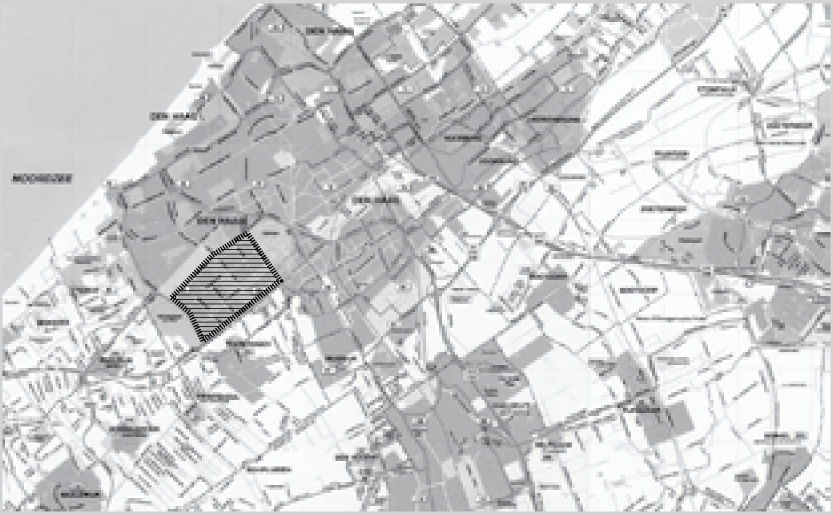
On the supply side there have been processes of scale increase and growing competition in the wider region. Already in the 1980s there was increasing concern about facilities such as schools, churches and sports facilities, which were not used very frequently. Some of these had to close. This process was most visible in the shopping structure. The twenty-eight shopping centres functioned well in the early years. However, ongoing global trends such as depopulation, greying, economic scaling up and rising car mobility had their impacts. From the late 1980s on, the policy was to concentrate the remaining shops in viable centres (Gemeente Den Haag, 1987).

Now the strategy is to concentrate amenities in only fourteen centres, and redevelop the remaining fourteen. Six of the fourteen are being actively renewed and stimulated, part of a large urban renewal scheme for the whole district. One centre at the top of the distribution pyramid, Leyweg, has been redeveloped and is now promoted as ‘the second centre in The Hague’, after the inner city, with 37,500 m^2 of shopping floor space and 125 shops.

Leyweg is being supported by two district (wijk) centres and three minor neighbourhood (buurt) centres. Eight other centres are receiving some attention, while the remaining fourteen are being redeveloped. Vacant shops can be converted into dwellings or small business premises or art centres. This offers several goals at once: inexpensive accommodation for start-up firms, more employment within the district, and a mix of functions (Gemeente Den Haag, 2003).

The main centre, Leyweg, has been modernized to fulfil a regional function. When South-West was built, Leyweg was the only larger centre in the agglomeration of The Hague, after the historic cores of The Hague and Delft. Six oth-

Figure 4.8 Shopping areas in The Hague and its surrounding cities



The 1960s South-West area, with the centre Leyweg, is boxed. Later on, Leyweg got competition from many newer district centres.

er district centres have been developed since, all of them with a regional function (Figure 4.8).

The case of The Hague South-West clearly shows the consequences of a process of enlargement of scale: the pyramid of facilities was widened at the top and hollowed at the bottom, at the same time.

4.5 The future and discussion

Post-war neighbourhood centres have been planned according to a functional hierarchy that has resulted in an intricate facility structure. This has been the planning principle for all kinds of facilities in the Netherlands in the post-war decades, for both commercial (shops) and non-commercial facilities, like schools, care and culture. The functional hierarchy can be regarded as a pyramid, with the city centre at the top and small neighbourhood centres at the bottom. This hierarchy functioned well in the 1950s and 1960s. Later on, somewhere in the 1970s and 1980s, the intricate structure came under pressure. Processes of scaling up and rationalization led to fewer shops and facilities such as libraries and childcare at the neighbourhood level. Demographic processes led to fewer people and people with other characteristics. Individualism and prosperity led to wider travel patterns and less dependency on local contacts. Technological progress made people less dependent on their daily environment and car mobility replaced the need for proximity.

The role of neighbourhood centres has decreased, and the prospects are that this process will continue. Some data illustrate the decline of local shopping centres in postwar areas: the overall total shopping area has tripled in the Netherlands since the 1970s, but it has decreased in the neighbourhood centres. Half of all shop floor space was situated in neighbourhood and sup-

This neighbourhood centre in The Hague South-West will keep its function. It is a characteristic example of a post-war developed neighbourhood centre.

porting centres in the 1960s, but this has diminished to only 15% at present.

Many other services in the neighbourhoods are declining as well. Community centres, pubs, restaurants had viability problems and many have closed, or moved out. Facilities on a wider scale (wijk) have moved as well. Post offices, banks, libraries, medical centres, police stations, city halls, all of these have concentrated due to processes of economic rationalization. In short, the two lowest levels of the functional pyramid have declined and probably will decline further in the near future.

It is remarkable, however, that at the same time we can see support for the lowest level, the neighbourhood. Local shops are getting support, not for commercial, but for social reasons. The last supermarket in the neighbourhood – similar to the village – has a growing importance as a social meeting point. There is a lively debate in the Netherlands in support of commercial facilities for social reasons by not only local authorities, but also housing associations. This is more the case in the areas built in the 1950s and 1960s, where housing associations own much property. They can, for example, offer the shops a moderate rent. And there is support by the local residents themselves, who are confronted with vacant properties instead of lively meeting places. People can buy shares to support a commercial interest.

Another kind of concentration is taking place within the school sector. New schools are being built, replacing the old schools which served separate denominations. These buildings are used more intensively, for functions after school hours such as afternoon activities for school children, adult courses, sports and social events. Schools have a more central function within the neighbourhood.

Policy

There are two major national policy areas worth mentioning regarding the future of neighbourhood centres. The first is economy oriented, following current trends. The careful neighbourhood planning in the 1960s was accompanied by restrictive policies to maintain the intricate facility structure. Gradually the role of national government became less restrictive. Large peripheral shopping centres were prohibited, and only in the late 1980s occasionally permitted. However, as in other countries in Europe and in the United States the shopping landscape was overrun by mega-shops in the countryside.

Recently, the national government has released a firm planning doctrine. The provinces and the municipalities have to agree on location policy for new shops – including claims from new peripheral malls – and the possible consequences for the overall structure. As a result, neighbourhood centre planning is back (again) on the political agenda. The case of The Hague is illustrative. Local (and regional) governments have to find a balance between economic forces and the needs of the local population. Local authorities frequently formulate an active policy and distinguish between economically viable and unviable neighbourhood centres. The ones above the line are actively stimulated, while those below are actively redesigned.

The second area of national policy is urban renewal, focused on the post-war areas of the 1950s and 1960s. (See Priemus (2004) and Kleinhans (2004) for an overview of Dutch urban policy programmes.) One of the aims is the support of the local economy, alongside renewal and differentiation of the housing stock, improvement of the environment and quality of life, social programmes for distressed people as well as emphasis on jobs, schooling and integration. Commercial centres have to be revitalized, a mix of functions encouraged and there should be more employment within the neighbourhoods themselves. The aim is vital neighbourhoods in vital cities.

The redevelopment of retail in neighbourhood centres is a key element within the urban renewal scheme. The revitalization of run-down neighbourhood centres is claimed to renew the whole neighbourhood. This conforms to similar developments in England, for example (Lowe, 2005).

Most often, initiatives are taken by the municipality, standing for the public interest and the public space, or the housing associations, as large property owner, or sometimes residents, as those experiencing the environment on a daily basis. In some cases, private owners or commercial developers play an important role.

The result of the processes of enlargement of scale is oversupply and vacancies. This is obvious in the neighbourhood centres. The question is what to do with these properties. Some of them are converted into dwellings, as has happened many times in the case of former small shops in pre-war areas. However, in recent years the awareness has grown that the mix of functions, already scarce in these areas, should be fostered. These former shopping strips are a good location for starting local enterprises, such as small businesses, immigrant shops and ateliers. The mix of functions is one of the aims of national urban policy, to enhance the quality of life in the neighbourhood, improve social safety and offer local employment. This is in line with the often cited ideas in Richard Florida's book *The Rise of the Creative Class*

(2002). Florida emphasizes the need to offer starting places for creative entrepreneurs. The former neighbourhood centres provide ideal locations for them. Fiscal policy is being discussed to create a liberal tax climate for those areas to help budding entrepreneurs.

At the lowest level, another tendency can be noticed. Municipalities 'discover' another function of neighbourhood centres: that of being a centre – the heart of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhoods of the 1950s and 1960s were planned according to the division of functions, but the final result is that they are experienced as boring and monotonous. A real heart for the neighbourhood can counteract that and bring identity to place. People and politicians have become aware that a neighbourhood centre not only offers specific services, but can also function as a heart for the neighbourhood and therefore add to the quality of life. This 'new' function actually goes back to the original ideas, and maybe it can help to revive the neighbourhood centres.

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5 The making of the Bijlmermeer

5.1 Glorious ideas

One of the most well-known large housing estates in the Netherlands is the Bijlmermeer high-rise area, located in the south-east extension of Amsterdam. The Bijlmermeer district (or 'Bijlmer') serves as the leading case throughout this book. This part of the book highlights the glorious ideas, the well-thought-out designs, the high hopes and the ideals. Other parts of this book will show that the glorious ideals did not last for long.

The Bijlmermeer as a high-rise paradise

The glorious ideas behind the making of the Bijlmermeer have been written about more than once. I refer especially to Maarten Mentzel, who wrote a conscientious report about the genesis of the Bijlmermeer in 1989, after studying all the documents that had influenced the design and realization of the area.

The following section originates from an article by Ronald van Kempen and myself in 1996. It was written as a retrospective, as by then the first actual renewal had become visible, a major operation that we will return in Part IV. Below, only the two first sections of this article are reproduced.

Without a doubt, the country's most well-known high-rise housing estate is the Bijlmermeer, located in the south-east extension of the city of Amsterdam. Some people have read about this estate in scientific and professional journals, both national and international (see e.g., E. Van Kempen, 1986; Blair & Hulsbergen, 1993). Others have experienced it in practice or have read of it in numerous policy documents. Bijlmermeer received worldwide media exposure in October 1992, when an El Al Boeing cargo plane crashed into an apartment block, causing many casualties.

High-rise apartment buildings can be found throughout the Netherlands, but nowhere are there as many in one place as in the Bijlmermeer. All told, there are 13,000 dwellings in 31 very large blocks, which were laid out in a honeycomb pattern. For years, the media have projected a dismal image of the Bijlmermeer. They depict it as one of the country's most troubled areas: dirty, vandalized and dangerous. The area is known for its high crime rate in the midst of a large concentration of people who are unemployed, have no prospects and, in most cases, are of foreign origin. In total, 45% of the 28,000 high-rise residents come from the former Dutch colonies of Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles. Another 35% come from elsewhere, particularly West Africa, whereas a mere 20% of the population have Dutch roots. The Bijlmermeer is sometimes called the 'gateway from many countries to Amsterdam'.

Modern living

Many high-rise apartment buildings have been built in the Netherlands since the mid-1960s. High-rise estates were needed to ease the housing shortage that had dominated the Dutch housing market since the Second World War.

Box 5.1 The airplane crash

On 4 October 1992, an El Al cargo plane crashed into the flats Groeneveen and Klein-Kruitberg in the Bijlmermeer. This disaster (the 'Bijlmerramp') overwhelmed the whole country. There were 43 casualties, of whom 39 were on the ground. Some 50 dwellings were destroyed, but because of further damage and the construction of the blocks, 220 dwellings had to be demolished. The Bijlmerramp happened after the plans for renewal had been approved. The process was still going on, and was speeded up by the crash. The disaster led to broad support from Dutch society, and support for the renewal of the deprived Bijlmermeer.

A memorial was built near the crash site with a list of all victims. The site is now part of what is called 'the Bijlmer museum', an ensemble of six blocks in an environment that best represents the original ideas behind the Bijlmermeer (see Chapter 18).

New construction techniques made high-rise possible, while extra subsidies made it feasible. The keywords were standardization and repetition of construction patterns. Yet most of the high-rise areas built in the 1960s were and still are mixed in terms of dwelling types. They consist of single-family houses and midrise apartment buildings (three or four floors) intermingled with high-rise apartment buildings. Most of the high-rise flats belong to the social-rented sector.

The first dwelling in the Bijlmermeer was delivered in 1968. The master plan for the estate projected 90% high-rise in a mono-functional area dedicated to what was then considered modern living. All of the ideas of Le Corbusier and the CIAM modern architects were represented: separation of functions (living, working, recreation, traffic), a great deal of space and park-like landscapes. Traffic flows were separated: pedestrians and cyclists circulate at ground level, while cars drive around up above (Van Kempen & Wassenberg, 1996).

The idea: the city of tomorrow for the people of today

In the beginning, namely in the 1960s, the Bijlmermeer area was promoted as the most modern place to live, with its daring and innovative design. It would be the city of tomorrow for the people of today. This was being designed in the form of high-rise blocks located in large parks so that people would feel that they were in the middle of nature, with privacy in luxurious and large dwellings, uniform in design, and with numerous collective facilities, covered car parks, and a separation of cars and slow traffic. "Nowhere in the world has a nicer and more modern city of this size been constructed so far. This is the change: the estate for the most pleasant place to live you can imagine." (Mayor Van Hall at the presentation of the Bijlmermeer plans in 1964.)

Mayor Van Hall opened the Bijlmermeer in 1968. He handed over the first keys to the first new family, calling the Bijlmermeer the "most modern, the most talked-about and the most pleasant place to live that one can think of".

Another monument to city development

The new district Bijlmermeer was developed with great enthusiasm and political support. The Bijlmermeer high-rises were to be a shining example and one of the most talked about urban planned neighbourhoods in the world.

Box 5.2 The Bijlmermeer in the municipal leaflet of 1968

'Why is the Bijlmermeer so much talked about? Because it is not an ordinary suburb of the city of Amsterdam. The Bijlmermeer is going to be very special. The plan, designed for 110,000 inhabitants, is based on total new principles. It is the result of years of studies, aiming to create a modern city. High-rise blocks in the park, as urban living for the mankind of tomorrow.' (own free translation)

'Future value' was a keyword in all plans. The Bijlmermeer once again had to be a monument to city development, in the tradition of earlier well-known Amsterdam urban planning areas, such as the grachtengordel (the famous canal zone) from the Dutch Golden Age (1600s), Berlage's Plan for Amsterdam-South (1904) and the General Development Plan (*Algemene Uitbreidings Plan*, AUP) of Cornelis van Eesteren for the Western Garden Cities (1934) (Bolte & Meijer, 1981, p. 13).

The Bijlmermeer was to be the international high point of modern city planning, based on the ideas of the modern architects of CIAM and Le Corbusier. The Bijlmermeer would indeed become the most talked about neighbourhood in the country – but not in the way the planners had in mind.

5.2 The city of tomorrow and the demands of people today

The Bijlmermeer area was built in response to the enormous housing shortage in the country as a whole and Amsterdam in particular, together with a very clear view on future living: "to create a modern city where the people of today can find the residential environment of tomorrow," as the information folder announced in 1968.

The residential environment of tomorrow was being designed as vertical living in high-rise blocks, amidst large parks where one could feel oneself surrounded by nature, privacy in spacious and uniform dwellings with plenty of shared facilities in the block, cars stored out of sight in separate parking garages to be reached by covered passage ways, and motorized traffic separated from cyclists and pedestrians. The Bijlmermeer could be considered a large home zone (woonerf).

Mentzel (1989) concluded that the spatial design of the Bijlmermeer was mainly supported by urban planners, architects and politicians: "the genesis of the Amsterdam Southeast extension of the city shows the grandiose contradiction between the values of architects and urban planners, who wanted to build a city for the future, and the actual demands of residents" (ibid., p. 248). The residents were not consulted about anything.

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6 The ideas in a wider context: understanding the ideals

6.1 Introduction

> "Not only in the Netherlands, but also internationally the dogmatic functionalism makes the set-up of the Bijlmermeer area unique. The similarity of intentions of the design for the Bijlmermeer and the plans for 'ideal towns' and 'ideal communities' such as Howard's Garden Cities of Tomorrow (1898) and Le Corbusier's Urbanisme (1925) is striking. A decisive difference from the latter is that in Amsterdam the plan was also carried out". (Mentzel, 1989, p. 261).

After some experiments in Amsterdam-West (Osdorp) and Amsterdam-North (Molenwijk), the plans for the Bijlmermeer area were drawn up.

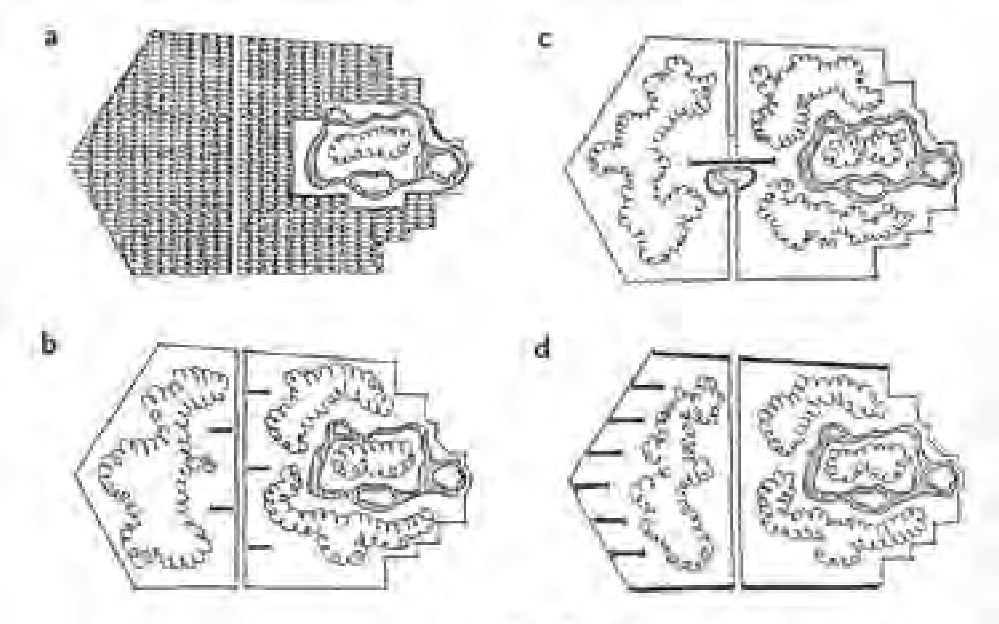
The Bijlmermeer was intended to be a new district with 'future value' (*toekomstwaarde*). Bolte and Meijer (1981) called this future value the keyword for the design of the Bijlmermeer. As overall prosperity would rise, according to the prognoses, dwellings had to be larger, wider and better equipped, anticipating future standards. The poor quality dwellings of the 1950s (the low-rise walk-up flats) should not be repeated, while the old pre-war stock had to be abandoned anyway. Instead, both dwellings and environments in the Bijlmermeer should have 'future quality'. The concomitant high rent level should not be a problem, as rent allowances would soon be introduced, so that low income groups could afford the marvellous new housing. Not only the dwellings but also the environment should be future-proof. This meant a sharper distinction between car traffic and pedestrian (and cycling) traffic, covered parking places, more concentrated facility centres and more concentrated green spaces (ibid., p. 246).

Future-proof living

Large high-rise housing estates could fulfil all the requirements for future-proof living. The Bijlmermeer was developed as 'a vertical town in the park'. The high-rise blocks would be 'towers in the park where you could hear the nightingale sing', the 1964 brochure promised.

The idea of high-rise towers in the park originated from the CIAM movement of modern architects. Their ideas were of great influence on Dutch post-war planning. After the war, their assumptions about rational, efficient, healthy and functional building found their way into the western suburbs of Amsterdam. In those garden suburbs, mainly low-rise flats were built to a maximum height of four storeys; not higher, because then an expensive lift would have been necessary. In the Netherlands, hardly any high-rises were being built in the 1950s, contrary to countries such as Sweden, Britain and France. The Danish architect Buhl in 1948 wrote an influential article in which he advocated the advantages of high-rise. Building in high densities saves nature and landscape (see Figure 6.1). The alternative would be an endless sea

Figure 6.1 The effect of low-rise (a) and high-rise construction (b,c,d)



Source: Buhl (1948)

of single-family housing, something professional planners and policy makers did not like. Decades later, the latter would be called 'the Los Angeles model'.

All arguments for high-rise building were integrated in the design of the Bijlmermeer. The city of the future was designed with free-standing high-rise blocks in the middle of large green public parks. The high-rise blocks in honeycomb shape were built after foreign ideas realized in Park Hill in Sheffield and Toulouse-Le Mirail (Verhagen, 1987). The common green areas were presented as one of the most important advantages of living in high-rises. In the Bijlmermeer, the ratio between the private and the public area would be 1:9, the most extreme ratio in the country. Most of the public area consisted of the green spaces between the blocks. The residents would soon appreciate the abundant green spaces (and actually, they still do consider the green scenery a major plus).

A national debate on high-rises

In the late 1950s, a broad debate started in the Netherlands about the way cities should be built. In those days, large new areas were developed to solve the enormous housing shortage resulting from the increasing population. The then minister of Housing formed an official committee, composed of experts in the field of urban planning. Its main task was to analyse the pros and cons of three types of house planning: to build mainly single-family housing, low-rise walk-up flats, or high-rise housing. The writing of the report took five years, and the conclusions were clear. Mentzel (1989) described the realization of the report, and concluded that the whole report was in fact a support for high-rise. The conclusions of the report promoted the climax of Dutch high-rise construction, which was the Bijlmermeer.

The 1961 report was titled, *Laag of hoog bouwen?* ('Low- or high-rise building?'). It gave a wide overview of the advantages and disadvantages of the three building types, but throughout the report the advantages of high-rise buildings outweighed the disadvantages, and high-rise critics were countered. Because of the important debate, the nationwide consequences and the international implications, in 1965 an English translation was produced (an almost unique event in those days) under the title 'Should we build – and live in – houses or flats?' The conclusion of the report was that in the countryside single-family housing was the best solution, but in urban settings high-rise blocks offered the most advantages. Low-rise flats were the lesser of both, and therefore this supply should be limited. Which it was in the Bijlmermeer.

A park for an ordinary man

The 1961 report supported high-rise construction instead of the many low-rise flats that dominated the urban settings of the 1950s.

The high living offers opportunities for a great deal of privacy, in combination with a maximal perception of visual contact with nature, space and society, which makes it the most ultimate living place for the modern human being. … A necessary condition for high-rise is the creation of common elements. High-rise offers opportunities for common facilities that are beyond individual possibilities. (the report of the Commissie Hoogbouw-Laagbouw, 1961, p. 27; see also ibid. 1965, and Mentzel, 1989).

High-rises fitted into a general trend in society, namely the growing importance of common things, including living. Mentzel quotes Le Corbusier, dealing with his maison radieuse with a striking quote (Mentzel, 1989, p. 96), a quote that also is provided in the 1961 report (p. 27): "Que l'homme ordinaire a aussi son palais au milieu du parc" ("an ordinary man can only have a palace in the park if he shares that park").

6.2 Toulouse-Le Mirail as inspiration

The Toulouse-Le Mirail project was considered a significant contribution to city planning and served as inspiration for the design of the Bijlmermeer high-rises. Toulouse was a booming city in the early 1960s, when the municipality ran a competition for a sparkling new town adjacent to the existing city. The Greek Georges Candelis from Candelis-Josic-Woods won and developed a pioneering contemporary plan for 100,000 new inhabitants. Candelis & co had been trained in the traditions of CIAM (Candelis and Josic had worked with Le Corbusier in Marseille at the *Unité d'Habitation*) and were active in the architect group Team 10, a kind of follow up to CIAM. Team 10 organized meetings on the spot, so they gathered in Toulouse in 1971 to visit the first results of the new area. The visiting architects, among them several influential Dutch architects like Bakema and Van Eyk, were impressed by what they saw. Candelis & co belonged to the group of modern architects who first tested their ideas in the colonial cities of northern Africa, Casablanca in particular (Avermaete et al. (2010) call this 'Colonial modern'; see Chapter 3).

Candelis, and the Team 10 movement, focused more than Le Corbusier, Gropius and the older pre-war architects on people's needs (Risselada, 2005). They were afraid that inhabitants would not identify with their environment, something Le Corbusier and the old architects did not take into account. There should be more attention to and relationship with life on the street. This was the same criticism that Jane Jacobs was making – at the same time but with a totally different design result. This was probably the only correlation, as CIAM ideas like the separation of functions, concrete housing construction, high-rise blocks and the many common spaces and green areas were leading.

At least two important ideas from Le Mirail were copied in the Bijlmermeer: the role of car traffic, and the function and position of the streets for communal use and as places to meet. Candelis & co developed a wide, elevated street – the dalle – on which street life would occur, with children playing and old people resting on benches, chatting with each other (Provoost, 2007). Downie visited Le Mirail just after its construction, and noted mixed feelings about the dalles. These were meant as elevated streets where all street life would occur, kilometres long to make it possible to reach all functions easily on foot. Opponents, however, spoke of a huge raised concrete slab, ghastly, grey, barren and inhuman: oceans of concrete. Downie (1972) cites the French writer Mylene Remy who described it as a "heartless Kafkaesque universe: Am I in Pompeii after the catastrophe?"

These dalles were not used in practice; they proved to contribute to the unsafety of the neighbourhood. Later on they would be demolished, together with other parts of the area. The idea of providing communal meeting spaces for the inhabitants of the flats was similar to those in the Bijlmermeer.

A second idea was the role of the car in daily life. In those days, there were far fewer cars in Europe than in the USA. Architects were well aware of the consequences of mass car use for daily life. In city centres major traffic breakthroughs took place, with four-lane motorways reaching up to the historical market squares, demolishing the 'old stuff' on their way, and high-rise blocks and parking garages central in the cities. The new suburbs like Le Mirail and the Bijlmermeer anticipated the expected increasing ownership and use of cars.

However, mass car use would conflict with the intention to make the environment friendly for inhabitants. The solution was found in the separation of traffic flows for cars and pedestrians (and in the Dutch situation: bicycles). Cars would be on separate lanes. In the Bijlmermeer these would be elevat-

Toulouse-Le Mirail served as inspiration for the Bijlmermeer high-rise.

ed, and cars would be kept in parking garages, from where people could walk into their houses.

Illustrative is how Georges Candelis, interviewed in 1970, saw the threat of mass car use[1]:

> "I have not outlawed cars, I have tried to put them where they deserve to be. I cannot accept that all our town plans mainly concern cars and not people. You see, when you start to draw roads, you think of cars, you don't think of people. Cars have overrun our daily life. It is unthinkable, and we are practically defenceless. So in the new constructions, it is necessary to anticipate the cars' place, and in particular give people their place. So I am really aware of the weakness of this construction. Because you can honestly say that what has been done during these last years does not correspond at all either to people's aspirations, or to progress or new conditions which allow us to do things better."

6.3 Vällingby as inspiration

One of the most famous Scandinavian suburbs is Vällingby, near Stockholm, which was constructed in 1954. Swedish urban planning was a symbol of the planned welfare state, and in those days an example for other countries, and Vällingby was one of its showpieces. Within Sweden, it would serve as the prototype for residential areas planned during the large Million Programme period between 1965 and 1974. It was to be "the jewel in the crown, both in terms of its size and in terms of the planning ambitions, looking to a new and brighter Sweden ahead". These words about Vällingby are based on the text of people I worked with in joint publications: Nyström & Lundström, 2004; Borgegård & Kemeny, 2004; Sax, 1998.

Chief planner Sven Markelius and his colleagues applied the ideas of neighbourhood planning (see Chapter 4) as well as the ABC concept, an acronym

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[1] Translated from French on: http://www.ina.fr/fresques/europe-des-cultures-en/notice/Europe00066/georges-candilis-architect-of-the-mirail-in-toulouse).

Vällingby, Sweden's symbol of the planned welfare state.

for Arbete-Bostad-Centrum (Work-Housing-Centre; separated functions integrated by easy (metro) transport, the tunnelbana. It was to be an independent suburb city, to provide the residents with everything they needed.

In Vällingby 8,000 dwellings were built; 90% were multi-family housing, mainly public rental. The suburb was designed with a segregated traffic system including pedestrian and cycle lanes between the various neighbourhoods and the centre of Vällingby. When the shopping and services centre was inaugurated in 1954, people were amazed by the state-of-the-art shopping facilities, and despite its peripheral location, it attracted many visitors over the coming years from all over the Stockholm region. Apart from shopping, Vällingby was also well provided with cultural and social facilities.

However, and comparable with the Dutch experiences described in Chapter 4, the population declined because family sizes shrank and people were ageing. In 2004, there were only 14,000 of the original 24,000 people left, a quarter of them retired; walking sticks and walkers were a common sight in the centre. Many of the new tenants were immigrants. Moreover, when the centre was new, it was the only one of its kind, but later on, there were plenty of suburban shopping malls competing for the same customers.

During the 2000s, the entire area was renewed. There were plans for 10,000 new flats in the area, making the population as large as it had been during the golden years. Commercial space (including retail, restaurants and amusements) has increased from 38,000 m^2 to 61,000 m^2, and the size of parking lots has doubled. The major redevelopment of the centre was completed in 2008; the flats are still being built.

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7 Motives for developing high-rise and large housing estates

The following mainly originates, unless otherwise mentioned, from 'High-rise housing estates in Europe', Chapter 1, Frank Wassenberg, Richard Turkington & Ronald van Kempen (2004), in: High-rise housing in Europe; current trends and future prospects, Turkington, van Kempen & Wassenberg (eds).
www.iospress.nl/book/high-rise-housing-in-europe/

7.1 Large housing estates: embracing the high-rise 'solution'

The 1960s were the 'boom years' for building high-rise housing, as a frantic effort was being made to solve urban housing shortages. The impact of population growth was compounded by population movement throughout Europe. Labour migration from rural to urban areas grew steadily in countries like France, Spain and Italy as people moved in search of paid work. Added to these internal flows was international migration to such countries as Britain and France, especially where labour shortages attracted young migrants from former colonies. In France alone, 1.2 million people were repatriated after the Algerian war in 1962.

Despite the political priority of meeting housing needs, and the efforts made throughout Europe, shortages not only persisted but also showed every sign of worsening. A common prediction from this time was that, by the symbolic year 2000, populations would have grown by between 50 and 100%. In such circumstances, there was an urgent need to identify construction techniques that were quicker, cheaper and more efficient. This can be seen as the first important motive for building high-rise housing.

7.2 Seven motives for building large housing estates

By the 1960s, a series of influences and pressures had coincided that can be regarded as the seven motives for building large mass housing estates across European countries. These motives are analysed for high-rise construction in particular, but can also serve as motives for the construction of large housing estates and mass housing in general. The seven motives were:

1. the need to solve long-standing housing shortages;
2. the development of innovative and labour-saving technologies;
3. belief that 'Modern architecture' would enable the achievement of a just and fair society;
4. a desire to protect the countryside from mass development;

Box 7.1 Forecasts of skyrocketing population numbers

In 1965, at the threshold of the high-rise wave, Statistics Netherlands (CBS) presented a long-term population forecast (CBS Statistics, April 1965; see also Heimans 1966). This forecast would have major consequences for urban planning. In the magic year 2000, there would be 21 million people in the Netherlands, nearly double the population (11.5 million) in 1960. And in the even longer term: "According to CBS it is probable that there will be 33 million inhabitants in the Netherlands in the year 2030, and 44 million in 2050" (Heimans, 1966, p. 183, who cites CBS).

Looking back, it is clear that the CBS did not foresee declining family sizes. It might be good to mention that around the year 1900 there were only about five million inhabitants. Heimans calculated, on the basis of the forecast, what enormous areas of land would be needed for living in the tiny Netherlands with all its claims on scarce land. Houses remain for a long time, which justifies a long-term horizon. We can now laugh about these forecasts, but should realize that they were a major source for decision making. They supported the felt need for compact urban building in general, and high-rise in particular.

the demand for improved standards of living;
6. competition between municipal authorities in the provision of modern housing;
7. the support of governments for radical solutions to meeting housing problems.

The first motive refers to the quantitative argument discussed above. The second concerns the development of production innovations that enabled homes to be built in volume and at speed. Building in concrete, the use of large prefabricated components, establishing housing factories on site and the rationalization of the building process all made high-rise technically possible. These mass housing techniques required high levels of investment by the building industry, which in turn encouraged more building in a high-rise form. Britain provides a good example of a country in which many companies were developing different systems, but all claiming that the new capacity to build on a large scale made it profitable. The possibility of creating homes through prefabrication reinforced the view that every social problem had a technical solution.

Third, there was great confidence that 'Modernism' applied to housing and urban planning could deliver a more equal and fair society. The achievement of the egalitarian 'functional city' (Ibelings, 1995, p. 110) through high-rise housing represented a powerful expression of the belief that social development could be controlled more effectively than ever before.

A fourth motive for building high-rise was the belief that the new high-density housing would protect nature from the urban sprawl associated with single-family houses. Göderitz and colleagues (1957) had demonstrated how a town would spread if each house had its own garden, and compared the land use impact of high-rise blocks with that of houses in rows or terraces with small gardens (in: Mentzel, 1989, p. 95). It was claimed that urban high-rise could be built in the same density as low-rise housing whilst providing more privacy, freeing everyone from the tyranny of petit bourgeois lifestyles and providing more open space. Moreover, the agricultural sector was also in favour of limited urban sprawl, in order to reduce the pressure on agricultural land (Heimans, 1966, p. 27).

A fifth motive was the desire to improve the overall quality of life. It is often forgotten that in the early 1960s, high-rise flats were relatively luxurious and spacious, provided with such modern amenities as a hot and cold water supply, a shower or bath, central heating and a rubbish disposal system. Collective amenities such as childcare, laundry, shops and recreation facilities were all intended to make high-rise living both comfortable and convenient.

A sixth motive was related to the status and symbolism of high-rise housing. High-rise blocks could be used as landmarks and to reflect a town's urbanism and modernity. Municipal authorities and social housing providers competed with each other to acquire such symbolic buildings, and as a result, high-rise blocks can be found in almost every town and city in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Britain. This status motive still exists in the form of the present competition to build the tallest skyscraper.

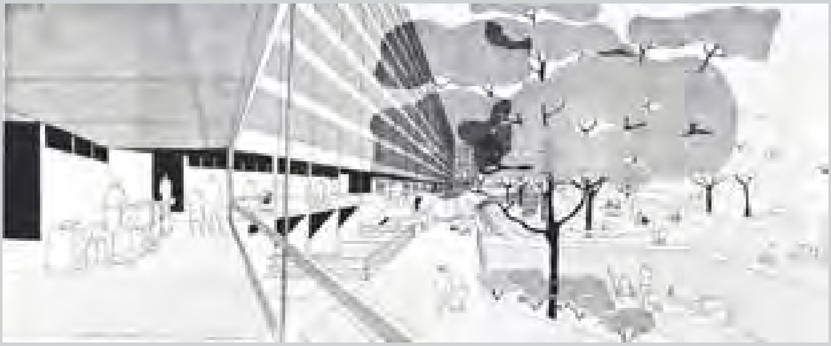
The seventh and final motive for building high-rise was the stimulus and support provided by national governments. In Britain, for example, where high-rise construction was associated with slum clearance, additional subsidies were provided to support building costs incurred by municipalities in 1956 and 1961. In the Netherlands, high-rise housing received the largest subsidies from public housing programmes: 25% extra subsidy was given in 1963 for every dwelling built in a prefab housing system. Van der Schaar called this the command economy of the housing sector (1994, p. 12).

7.3 Common features

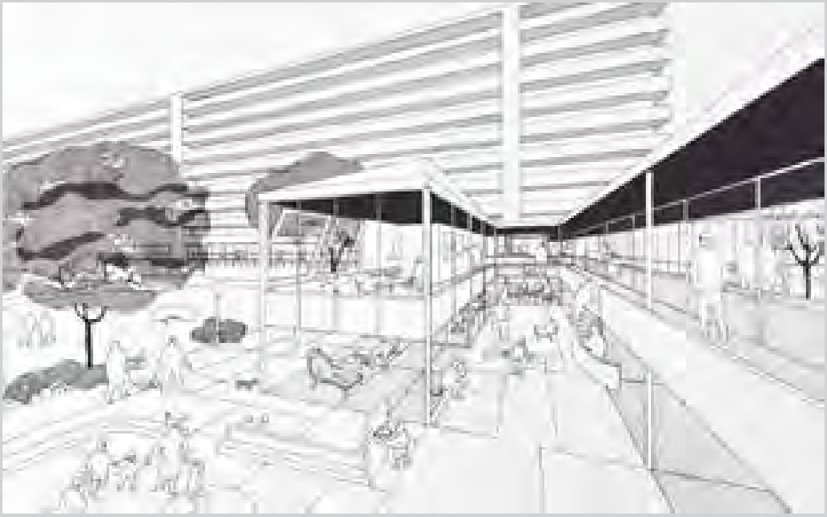
Similar motives for the production of high-rise housing produced similar outcomes. The first and most striking similarity was the level of production. In Hungary, for example, the *15-Year Housing Development Plan* of 1960 resulted in the construction of 1 million new homes, many of which were in mass-produced high-rise blocks. In Sweden, high-rise housing dominated the famous *Million Programme* that was launched in 1964.

A second similarity was the speed of construction. In the Netherlands, for example, it took 2000 hours to build a traditional house, compared to only 600 hours for a system-built construction (De Vreeze, 1993; Van Geest, 2001). Figures on France show that the average time taken to produce a dwelling dropped from nearly two man-years in 1950 to seven months in 1960. As a result, between 1960 and 1980, France built 9 million dwellings, and in any four years in these two decades, more homes were produced than in all of the 1920s and 1930s together.

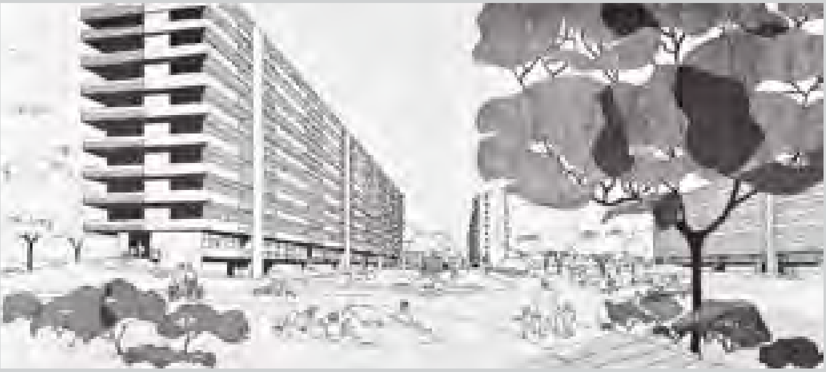
Figure 7.1 Sketches of the Bijlmermeer high-rise public area



The interior corridor in the building



The interior building and collective facilities



The greens between the apartment buildings

Source: Municipal prospect, 1968

There was a firm belief that urban planning could control social development. The egalitarian ideas focused on the common use of facilities within the building (entrance halls, walkways, washing machines, libraries, etc.) and in the surroundings (green spaces, playing facilities, etc.).

A third common feature was the use of prefabricated construction. Dwelling units could be produced to uniform standards in ‘housing factories’, with cast concrete panels replacing laborious work with bricks and mortar. Economies of scale were achieved through repeat construction, with tall blocks and uniform streets determined by the technology of the tower crane (Zijlstra, 2001; Blom *et al.,* 2004). Van Elk & Priemus (1970) compared all then available building methods in the Netherlands.

A fourth common feature was the choice of location, in that the easiest locations at which to construct large prefabricated blocks were greenfield sites on the periphery of existing towns and cities, where tower cranes could easily erect buildings along linear streets. Although local amenities were planned for estates, they were often inadequate or not provided at all.

A further feature of this phase was the provision of collective space for communal use. An inevitable consequence of the development of high-rise blocks was the creation of common areas, including halls, corridors, lifts, parking garages and refuse disposal areas. The use and sharing of such collective space was based on high expectations of people's mutual and collective behaviour (see Figure 7.1). Such ideas fitted particularly well with the Swedish and Danish welfare model, in which state-organized and large-scale systems were designed to take care of their citizens, and with communist principles of communal provision practised in eastern European countries.

A final feature was the construction of high-rise housing by the social (or public) sector to house working-class families. Between 1966 and 1973, over 60% of all social-sector housing built in the Netherlands, and two thirds of social housing in France consisted of high-rise blocks. As the concept of social housing did not exist in the centrally planned economies of Central and Eastern Europe, high-rise estates were intended for all classes of people.

7.4 The outcomes: mass housing estates

The outcomes of the golden years for the construction of large or mass housing estates are evident. Housing production peaked in the late 1960s and early 1970s, not coincidentally the same years that high-rise housing peaked. Mass housing on large estates was definitely supply-sided construction; arguments had to do with production numbers. Research had determined what residents should want. This resulted in 'the ideal dwelling', to be produced in limited types and large quantities.

Housing estates were produced in large quantities, at high speed and to uniform standards, and were provided with extra subsidies. Keywords were standardization and repetition of construction patterns, with the use of prefabricated constructions in housing factories on the spot. In Germany and Eastern Europe, the post-war estates are often called *Plattenbau*, referring to the concrete panels used.

The post-war large housing estates were built at easy and inexpensive locations, namely on the outskirts of cities. Since then, it has depended on the local urban development; some housing estates are still far out of town, while

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All that remained of four large housing blocks in the small Dutch town of Veghel; after demolition in the late 1980s.

others have been swallowed up by further urban expansions. In many countries, high-rise blocks and other large housing estates are not limited to the larger cities: many smaller cities and towns have their own large housing estates – large, that is, considered in their local context (as stated in Chapter 2). In the Netherlands, huge blocks, in both relative and absolute sizes, have been built in Leeuwarden, Alphen aan den Rijn, Venlo, Veghel, Middelburg and many other towns. One can say that traditional houses are 'built', while mass housing on large estates was 'produced'.

7.5 Toronto, city of towers

The urban landscape of Toronto is strongly influenced by the ideas of the modern architects. The Toronto region contains North America's second largest number of high-rises (New York has the most). Of these, 1,925 are residential towers of 8 storeys or more, built in the period 1945-84 (Stewart & Thorne, 2010). About 25% of the Toronto region's population live in these tower apartments. This number should not be mixed up with newer condominium buildings, which comprise an additional 12% (and counting) of the housing stock (CMHC 2012). Most of the post-1980s condos are centrally located and tend to be a more expensive housing option. They are aimed at the same groups the tower blocks were intended for in the 1960s and 1970s. About 80% of the dwellings are privately owned. Unlike in Europe and the USA, most of Toronto's apartment buildings were not social housing projects, but were privately developed and marketed to a wide spectrum of incomes. The tower in the park model emerged from the conviction that what people needed most was abundant open space. The towers were considered a marvel of planning and forward thinking at the time (McClelland & G. Stewart, 2007; B. Stewart, 2009).

Anticipating large regional growth, in 1954 Toronto and its neighbours formed a metropolitan government. In this large area, alternatives to typical American forms of suburban sprawl were sought – and found: Toronto planned complete communities, with higher densities along public transport lines, and modern neighbourhood centres. International examples such as

Vällingby near Stockholm and Roehampton on London's edge were looked at for inspiration. Key concerns were to ensure that neighbourhoods would provide a mix of housing types and tenures with access to open space, services, employment and transport. Two results, unique on the continent, are the mix of towers and bungalows over the whole region, and a higher density than any other North American metropolitan area; more than that of Greater New York, and about twice the density of greater Chicago. The relatively high densities generate a high use of public transport.

However, today these towers are aging and the problems have grown. Buildings are in desperate need of repair and are highly energy inefficient, using 20% more energy than Toronto's average. The large open spaces at the base of the towers – often representing 80% of a tower site – are underused and often fenced off from neighbouring properties. Walkability (a measure of how inviting an area is to pedestrians) is low, liveability is poor, and there is inadequate access to services and amenities. The towers have increasingly become a hub for low-income households. Toronto is becoming a more and more socio-economically polarized city. Hulchanski (2007) distinguished three types of areas, namely the more affluent city centre, the poorer inner suburbs and an intermediate zone. High-rise towers are all over the city, but most are in the inner suburbs (60%), where poverty increases. In 1981, 25% of all families in high-rise buildings were poor, by 2006 this was 40%, supporting the idea of 'vertical poverty', as identified by the United Way in 2011.

Despite the increasing problems, many consider the towers a strong urban asset. The original idea of controlled sprawl is still supported, but what is needed is a renewal programme. The Tower Renewal Project was proposed in 2007, supported by the mayor of Toronto, E.R.A. Architects and the University of Toronto. Graeme Stewart – who studied successful tower retrofitting and community renewal programmes in cities such as Amsterdam, Moscow and Berlin – is one of the initiators. The Tower Renewal Project aims to retrofit aging apartment buildings: "Most cities in America are lamenting about how to install high density, but we already have it, it's here. We only have to make it work. Therefore, the abandoned greens should be intensified, involving local residents. Make them self-sufficient communities – you can get your groceries, a community garden, retail plazas, bicycle paths and health centres. Make these buildings more energy efficient as a means to community revitalization. Build things around them that will support the people living there, then you are starting to create a sustainable city" (Duncan, 2008).

The principles of the Tower Renewal Project are currently being applied at four pilot sites. One focus is on the issue of financing, as substantial investment is required. Since most of the buildings are privately owned, renewal projects must be demonstrated to be advantageous to building owners if they are to be undertaken voluntarily. The city is pursuing a plan for property owners to self-finance the retrofit projects through energy savings or new infill

High-rise in Toronto. The Toronto region contains North America's second largest number of high-rises.

development opportunities. The solution to these constraints is believed to be a credit-enhanced capital pool serving as a revolving fund, backed not by mortgage security but by property tax-based security.

Another key liability is the zoning rules governing these tower properties inherited from the time of their original construction. These rules generally prohibited commercial uses, and therefore limit the number of shops, amenities and services to be found in and around tower neighbourhoods. As part of the Tower Renewal initiative, the City of Toronto is currently working to rewrite zoning laws to encourage local economic and social development and increase neighbourhood self-sufficiency.

Toronto happened to be the city that the famous Jane Jacobs moved to in 1968, when the towers were being built in the inner suburbs. She certainly had a great influence on the city, but her legacy is mainly related to working with resident groups to put a halt to a proposed highway through the centre of the city, as well as stopping the practice of demolishing portions of older neighbourhoods for the purposes of high-rise development. As a result, very few towers have been built in the city centre since the 1970s. She was less involved with the suburbs, where towers were still being built in the 1980s. Jacobs' ideas about grassroots local resident engagement have been of influence, and part of her legacy is an annual programme of neighbourhood walks, led by locals in each neighbourhood, called Jane's walks. Interestingly, the tower renewal project is bringing awareness and interest to the inner suburban neighbourhoods of Toronto, and a number of Jane's walks now happen in these districts each year. (Also see: http://www.toronto.ca/tower_renewal.)

Box 7.2 The disaster of Pruitt-Igoe

In 1972 and 1974, the high-rise estate of Pruitt-Igoe in St Louis, USA, was blown up, just 18 years after its construction. This was an experiment for the country. The spectacular demolition was broadcast around the world and has been described several times. It is considered one of the most tragic examples of a large public housing project. As such, for many it became a symbol of the failure of modernistic high-rise housing 'Corbusier-style', and of large public housing estates. In the USA, the Pruitt-Igoe disaster was a reason to stop virtually all public housing development. It is interesting to realize that it got blown up in times when in most European countries new large and other high-rise estates were still being constructed (see Figure 7.2).

The short history of Pruitt-Igoe served as a deterrent for the Bijlmermeer when problems increased during the early 1980s. Would this be the future for this Dutch estate? Hugo Priemus – who at the time was studying the decay of public housing estates and working on the 'model of decay' (see Chapter 11) – reported (in Dutch) about this disastrous example in 1986, thus contributing to the Dutch debate on the prospects for problematic housing estates. Despite obvious differences – the American context, the position of public housing, Pruitt-Igoe was older (it was built in the mid-1950s) and smaller (2,870 dwellings) – there were also remarkable similarities, namely a large estate in the local context, a poor population, many ethnic groups, non-popular housing, vacancies and losses, crime, safety and other liveability problems, stigmatized. Thus, the final solution could have been similar. But the demolition of Dutch large estates would seldom be an option until the 1990s, as shown in Chapter 19.

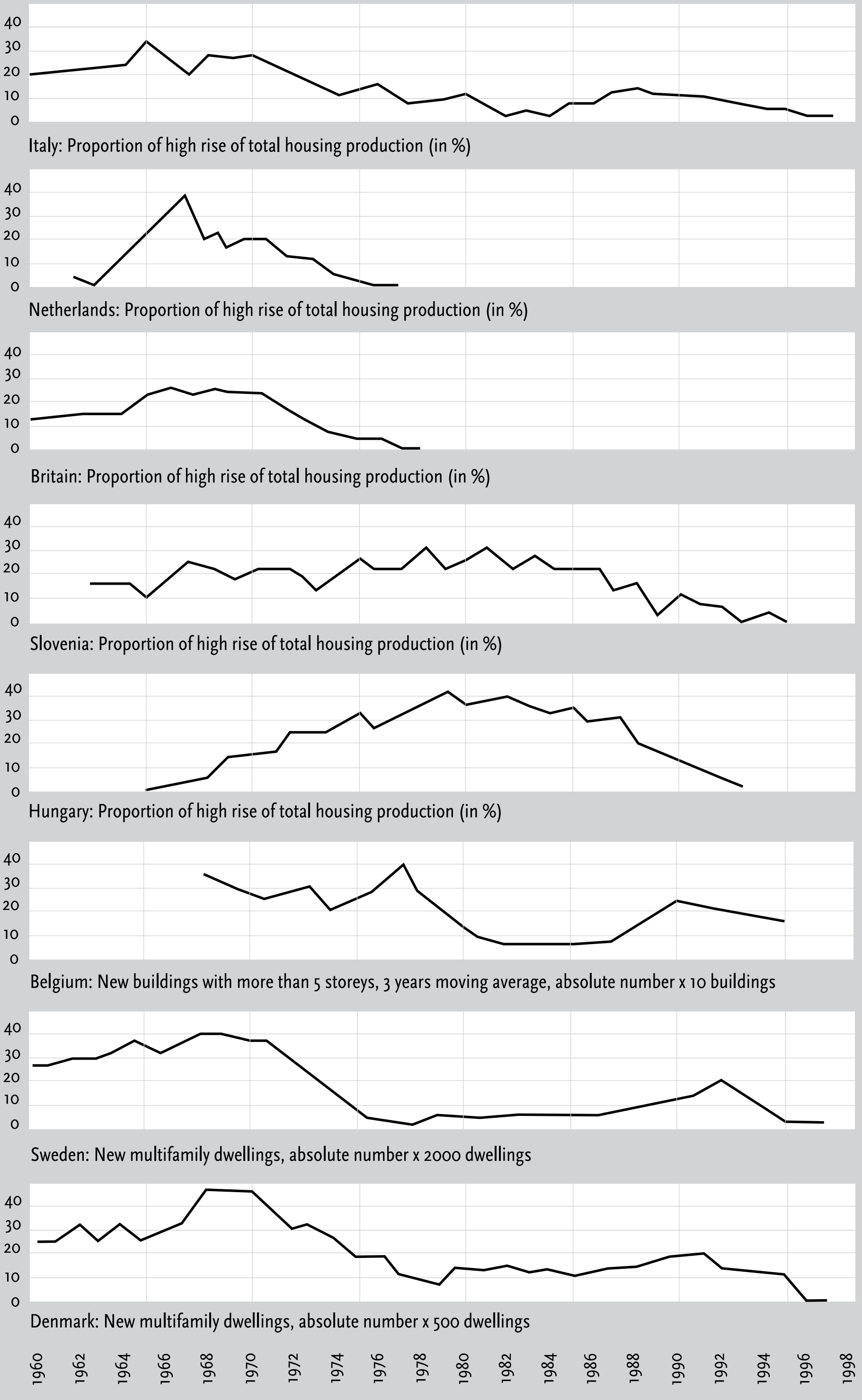
7.6 The high-rise wave

High-rise housing can be considered the apogee of the modernistic planning of post-war large housing estates: the climax of mass housing. However, the climax did not last very long.

High-rise estates in western countries were built in a concentrated period, a high-rise wave, starting somewhere in the 1960s, and stopping rather suddenly some 10 years later. The period ended in England after a horrifying gas explosion (Ronan Point in East London) in the late 1960s, in the USA after a major debacle in St Louis in the early 1970s (Pruitt-Igoe), and in the Netherlands and Sweden in the mid-1970s after it became clear that the market demanded something else. The reasons differ, but in many countries at some time the construction of large housing estates stopped rather suddenly.

Figure 7.2 shows the high-rise waves in a number of countries. The waves

Figure 7.2 The pattern of high-rise construction in eight European countries



Italy: Proportion of high rise of total housing production (in %)

Netherlands: Proportion of high rise of total housing production (in %)

Britain: Proportion of high rise of total housing production (in %)

Slovenia: Proportion of high rise of total housing production (in %)

Hungary: Proportion of high rise of total housing production (in %)

Belgium: New buildings with more than 5 storeys, 3 years moving average, absolute number x 10 buildings

Sweden: New multifamily dwellings, absolute number x 2000 dwellings

Denmark: New multifamily dwellings, absolute number x 500 dwellings

Source: Turkington *et al.* (2004)

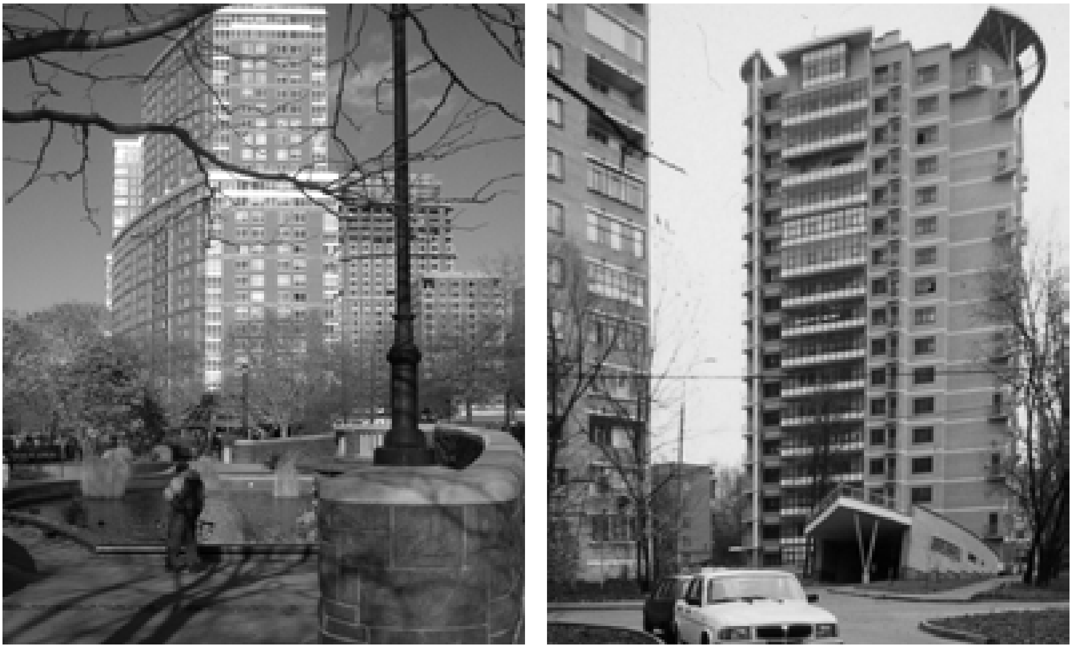
of northern and western European countries peaked around 1970. The Dutch high-rise wave is a sharp one, starting in around 1965 and disappearing only 10 years later as quickly as it had appeared. In Britain, the high-rise wave also lasted about a decade. Dunleavy (1981) provided data on dwelling approvals, and showed a wave that starts around 1960 and ends around 1970.

In Eastern Europe, the construction of high-rise housing estates continued until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and in Southern Europe and South-East Asia there has been continuous construction of high-rise estates for the last 50 years. This is why more high-rise estates can be found in countries such as Spain, Italy, Ukraine and Hong Kong, than in Scandinavia, Germany, Britain and the USA.

In the early 1970s, discontent with high-rise estates swelled in society at large, as shown by the decline in the high-rise waves. People objected to high-rise living, at least in western countries. The Netherlands was no exception, and hardly any high-rise apartments were built after 1973; the high-rise building boom had lasted here about a decade. The Bijlmermeer high-rise flats were part of the last part of the Dutch high-rise wave. When the last block was finished in the Bijlmermeer in 1975, the construction of high-rise flats in the rest of the country had already been stopped.

7.7 New high-rise housing developments

After a standstill between the mid-1970s and the 1990s, new high-rise housing is again being constructed in western countries, following Asian initiatives in the Pacific and in Arab countries (see Yuen *et al.,* 2006). Organizations such as The Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (www.cbtuh.org), skycrapercity(.com) and emporys(.com) watch all new developments. In the Netherlands, Stichting Hoogbouw (the Dutch Council on Tall Buildings, http://stichtinghoogbouw.nl) promotes high-rise construction in general. At present, Asian high-rise, including the housing function, serves as an example for the rest of the world. The new high-rise housing in western cities, however, is no longer built on large housing estates, but mostly in separated tower blocks. La Grange and Pretorius showed for South-East Asia (2009) and Czismady showed for Hungary (2009) that these modern high-rises are developed not as apartment blocks or large housing estates, but as gated communities in residential parks, or as individual housing parks. What is remarkable is that these modern high-rise blocks are promoted with the same advantages and features as their predecessors: private living, extensive views, security and luxurious common facilities. Moreover, they are aimed at another population group, namely wealthy young or elderly urban-oriented citizens, not the working or middle-class families as in the 1960s. And the location differs: while in the 1960s and 1970s large estates were often built on the outskirts of



From left to right:
New York
Moskou
Hong Kong.

town, on cheap, easily accessible sites, the new towers are in central and attractive locations: in the city centre, near the station or at the river front.

The post-war housing estates, culminating in the high-rise estates of the 1960s and early 1970s, represented the ideal housing of their era, egalitarian and modern dwellings that were spacious, comfortable, well designed and often suitably located. However, these qualities would be questioned in the subsequent era.

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8 Early critics

8.1 There were critics, but no-one listened

Considering the mass of criticism and problems that finally arose, did no-one criticize beforehand mass housing construction on large estates and high-rise housing, and the Bijlmermeer high-rises in particular? It is easy to criticize when history has already shown you to be right, but what were the opinions beforehand? High-rise housing might seemed to have been planned without any critics, which was not the case. Let us consider the critics, focussing on the Bijlmermeer.

In the early 1970s, discontent with high-rise estates arose in society at large. People objected to high-rise living not only in the Bijlmermeer but throughout the country. Accordingly, hardly any high-rise apartments were built after 1973; the high-rise building boom had lasted less than a decade, and the Bijlmermeer was not only in the middle of it, but was also considered synonymous with it. Cities did not have their own high-rise districts, or at least their own high-rise blocks; no, they had their own little Bijlmers. Cities and towns considered it a chance to improve their urban and modern status; in Chapter 7, we called this the sixth motive. An example is the Vollenhove flat in Zeist, a town in the centre of the Netherlands, which was evaluated soon after occupation by Priemus in 1968. When constructed, it was one of the largest housing blocks in Europe, 490 metres long and accommodating 1500 inhabitants in 730 dwellings, divided over 13 floors.

The Bijlmermeer high-rise was being built at the end of the high-rise wave. When the last blocks were delivered in 1975, they were among the last high-rises to be built in the Netherlands for at least the next two decades. The Bijlmermeer was the ultimate culmination of CIAM. The city of tomorrow for the people of today. Although Le Corbusier was the most influential mid-20th-century architect, his ideas were hardly realized in practice. Peter Hall (1988) described how Le Corbusier travelled all over the world to sell his ideas, but hardly any of them were realized. The most well known that were realized are the newly developed cities of Chandigarh in India and the new capital city of Brazil, Brasilia. Yes, there were several new developments like Park Hill in Sheffield, Pruitt-Igoe in St Louis and Toulouse-Le Mirail, which all served as inspiration for the Bijlmermeer. However, there had never been a completely new development on the scale of the Bijlmermeer (which was originally developed for 100,000 inhabitants) in which the pure CIAM ideas were used. In the Bijlmermeer all the original ideas of Le Corbusier's ideal city, as described in the Plan Voisin (1925) and The Radiant City (la Ville Radieuse, 1935), were realized: the high blocks in a park, geometrically positioned, the separated functions, the collective living.

8.2 Top-down planning

One characteristic of CIAM was the emphasis on leadership. A leader has to be visionary, and to determine what is good for society. Peter Hall (1988) described how Le Corbusier looked up to King Louis XIV when he decided to construct the Palais des Invalides in the 1700s. Hall cites Le Corbusier when he wrote about Paris, that "could be saved only by the intervention of grands seigneurs", men "without remorse": Louis XIV, Napoleon, Haussmann. Their grand openings were for him "a signal example of creation, of that spirit which is unable to dominate and compel the mob" (ibid., p. 207). Today, we would say that Le Corbusier's planning method was extremely top-down.

Walter Gropius, another famous CIAM architect, supported this view: "Architecture needs conviction and leadership. It cannot be decided by clients or Gallup Polls, which would most often only reveal a wish to continue what everybody knows best" (in Mentzel, 1989, p. 117). The architect, the urban planner and the politician had to decide what is best for mankind, so they did.

One of the most famous critics of the top-down planned neighbourhood is without a doubt Jane Jacobs. In 1961 she published *The death and life of great American cities*, but it would be a decade or so before her work, and followers, became more mainstream. Jacobs would later be considered one of the most influential urban thinkers, with her plea for more lively urban areas, a mix of functions, attractive streets and a concentration of activities, functions, inhabitants and passers-by. Cities should not be planned, but grow in an organic way. With the obvious failure of too many top-down planned large neighbourhoods, it is not difficult to understand why she later acquired a wide range of followers, even though she based her study on a New York neighbourhood (the very sophisticated area of Greenwich Village), and not on a typical post-second world war area. Jacobs moved to Toronto in 1968, where she also influenced urban developments, although mostly in the inner city and not in the suburbs (see more on the Toronto Towers in Chapter 7)

8.3 Consumers' preferences

Did high-rise in general and the Bijlmermeer high-rise in particular meet people's demands? A constant factor during the pre-high-rise years was the almost total neglect of consumers' wishes. Planners and architects knew what was good for people. Gropius and Le Corbusier saw a planner as the future visionary, and hardly any architect disagreed with this view. Critics like Dunleavy, Jephcott and Cooney in England, and Derk de Jonge and Aad Heimans in the Netherlands stated that the intended families with children did not want to live in flats at all. In the 1960s, Pearl Jephcott studied inhabitants of the well-known (and just finished) new towers of 'the Gorbals' in Glasgow and concluded that "local authorities should discontinue this form of housing except for a limited range of carefully selected tenants" (Jephcott, 1971; Mentzel, 1989).

Evidence of doubts about high-rise living emerged in the early post-war years. In the USA, for example, Catherine Bauer (1952) was one of the first to claim that "almost universally, families with growing children apparently want to live at ground level" (quoted in Mentzel, 1989, p. 280). In Sweden, it was reported already in the 1940s that there was great concern that high-rise buildings create barriers between people, especially between mothers (on the higher floors) and their children outside (quoted in Borgegård & Kemeny, 2004, p. 37). In a further example from England, Dunleavy quoted a 1967 Greater London Council report that stated "that 75% of their applicants preferred a house and a garden, although in this period only 9% of the authority's housing output was in this form, while 65% was in high flats" (Dunleavy, 1981, p. 94). Limited evidence of families' preference for single-family houses also emerged in the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark in the 1960s. Cooper Marcus and Hogue (1977), Gifford (2007) and Stewart (2007) provided an extensive literature overview that clearly shows that children are better off in low-rise rather than high-rise housing. It is difficult to establish how widespread these views were, as in the early years of high-rise construction, consumers' opinions were not heard and the views of professionals held sway.

8.4 The high-rise debate in the Netherlands

In the late 1950s, there was a lively debate about the planning of new housing areas: should people live in flats or houses? A committee of important people published the earlier mentioned influential report (see Chapter 6: Commissie Hoogbouw-Laagbouw, 1961). In this report, the pros and cons of high-rise living were given. Although the undertone of the report is a plea for good high-rise estates, a lot of criticism of high-rise housing is also formulated. "The committee considers that multi-storey building is not for the time being suitable as a general form of housing, but regards it chiefly as suitable accommodation for a limited category of more cultured families in the middle and higher income groups" (Ministry of Housing, 1965, p. 27; a translation of the 1961 report). It was already known in the late 1950s that families with young children preferred single-family houses.

The committee clearly reported on the limited target groups for high-rise housing, and questioned the use by families with young children and low-income groups: households with low social, economic and cultural capital, as we would call them today. The professional world – planners, architects, policymakers – took up the next conclusion of the committee: "Each form of housing [including high-rise] should as far as possible be developed according to its own individual nature." The planners of the Bijlmermeer regarded it as their task to build an even better high-rise area to please the critics.

Early Dutch critical remarks

In the Netherlands, Derk de Jonge was one of the first to question the proposed high-rise developments. De Jonge (1962, 1964) did surveys among the occupants of several types of housing, and concluded that with a free choice, residents would prefer single-family housing. However, in 1964 De Jonge concluded that high-rise blocks were evaluated positively by the new tenants – but we have to keep in mind that the presence of high-rise was only limited in the early 1960s. The limited amount of housing preferences research was oriented towards the improvement of dwelling types: to efficiently design ideal housing types.

The critics stated that under free choice, people would prefer single-family houses, but in the early 1960s there was no free choice at all, as the context was one of huge housing shortages, tremendous population growth, the setting of quantitative goals, the speeding up of building time and the limiting of unbridled urban sprawl. Single-family houses would simply take up too much land. This last argument, however, was challenged in 1966 by Aad Heimans, who had compared the densities needed for several ways of construction (high rise, low rise, family housing). Because of the surrounding green spaces that were needed, these densities were the same.

A remarkable conclusion might be that the architects, planners and politicians on the one hand, and the (few) critics on the other hand agreed with the same conclusion: high-rise housing was a good way of housing urban-oriented people, middle or higher classified (education, income, culture) and without children. However, the critics concluded that single-family housing would be better, while the large majority of planners, architects and decision-makers concluded that mass housing in large housing estates, and high-rise in particular, should be improved to the highest standard possible.

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Part III Decline and fall: sink estates

Introduction to Part III

Not all large housing estates turned out to have a glorious future. Unfortunately, quite a lot got into serious problems; everyone will know their own examples of such sink estates, as these are called. Sink estates are housing estates characterized by high levels of physical, economic and social deprivation. The quality of life is low, as shown by high crime rates, polluted and wrecked public spaces, and high feelings of unsafety. Financial exploitations are disastrous. This part deals with the decline and fall of large housing estates. To illustrate what a sink estate is like, we start in Chapter 9 with the estate in the Netherlands that has the doubtful honour of having become a sink estate faster than any other estate in the country: Hoptille.

By far not all housing estates are sink estates. Any housing estate develops according to factors on the micro level of demand and supply for that particular estate: what quality is being offered, who is living there or is willing to live there, and what are alternatives? At the macro level, the position of any estate is affected by megatrends in society in general and by public policies; these differ in the amount of possible effect. All these background factors are described in a framework in Chapter 10, which refers to high-rise estates but is valid for any estate.

Although this framework was published in 2004, it still applies today. Of course, society has changed since then, the stubborn and long-lasting economic crisis is most prominent, but the internal and external factors mentioned in the framework have not changed. Technological progress, environmental needs, economic upturns and downturns, an ageing population, a changing governance structure; all of these are still going on. Although the economic crisis seems to have consequences mainly for the owner-occupied housing sector, it has also a stabilizing effect on large housing estates.

Chapter 11 elaborates on accumulating problems. It distinguishes types of problems and shows how problems reinforce each other. Decline increases decline. An obvious feature of large housing estates is their size and appearance: does design matter? Is it one of the causes, or are external causes to blame?

Chapters 12, 13 and 14 turn to the Bijlmermeer high-rise area, a shining example of decline and fall. In these chapters I present some key figures from all the surveys I carried out in the Bijlmermeer. When problems increased, several kinds of measures were taken, but could not reverse the declining trend in the area. The deprivation is reflected in the judgements of residents on their quality of life, and these do not provide a very positive view. Chapter 14 comprises an article published in Cities in 2004 about the developments in the area.

Any sink estate is known by its stigma, the result of all accumulating problems. Stigmatized estates are presented at the end of this part. Changing a negative image, once imprinted, is a process that takes a very long time. As the saying goes: a good image goes by foot, but leaves by horse. This can be illustrated by the annual report of the Bijlmermeer Renewal Project Office on 2009 (PVB, 2010). The introduction starts with: "The Bijlmermeer has a problematic image for a long time: the area has been improved a lot in many respects, but many people still keep the images of the 1980s in their minds." Those are images of almost a generation ago! Chapters 8 and 9 elaborate on stigmatized large housing estates and present a framework for internal and image renewal strategies. Both chapters were published in 2004.

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9 Hoptille: record-breaking problematic housing estate

The Hoptille estate in Amsterdam has the dubious honour of being the country's estate that deteriorated most rapidly. In this part about the fall of large housing estates, it is very exemplary of a sink estate. The construction of Hoptille was completed at the end of 1981/early 1982, and had to be fully evacuated and renovated in 1984, just two years later. Never had an estate in the country sunk that fast.

How could such a disaster happen? Just entering OTB as a new researcher, I was confronted with this research question in my first project in 1988. Problems were described and analysed, causes explored and related, and measures judged on their effects. All problems, causes and measures will be elaborated later on. Here, Hoptille is presented as a very clear example of a sink estate.

9.1 Glorious ideas

The history and context of the Hoptille estate are remarkable. First, its location adjacent to the Bijlmermeer high-rises. The location was originally to get an extra high-rise block, similar to all the other already realized blocks. However, when the planning started in 1973, high-rise construction was totally out of fashion, even in Amsterdam, where building in the nearby Bijlmermeer was continued for a long time. Hoptille should be totally different, according to the spirit of the time. The plans were developed not by the old Planning Department, but by the newly established Housing Department of Amsterdam; that is, they were developed not top-down, but in close consultation with future inhabitants. It was to be the opposite of a high-rise block, open to experimental innovations. The architect, Kees Rijnboutt, who later became the government architect (Rijksbouwmeester), halved a high-rise block and joined the ends together, creating a very long, 5-storey block. In total, there were 220 dwellings of different types and designed in a typical Amsterdam style: it was like a long, 5-storey-high street.

An important aim was to create a mixed society. All types of residents should have a place, and all should be able to meet each other. Therefore, a long inside corridor was constructed, opening up most of the dwellings, and freely accessible to everyone. This corridor was on the second floor, 300 metres long and only 2 metres wide, with no natural light from outside. Another experiment was the many single-person units (HAT dwellings), a new type in the country, most of them in group houses. Many units were created with common facilities, but allocations were individual, so that strangers ended up living in the same house. Moreover, there should be place for the weakest in society: drug and alcohol addicts, ex-delinquents, ex-psychiatric patients and drop-outs. The help organization HVO would help them to integrate into 'ordinary' society.

In addition to the long block, there were 100 single-family houses (the first to be planned in post-war Amsterdam), which all participating residents opted for. These were not included in the later renovation. In short, it was a totally new concept.

During the process, unexpected delays arose. The city's old Planning Department – the designer of all the nearby Bijlmermeer high-rises – rejected the innovative Hoptille design, because the zoning plan allowed only another 'ordinary' high-rise block. However, the new Housing Department won this struggle. Then the building company went bankrupt. It cost the next contractor 20% more to take over the complicated design, resulting in cutbacks in the implementation and in higher rents.

Nevertheless, when the first dwellings were delivered in late 1981, critics in the press were positive: 'a surprising new neighbourhood', 'colourful design', 'innovative concept' and 'an exciting area'. Yes, it would be exciting alright – but not as intended.

9.2 Problems

Problems started right from the beginning. In the report mentioned (Wassenberg, 1988), a range of problems were divided into three groups. First was the lack of tenants, and those who did arrive, soon moved out. One year after completion, the turnover rate was 55%. Refusals were plenty, there were vacancies from the start – and this was unexpected, as Amsterdam had tens of thousands of people on the waiting list. After one year, already one third were vacant. Most people did not pay their rents properly, increasingly because of the bad living situations.

The second group of problems were related to a lack of quality of life: a lack of safety and plenty of fights, nuisances, crime and pollution. All problems were covered in the press, attaching a stigma in no time. Results of all problems were huge financial costs for the owner, the housing association. By that time, it was the council[1].

An estate had never sunk so fast

What made Hoptille the country's fastest deteriorating estate? In the Hoptille report, 13 causes were analysed in three groups, all of them contributing to the decay. Physical causes were the narrow, 300-metre-long inside corridor, the group housing (no groups were interested in them and the renting out of single rooms created conflicts), the high cost of living, the remote loca-

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[1] In the early 1980s, municipalities in the Netherlands owned some 20% of the social housing sector. In the 1990s, almost all council housing was transferred to housing associations.

Box 9.1 Hoptille: Living in a sink estate

Hoptille was to be the anti-Bijlmer: a mix of dwellings, groups and lifestyles, experimental, innovative and planned bottom-up. However, once built, the intended people did not queue for the new estate and others took their place, creating many tensions. From the start, liveability problems rapidly arose.

The 1988 report quotes from an internal note from employees of the council housing in 1983, a pressing letter to the Amsterdam alderman, stating that Hoptille is a complete disaster, for which they cannot be responsible. This note tells about real life in Hoptille: living there requires the residents to exhibit appropriate social behaviour, which they do not. Many tenants are problematic, resulting in a category of people who are not able to live independently by themselves. Many of them are on alcohol or drugs; rubbish, robberies and burglaries are regular, the long inside corridor, staircases, alcoves and dark corners are used for dumping rubbish, as public toilets, as meeting or sleeping places for junkies and tramps, or experienced as dangerous hiding places. All residents hear all that happens in the whole corridor. People with dogs take them out in the inside corridor. Rats and cockroaches are spotted and, as there is no ventilation, a bad smell is all around. The reaction has been extra cleaning, with no effects, but increasing costs for residents. People move out as fast as they can. New tenants, if any, do not register any more, and many units are squatted, some only for a night. Dwellings are broken into and vandalized. Personnel are scared to enter, especially in the evenings. Selling drugs and stolen goods is a common business. The ground is covered in needles and absorbent cottons, used by junkies. People cycle in the narrow inside corridor, even on motorbikes. In addition to small fires, set on rubbish in the corridor, there have been five major fires in the last year. One man was killed in a shooting. The police raid regularly, and once besieged the whole block.

All these events were published in the newspapers, reinforcing the stigma of the estate. Some headlines read: ‘anti-Bijlmer Hoptille is a disaster’, ‘it is definitely not a nice place to live, ‘Hoptille as meeting place for problems’ and ‘estate completely dilapidated in two years’.

tion for the intended young people and the poor management from a far distance.

The second group of problems were social. The mixed society turned out to be a disaster, the long inside corridor created tensions instead of cohesion, as did the common living in group houses for individuals who were strangers to each other. Many refusals resulted in only second-choice residents, including lots of very problematic people. They created numerous problems and were not aided by the self-help organization HVO as promised, because of limited budgets and priorities. All forms of control and surveillance were absent.

As well as these physical and social factors, there were external factors, outside the reach of Hoptille. These created a poor position from the start. Just when Hoptille was completed, the production of housing in Amsterdam peaked, as it did in surrounding towns. Thus, there were many alternative housing opportunities. Hoptille was completed at a time of economic crisis, and was considered too expensive. The location in the Bijlmermeer did not help, as the image of the Bijlmermeer was rapidly getting worse. The nearby high-rise dwellings were lowered in rent, making Hoptille even more expensive.

These 13 causes influenced each other in a negative way; they pulled each other downwards in a spiral of decay. Problems strengthen problems. Within two years after completion, the whole estate had been emptied and renovated. The long inside corridor was compartmented, entrances to the street were built, group housing was transformed into family units and rents were lowered. In the middle part, the inside corridor remained, but a decade later this was compartmented as well.

Since the renovations, Hoptille has functioned weakly on the housing market. Because it is located next to the Bijlmermeer high-rises, the estate had troubles of spill-over effects when refurbishment and demolition interventions were implemented in the high-rises, resulting in a more deprived population entering the Hoptille estate. Moreover, safety in and around the estate remained problematic, and the image is still rather poor. The estate is on the long list for demolition, but decisions have been postponed because of the economic situation.

10 The changing position of high-rise housing estates: background developments

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10.1 Factors influencing the position of high-rise housing estates: a framework

Why do high-rise housing estates develop as they do? Why do their functions and positions change? Why does their popularity increase or decrease? In this chapter, we will review the dynamics affecting the changing position of high-rise estates.

In some market situations, high-rise estates are a popular part of the local or regional housing market, whilst in others they represent the least popular ‘dead end’. What determines whether high-rise estates will do well or not? Figure 10.1 summarises the factors operating at macro and micro levels which affect the supply of and the demand for high-rise estates, and which are considered below.

The position of a single estate on the housing market will be determined according to the inter-relationship between supply and demand. On the people-related demand side, we can identify the number and types of households looking for a home and the impact of such factors as individual preference, aspirations and resources. The housing-related supply side will be governed by such factors as the number and type of dwellings available, their quality, price, location and reputation. Factors operating at the micro level form the inner circle of Figure 10.1. They consist of supply and demand factors.

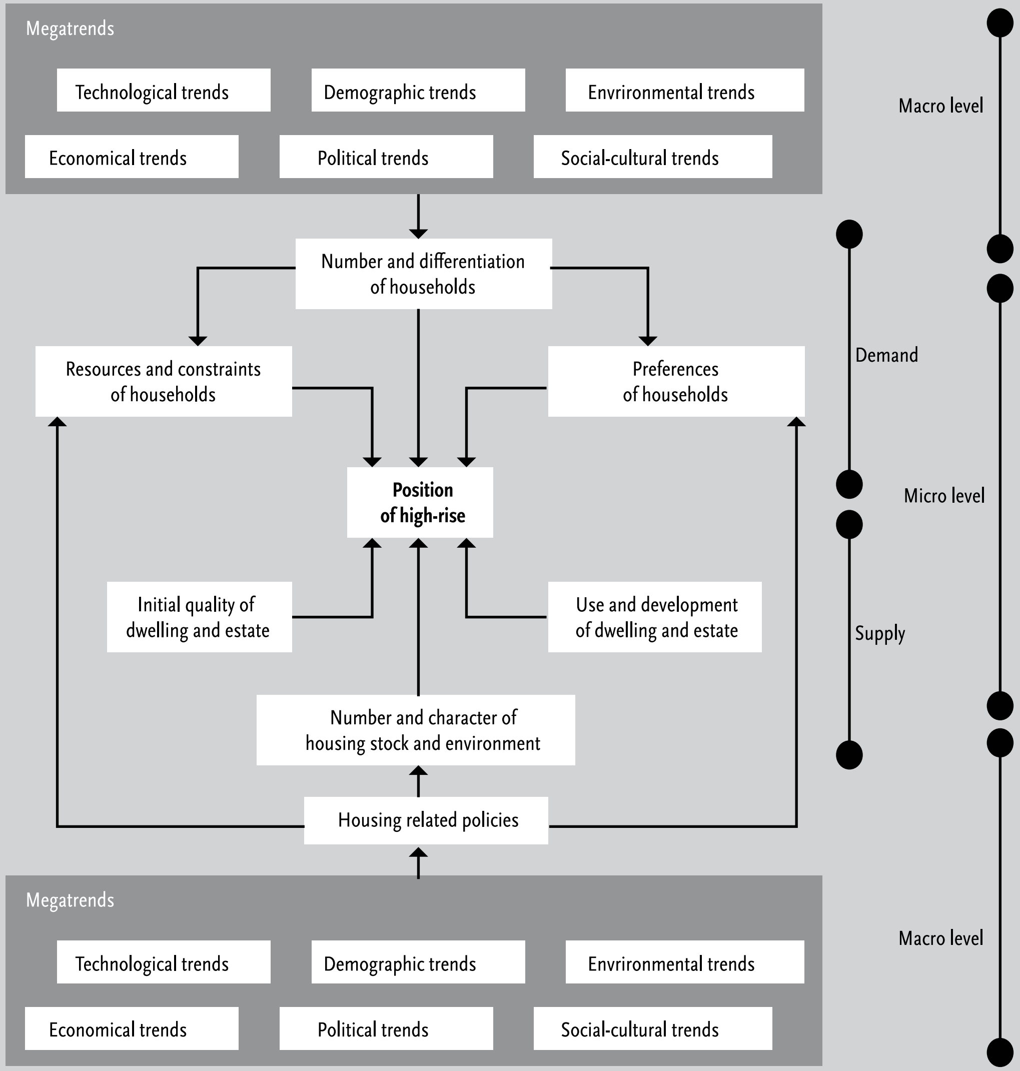
At the macro level, the two main factors affecting the position of high-rise estates on the housing market are public policies and mega-trends. The effect of the latter may be great, even though control over them may be limited. Public policies may operate at local or national level, and may range from measures taken to improve a single estate to housing policies affecting the operation of the housing market.

10.2 Factors operating at the micro level

The demand side of the housing market

Several key factors operating at the demand side of the housing market can be identified. They are the number and differentiation of households, pref-

Figure 10.1 High-rise housing estates: factors affecting supply and demand


Megatrends
Technological trends
Demographic trends
Envrironmental trends
Economical trends
Political trends
Social-cultural trends
Macro level
Number and differentiation of households
Resources and constraints of households
Preferences of households
Demand
Position of high-rise
Micro level
Initial quality of dwelling and estate
Use and development of dwelling and estate
Supply
Number and character of housing stock and environment
Housing related policies
Megatrends
Technological trends
Demographic trends
Envrironmental trends
Economical trends
Political trends
Social-cultural trends
Macro level

erences and aspirations of households and household resources and constraints.

The number and type of households looking for a home are key variables which are mainly affected by such demographic factors as increased fertility, the ageing of the population and immigration flows. The post-war 'baby boom' in many European countries had a major impact on the demand for housing and more older households will increase the demand for more manageable homes.

Such household characteristics as size, composition and age structure are major determinants of housing and locational preference (Clark & Dieleman, 1996). In particular, age intersects with the household formation cycle at the key stages of establishing a stable relationship; starting a family; children leaving home and the death of a partner (Rossi, 1955; Speare *et al.,* 1975). However, Stapleton (1980) has indicated that this standard cycle holds for fewer and fewer people. Not everybody starts a family and more people stay single, or are single again after a divorce. Moreover, families have fewer children, while people are getting older. As a consequence, the number of small households is growing in all Western countries, especially in the cities.

There is a growing amount of literature that focuses less on household formation and the preferences of traditional groups and more on so-called lifestyle groups. In this approach, housing preferences are not in the main determined by traditional such variables as age, household composition and income, but (more) by preferences in several spheres of life, such as employment and leisure patterns. According to this view, some people prefer to live near certain amenities which are important to them, for example bars and restaurants, leisure facilities or the natural environment.

Each household will then have its own 'subjective hierarchy' of preferences and aspirations which will change over time. For some, it may be to live in an apartment, for others, to be close to work, family, school or the city centre. Preferences may be influenced by the experience of friends and families, marketing or by fashion and the media will be very influential in this process.

When housing circumstances are out of line with aspirations, people will use a range of strategies to change them, from lowering their expectations to adapting their dwelling to 'voting with their feet' and moving out. However, the latter is dependent on the 'strength' of the household in the housing market and the resources available to them (Rex, 1968). A household's resources can take various forms (Van Kempen & Özuëkren, 1998) including:

- financial resources, including income, security of income, and capital assets;
- cognitive resources, including education, skills, and knowledge of the housing market;
- political resources, including the political power people wield, either formally or informally;
- social resources, including the contacts to help find suitable housing or neighbourhood.

All these aspects will influence the position of high-rise housing estates in their local or regional housing markets. When, for example, the number of households looking for a home increases, there will be more competition, which might mean that the number of vacancies in the high-rise stock is relatively low. An increasing number of small, low-income, younger or older households may boost the demand for dwellings in high-rise complexes. A growing number of family households will more often lead to a rise in the demand for single-family housing. Whether these kinds of households actually move to such a dwelling is dependent on the supply within the housing market.

The supply side of the housing market

Also on the supply side of the housing market key factors determining the supply of high-rise housing can be identified. They are the initial situation of the estate, the number and type of dwellings and estates and the use of and development of the estates.

For high-rise estates in particular, their initial quality may be an important factor in determining subsequent attractiveness, determined by, for example, location; the services provided; the organisation of (semi) public space; the materials used; the quality of the block, the size and layout of flats, their tenure and price. Where the initial quality was low, decline may have set in after only a few years, and caused blocks and estates to develop a stigma which is difficult to shrug off (Hastings & Dean, 2000; Heeger, 1993; Power, 1997).

Clearly, where supply exceeds demand, vacancies may occur. However this does not automatically mean that high-rise is always in the losing position. Despite accusations of uniformity, there are many variations in high-rise housing and estates which may affect the dynamics of supply. Important factors include location, design, the height of blocks, the size of flats, their cost and patterns of ownership and renting. For high-rise estates, reputation is a particular issue affected by the extent to which high-rise living is ‘normalised’ in a locality or country and by the existence of positive or stigmatised identities.

Key factors here include the extent to which residents have chosen to live there or not; the rate of turnover of residents; the quality of management, maintenance and repair and the extent of modernisation. It is widely recognised by housing managers and researchers that high-rise estates require more intensive management than more conventional housing types (see Power, 1997).

The relationship between housing demand and supply

An acute shortage of housing at the national, regional or local level will create a suppliers market, and irrespective of the factors summarised above, flats on high-rise estates may find themselves in great demand. Such situations currently prevail in a number of the countries examined below. Where the opposite is the case, deficiencies which might otherwise be tolerated become obstacles to demand or new alternatives may change patterns of preference and lead to changes in the social composition of estates or increased vacancies.

10.3 Factors operating at the macro level: public policies

Policies affecting housing can be divided between general policies which might affect the housing market, such as fiscal measures, housing policies affecting for example access to tenure, and specific housing policies aimed at high-rise estates. Policies may originate from different levels of decision making including the European, regional and local municipal. We have selected here those which have the greatest impact on the future of high-rise estates including:

The use of public subsidies

Public subsidies are particularly associated with the provision of new dwellings, for example to meet housing shortage in the 1950s and 1960s. Such a practice had particular implications for the volume of construction of expensive high-rise estates. Subsidies are also used to achieve modernisation and repair and may determine the provision or otherwise of such additional amenities as lifts, or extra personnel such as concierges.

Subsidies can also be used to support personal housing costs, enabling households to live in a dwelling they could not otherwise afford. In some countries, such as the Netherlands, this means that living in high-rise becomes affordable. The subsidies may also have the effect of 'trapping' populations in the housing circumstances in which they remain eligible for subsidies. Changes in application and entitlement may have a dramatic impact on the population structure of a housing area or estate.

Housing allocation rules

Allocation rules and practices in the public rental sector have had a major impact on the social composition of high-rise estates. For example, housing associations may allocate all dwellings in a block to older or younger people or to a particular social group, or they can exclude immigrant or other minority ethnic households by claiming that no large dwellings are currently available. The role of 'housing managers' as 'social gatekeepers' has been recognised by Pahl (1975, 1977) and Lipsky (1980), and where personal values, assumptions and ideologies can have an influence, there is a risk that stereotypes and racism may affect decisions (Tomlins, 1997). The application of such allocation rules has greater impact where supply is limited.

10.4 Factors operating at the macro level: global 'megatrends'

Megatrends are structural movements which go beyond local developments and operate in the technological, economic, political, demographic, socialcultural and environmental domains. Priemus et al. (1994) have combined such trends into several scenarios and have argued for their effects on housing in general. In this section, we have focused on those trends with particular implications for high-rise estates (see Table 10.1).

Table 10.1 Megatrends in society and their possible influences on the position of high-rise estates

Trend	Keywords	Effects on the housing market	Effects on high-rise	Trend	Keywords	Effects on the housing market	Effects on high-rise
A. Technological trends: the world gets smaller				**B. Economical trends: globalisation**			
Rapid growth of telecommunication		People have less need to live close to their work A flexible layout for houses	Adaptations to apartments are needed More spacious apartments can respond to new demands	European unification	Introduction of the euro Open markets Free transport of goods and people Enlargement of European community	Relocation to economically stronger regions Population shift after EU enlargement	Greater housing demand in economically stronger regions, less in weaker regions
Mobility growth		Accessible and attractive locations are preferred	Importance of location Benefits for well-located blocks	Prosperity growth	Increasing GDP	Greater demand for better quality of housing types Increasing housing market polarisation	Prospects determined by position on the housing market
C. Political trends: the changing role of the state				**D. Demographical trends: ageing and immigration**			
Less state intervention, more market provision	Declining welfare state Increasing market provision Increasing personal liability Declining state intervention	Personal liability for housing More competition More private sector activity More choices for some	High-rise housing exposed to market competition	Ageing	Growing share of retired and pensionable population	Increasing need for housing with care More secure and more manageable homes	Increasing need for housing with care More secure and more manageable homes
Transformation in Eastern Europe	Declining welfare state More market provision More personal liability Decreasing egalitarian society	Personal liability for housing More competition More private sector activity More choices for some More differentiation between housing areas	High-rise housing exposed to market competition	Immigration	Economic and political immigration Illegal immigration	Settlement in low cost areas Multi-ethnic society growths or the danger of a dual society The experience of later generations may differ	Settlement in low cost areas Multi-ethnic society growths or the danger of a dual society The experience of later generations may differ
E. Social cultural trends: diversity and choice				**F. Environmental trends: sustainability, safety and security**			
Individualisation and new lifestyles	Changing norms and values Emancipation Greater diversity and choice	Decreasing household sizes Increasing diversity of needs and preferences	High-rise may suit some new lifestyles, but requires certain norms	Community safety under pressure	Norms and values	Determining neighbourhood reputations	Negative image created by high crime rated
				Sustainability	Environment Ecology	Sustainable quality of building materials Push back energy consumption New building versus renovation	Can high-rise meet this new challenge?

A. Technological trends: the world gets smaller

Information and communication technology (ICT)

In his famous book from the 1980s, Naisbitt identified the first of ten megatrends as the change from an industrial to an information-based society (Naisbitt, 1984). Whereas the Industrial Revolution was based on labour, products and energy, the current technological revolution is based on information and communication and the creation of a digital society (Spaans, 2000). In the Information Age, Castells argued that alongside the traditional physical space of places, a new world-wide organisation is developing, the space of flows, dictated by networks, streams and hubs of on-line communication (Castells, 1996-1998). Castells also indicates that certain parts in the 'old' western world may be located outside these flows and thus cannot participate in the new economy. This might affect the overall demand for housing, especially the weaker parts of the housing market, including some high-rise estates.

Mobility as the norm

Since the 1970s, there have been continual predictions that more and more people would work from home and live home-based lives. More and more people use IT at home, a development which is leading to higher demands on dwellings themselves, on the need for larger and well equipped dwellings to accommodate more functions, and for well-sited but attractive locations.

Despite evidence of such trends, there has been a continual growth in personal movement and mobility. In many European countries, the number of cars exceeds the number of households, traffic is increasing and congestion is common.

B. Economical trends: globalisation

In all western countries, the industrial manufacturing sector has declined while service sector activity has sharply increased. Many traditional production tasks have been mechanised, automated and computerised, making production more capital-intensive and less dependent on manual labour. Other tasks have been relocated to other parts of the world, where labour is less expensive. In such a situation, businesses act, compete, deal, finance and form relationships on a worldwide basis (Marcuse & Van Kempen, 2000). The question here is whether high-rise estates or residents will suffer as a result of these changes. Our view is that factors such as education are more important than place of residence, although in an urban setting, declining labour market opportunities will affect negatively the income and employment prospects of the inhabitants of low-income housing areas.

The consequences of globalisation for the housing market

As already mentioned, growing differentiation in society can lead to social exclusion with spatial consequences (Madanipour *et al.,* 1998). The creation of internal open markets in the EU has enabled people to move to gain employment in the economically healthiest regions. The growing prosperity and enlargement of the professional middle classes has increased the demand for more quality and diversity in the housing market. However, as the chapter on Germany will examine in relation to the former GDR, where the dynamic is to leave rather than to stay, the consequences for the housing market can be devastating. With the enlargement of the EU, a similar population shift may take place between Eastern and Western Europe resulting in additional demand for low cost housing in the West and a declining market with increased vacancies in the East.

Prosperity for some

A second major economic trend in the post-war years has been an increase in the wealth and prosperity of many people, especially the professional middle classes in the expanding service sector. This is in direct contrast with evidence of growing social exclusion among those whose skills are limited and whose (mainly manual) employment continues to decline. Many authors have pointed to the dangers of creating 'dual societies' in which a growing social and economic 'underclass' is concentrated in certain estates or neighbourhoods, including high-rise estates (Castells, 1989; Wilson 1987, 1996; Taylor, 1995).

European unification

One of the most visible manifestations of globalisation within Europe is European unification. Originating in 1948, the European Community reached 15 members by 2000 and will enlarge substantially to include more Eastern European countries in 2005. The tangible consequences of European unification are the open internal market; the free movement of goods and people; European-wide legislation and from 2002, the adoption of the euro. Although a slow process, more and more responsibilities are being devolved to the European Community level. However, in the field of housing a European policy seems far away.

C. Political trends: the changing role of the state

Restructuring welfare states in Western Europe

In Western European countries, the restructuring of the welfare state is one of the most important political developments. In some countries, the welfare role of the state has always been limited, but in others it has been comprehensive and well-developed. Its main principles have been twofold: to provide support for those who are excluded from the paid work force for example, the unemployed, the old and the ill, and secondly, to provide subsidies to support such basic social provision as education, social services and housing (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Since the mid-1980s, the welfare activities of states have been in retreat (Lundqvist, 1992). Characterised by the phrase 'less state and more market', a new ideology has swept Europe which advocates less state intervention, more reliance on 'market' provision and on people providing for themselves. Economic prosperity during the 1990s shifted the emphasis on the private housing sector. The resulting economic cutbacks have had a major impact on the public housing sector.

Housing in a retreating welfare state

The restructuring of the welfare state can especially be felt in housing. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, housing diminished in political significance in favour of market provision and an increase in personal responsibility in almost all Western countries. Subsidies for house building have been dramatically reduced, the social rented sector has continued to decline and the owner-occupied sector to expand. Where less financial support is offered for housing costs, households have to rely more on their own resources and low income households are relegated to the poorer segments of the housing stock. For low cost high-rise housing, the impact can be two-fold, either becoming an important housing resource or the site of increased social exclusion and segregation.

Transformation in Eastern Europe

A description of the main consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union is best left to a contributor from one of the countries affected: "After 1989, due to the radical political and economic changes, Eastern European countries began a new phase in their development. The orthodox principles of state-socialist redistribution of income and goods (e.g., housing) were replaced by the rules of the market, setting off profound changes within these societies" (Kovacs, 1998).

The impact of this continuing process of transformation is still being felt, including the growth in income inequalities within countries; the reduced role of the state; the processes of restitution and privatisation and attempts to create post-socialist societies and economies.

Housing in a transformed Eastern Europe

The restitution and privatisation of housing has been one of the most important processes in Central and Eastern European countries since 1989/1990. In most former socialist countries, housing which was privately owned before the Soviet era has been returned to its former owners or their descendants, and former social housing has been sold to its tenants at heavy discounts. As a result, many former socialist countries now have a high rate of home ownership, and there has been a huge expansion in private sector activity (Schwedler, 1998).

According to Douglas (1997), privatisation has been considered a positive development in all Eastern European countries, especially by states relieved of responsibility for its provision and maintenance. However, “post-privatisation housing systems face a number of problems” (Tsenkova, 2000). One is that low-income households have become homeowners without the ability to maintain and sustain the quality of their asset. Another is that the limited residue of public housing may be insufficient to enable municipalities to provide for those with special needs, for socially marginalised households, or to meet rising homelessness. Much of this remaining stock tends to be concentrated at the periphery of large urban centres, often in large scale and high-rise housing estates.

D. Demographical trends: older and more diverse populations

Ageing

Demographic trends such as ageing are among the more predictable megatrends. In the years after the Second World War, all European countries had to cope with a baby boom. In some countries, the boom faded away within a few years, while in others including Ireland, the Netherlands and Poland its effects persisted until the 1960s or later. The ‘baby boom’ cohorts have boosted the demand for services as they have successively required child care, education, employment, housing and elderly care services. The large cohorts of the late 1940s and 1950s will create a ‘boom’ in retirements and in the older population in the period 2010-2020.

Immigration

Immigration may have political or economic motives and has been a major feature of post-war European development. The relative economic prosperity of the west has drawn in significant populations from poorer countries, many of which were former colonies of the host country. Illegal immigration can add to the flow of ‘official’ migrants, and through chain migration may have a major impact on specific cities and neighbourhoods (Burgers, 1998).

Housing and demographical trends

It is clear that older people have distinctive housing needs and preferences, especially when personal or social care needs increase. Issues around limited mobility and poor health can be met by providing secure and manageable dwellings, an alarm system and care services, and by ensuring effective heating and home insulation.

Future cohorts of the elderly are likely to be very different from previous generations. In the past, the elderly in Europe have experienced recession, war and scarcity, whilst more of the future elderly will have grown up in times of economic growth and relative prosperity. As a result, they are more likely to own their home and to be mobile car owners, and to have much higher expectations concerning their future housing and care needs.

The impact of migration is less easy to determine. Large immigration flows may increase the competition for housing, and immigrants may have the weakest market position (Sarre *et al.,* 1989). Segregation of immigrants may lead to stigmatised areas, and high-rise estates are likely to be among them. Immigration may also lead to tensions with the established population, especially when the process is rapid. However, immigration may also serve to support markets in which there is an over-supply of housing, subsequently providing a degree of stability.

First generation migrants tend to settle in neighbourhoods which offer available and affordable housing, and where family or community contacts are already established (Van Kempen & Priemus, 1999). Where high-rise estates have represented this segment of the market, they have played an important function in housing those newly established in the country. The Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam provides a perfect example of this process. The options and preferences of second and subsequent generations are less easy to predict, although experience from the UK suggests that very different paths are taken according to the relative economic success of different ethnic groups.

E. Social-cultural trends: diversity and choice

Individualisation and changing lifestyles

Individualisation takes place when collective values and norms associated with established faiths and belief systems break down, and individuals are able to exercise personal choice in their lifestyles and in relation to employment and the housing market (Van Kempen *et al.,* 2000).

The growth of personal choice and distinctive rights for different social groups is a key megatrend at work in contemporary Europe. Originating with the emancipation of women, a growing series of social groups, from young people, migrants and the elderly to single parents, homosexuals and those with a physical disability have established distinctive needs and the right to their own choices.

Whilst norms and values change rapidly, the housing stock tends to remain relatively stable, and people must either adapt to it or adapt housing to their needs. Some housing has proved more flexible than others, and high-rise housing, which has the potential to meet some of the new needs, is technically less adaptable.

Life courses have also changed rapidly in the last two or three decades. Among the main changes in many countries are a growth in relationship breakdown and the postponement of family formation. As a result, the demand for housing and turnover of housing increases. Even for those who have established a stable relationship or a family, there may be less stability in place of residence. Labour market opportunities may increase the need to move, and more movement to access better quality homes or neighbourhoods is a well-established pattern. Where both partners are working, the demand for manageable homes may match that from much older households.

Such options are not open to everybody, and for low income households, choices will be limited or in decline, especially where labour market opportunities are reduced and the welfare state is in retreat. Such a dynamic is clearly associated with the fortunes of many post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Social-cultural trends and their effect on housing

A very visible effect of the process of individualisation is the number of smaller households. Whilst conventional family households have been in the majority, they may now be outnumbered by single, childless couple, divorced, elderly, and single parent households. While the average household size is falling and there are less people per square kilometre, more households means the need for more homes of different types.

The greater individualisation of lifestyles creates contradictory situations in high-rise housing. Whilst many blocks show little individuality, they can offer the anonymity which suits a more private and individualised lifestyles. At the same time, the desire for anonymity may conflict with a greater awareness of neighbours in flats and the need for a more social way of living.

F. Environmental trends: achieving sustainability, safety and security

Concern over quality of life, the future of the natural and the built environments and their sustainability has never been greater. Since the Brundtland Commission's report *Our Common Future* in 1987, sustainability has become a key word. The report questioned the necessary relationship between economic growth and environmental pollution, and promoted the alternative of sustainable growth supported by ecologically sound techniques. In two World Congresses, in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and Johannesburg in 2002, the overall aims behind a sustainable future are worked out in more concrete agreements. Such concerns cut across national and continental boundaries, although progress has proved highly variable.

In relation to housing, attention has turned to such issues as insulation; the use of ecological building materials; building regulations; recycling and a preference for the refurbishment and re-use of the existing stock instead of demolition and new building. Questions over the sustainability of high-rise housing may have particular consequences for its future.

A good quality of life depends on both the dwelling itself and the environment in which it is located. At the beginning of a century characterised by new uncertainties, the safety and security of home and neighbourhood have taken on even greater significance. Concerns include the priorities of ensuring safety from crime and anti-social behaviour, from dangerous road traffic, from other sources of noise and from environmental pollution. Whether this requires such formal provision as air conditioning and 'gated communities' or the informal scrutiny provided by friends and neighbours, the importance of a safe and secure home environment continues to grow.

10.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the factors affecting the position of high-rise housing estates on the housing market. We have attempted to identify key supply and demand factors which have particular consequences for high-rise estates, and to establish the influence of public policies and megatrends. In the following chapters, we will see how supply and demand factors are operating in each country. We identify the public policies of relevance and the extent to which megatrends are shaping the current and future position of estates. In chapter 18, we will seek to summarise the impact of these trends in relation to the future for high-rise estates across Europe.

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11 Accumulating problems

Issues in deprived urban areas

11.1 Introduction

Problems on large housing estates have been described many times. No other urban area has been portrayed and analysed so often. I have been one of these many authors myself, and the next chapter draws heavily on three publications that together provide a compact overview of the increasing problems that the often well-planned housing estates had to cope with. These three are High-rise housing in Europe (Turkington *et al.,* 2004), Chapter 1 (Wassenberg et al.); the report 'A practitioner's view on neighbourhood regeneration' (Wassenberg & Van Dijken, 2011) and an older article that focuses on the process of decline (Elsinga & Wassenberg, 1991). The last article illustrates the fact that 'old knowledge' can still be valid.

All areas develop……

Neighbourhoods are not static entities. They change when used by residents, visitors and local entrepreneurs. They age, wear out, and need maintenance and renewal. Some neighbourhoods are always doing well, while others decline. In the latter case, they become branded as a 'problem', 'disadvantaged', 'deprived' or 'concentrated' area, low-income neighbourhood or poverty district. This refers to a downward process in which people who can afford it move out and make room for people in the lower social strata, whereby dwellings and streets deteriorate, crime and anti-social behaviour increase, services and businesses leave or go out of business, and the image of the neighbourhood worsens.

Almost by definition, cities are characterized by differences and inequalities. They are places for both poor and rich households, for new and old inhabitants, and for wealthy and modest neighbourhoods. Cities comprise various districts and neighbourhoods, each with its own function, nature, architectural style, attraction, and advantages and disadvantages for residents, businesses and visitors.

…… but some areas get deprived

Variety and differentiation are part of urban life. However, when differences are too large, problems accumulate in too large and too heavy concentrations: the deprived areas. Deprived neighbourhoods exist in many forms. Some areas can be characterized by a single problem – such as noise from an adjacent railway – while others have a multitude of problems. For an area to become included in a national urban policy programme, it is often required that it exhibits a multitude of problems.

There is abundant literature explaining area developments and providing causes for deterioration. Van Beckhoven and colleagues (2009) provided an overview, including the findings of earlier scholars. They mentioned processes that are considered to happen more naturally and automatically (like the ecological school of succession, filtering and downgrading), while others emphasized the influence of human behaviour (with preferences, social cohesion and identification with an area, constraints and possibilities) or the physical appearance (bad buildings and brownfields cause deterioration). Others focused on institutions and organisations (like the good or bad management of estates, and processes of allocation).

11.2 Issues in deprived urban areas

What issues might there be in deprived urban areas? A long but incomplete list can be presented based on a range of earlier research:[1]

- Dwellings show clear signs of physical decay, for example problems with the construction of buildings, bad painting, damp rooms and elevators that do not work.
- Buildings leak heat and are energy inefficient, which causes high CO_2 output and high heating costs.
- Dwellings are out-dated, kitchens and bathrooms are too small for modern equipment and there is a lack of good heating facilities, sanitary equipment and storage space.
- Public space may be dirty, dysfunctional or dangerous.
- Urban design or spatial problems, related to an isolated location, bad transport, high building density and problems with traffic (e.g. noise pollution, lack of parking spaces).
- Health inequalities: people in deprived areas die earlier and live more years in unhealthiness.
- Relatively cheap housing attracts households that cannot afford to live elsewhere, which sometimes leads to a population that is not very interested in the neighbourhood or in bonding with others who live there.
- Social-economic problems, such as poor schooling, unemployment, debts, language problems, broken families, etc. A concentration of households that live in such circumstances is thought to intensify problems.
- Many deprived urban areas are characterized by a disproportionately high number of unemployed persons or those with other disadvantages, such as the elderly on low pensions, single-parent families, etc.
- Anti-social behaviour towards fellow residents, noise and other nuisances, intimidation, poor neighbour relations and weak social cohesion.

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[1] See e.g. Power (1997); Hall (1997); Social Exclusion Unit (1998); Cars (2000); Van Kempen et al. (2005); Krantz *et al.,* (1999); Wassenberg et al. (2007); Whitehead & Scanlon (2007); Schwedler (1998); Rowlands et al. (2009); Heeger (1993); Skifter Andersen (2003); Wassenberg (1993); Argiolu et al. (2008); Murie et al. (2003); Van Beckhoven et al. (2009); Turkington et al. (2004); Dekker et al. (2005).

- Financial problems both for tenants – because of increasing rents and service charges – and for landlords, who have to deal with rent arrears, vacancies and extra maintenance costs.
- Management and organizational problems resulting from inadequate maintenance and insufficient resources.
- Nyström (2006) described the growth and decline of the carefully planned neighbourhood centres of the post-war decades. Neighbourhood centres declining and sometimes closing.[2]
- Stigmatization of a neighbourhood can arise from downgrading processes in the area, especially when the processes of decay are broadly covered in the media. Getting rid of these negative images is often very difficult.[3]
- Unpopular areas in a loose housing market may result in oversupply and vacancies.

In some areas, problems emerged soon after construction, as in Hoptille. Some high-rise estates have proved to be particularly vulnerable. Many semi-public and collective spaces, including entries, alleys, corridors and garages, proved to be very problematic rather than the cosy places where people could meet each other and socialize. In such circumstances, vandalism and public safety became major issues (Krantz *et al.,* 1999).

Cycles of decline

The problems on estates are highly varied and complicated, as the overview illustrates. In most cases, neither a single problem nor a single cause can be indicated, but rather intricate combinations of causes and effects that are responsible. Prak and Priemus (1986) developed a comprehensive model to explain why a process of decline, once it has begun, apparently leads of its own accord to the further decline of post-war housing estates. They identified three cycles of decline: technical decline (affecting the estate), social decline (affecting tenants) and financial decline (affecting the operation of the estate). All three cycles may influence and reinforce each other, and are also affected by external factors including government policies, wider social and economic trends, and the policies of the owners, as described in the previous chapter. Later on, a 'growth model' was developed, in which the same factors are described, but now influencing each other in a positive way (Heeger, 1993).

Is it the design?

Similar spirals of decline have been analysed by other authors, including Power (1997), E. van Kempen (1994) and Temkin and Rohe (1996). One of the most controversial questions concerns the impact of the urban form itself. Alice Coleman's 1985 study 'Utopia on Trial' accused the architects and developers of mass housing estates of generating problems through bad design. However, while large high-rise estates were generally considered unattractive, the case for physical design determinism was unproven.

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[2] Nyström (2006) described the growth and decline of the carefully planned neighbourhood centres of the post-war decades.

[3] See e.g. Wacquant, 1993, 2008; Dean & Hastings, 2000; Wassenberg, 2004; Hastings, 2004.

The question was also raised in the book Mass housing in Europe (Rowlands *et al.*, 2009): why are mass housing estates a problem? One obvious reason is that they provide – en masse – a housing type that does not reflect contemporary household preferences. However, the authors were reluctant to blame the physical layout of the mass housing estates, and referred to many large estates that have satisfied residents. Adriaanse (2011) elaborated on some well-functioning large housing estates that are doing well in their local housing markets, despite their appearance. One of the main explanations she found lies in the set of mostly unwritten norms and values among inhabitants, tacit rules that maintain the quality of living. The one estate is not the other, and the local context will always be different. So, the question has not been answered.

In a recent book, Florian Urban (2012) compared mass housing in seven metropolises around the world. He stated in the opening chapter that differences between those megacities show that design alone is not to blame for mass housing's mixed achievements. The buildings did not produce the social situations they came to stand for, but acted as vessels, conditioning rather than creating social relations. Similar buildings function well in one city, but are catastrophic in another. This functioning is dependent on a range of factors.

At least the design plays a role

Although many large housing estates function rather well, problems in large or mass housing estates are more numerous than in many other areas. It is a combination of housing type, large scale, urban design and location that make many large estates less popular places to live. When alternatives are available, people choose 'with their feet', and stay out or move out. Hirschman (1970) was among the first to elaborate on the conceptualization of customer's choice, and how increasing choices affect behaviour. In a recent publication, Qu and Hasselaar (2011) connected increased choice with issues of liveability.

The urban design causes problems like insecurity and lack of social control, due to the way the area was built (large, monotonous blocks, separate lanes for pedestrians, bikes and cars, bushes beside the pavements). Oscar Newman (1972) came up with the often cited idea of the (failing) defensible space in many of semi-public spaces: no-man's areas between home and the street. Moreover, the competitive position of high-rises on the housing market is often not good. In some estates, social problems are on the increase. This might be a consequence of the allocation process, whereby households with little choice on the urban housing market end up in high-rises. These households may cause conflicts. Crime, vandalism and feelings of insecurity occur frequently precisely in this type of post-war district (Elsinga & Wassenberg, 1991). The Bijlmermeer area in Amsterdam is a typical example. The adjacent Hoptille area, the country's estate that deteriorated the most rapidly (in Chapter 9), is another.

11.3 The process of decline

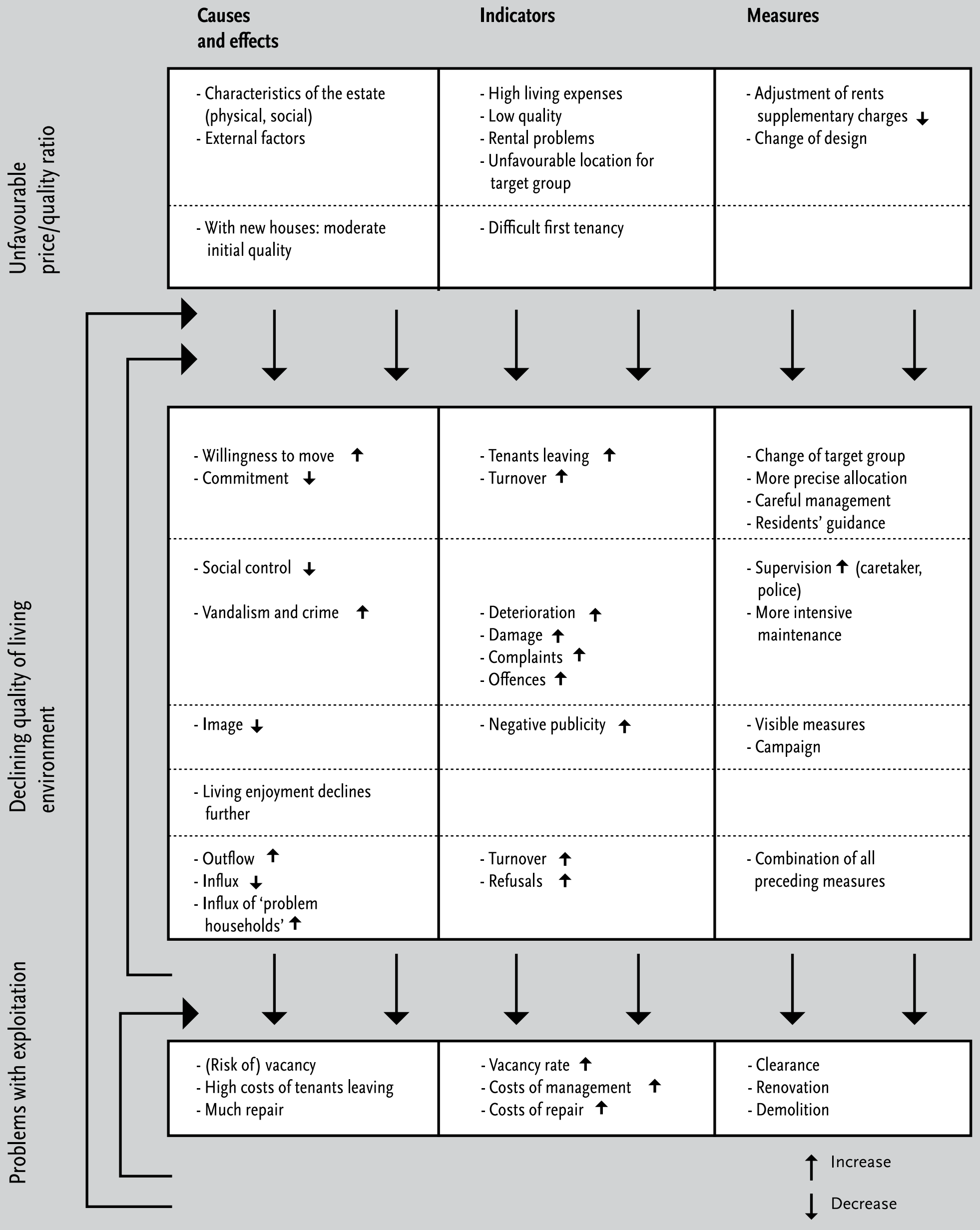
The process of decline can be elaborated somewhat more, and is shown in Figure 11.1. This figure focuses on factors on the micro level as identified in Chapter 10. Figure 11.1 is a result of a large 5-year research programme on the relation between large housing estates and quality of life, crime in particular (Elsinga & Wassenberg, 1991a, 1991b). This large project was carried out in six cities in the Netherlands, and included Hoptille and the Bijlmermeer. The figure shows the factors that may cause deterioration, but it also shows that deterioration is dependent on factors and developments that happened before and that accelerate the decline.

Problematic estates often have a false start, caused by a relative low initial quality and an unfavourable relation between price and quality. Rents and additional charges are relatively high, while the quality is not highly appreciated by the prospective tenants or owner-occupiers. A lack of quality may be caused by absolute deficiencies such as small living spaces or inferior conveniences (sanitary, kitchen, sufficient room outside) or a vulnerable physical environment (deck access, long basement corridors, a long inside corridor, open stairwells). A lack of quality may also be expressed in more subjective terms (unsafe, dirty, ugly), an isolated location, anti-social behaviour and a bad reputation. For the residents, these subjective factors are just as important.

The unfavourable conditions support social problems. The already poor and disliked buildings are populated by inhabitants with little choice in the urban housing market, often having a low socio-economic position and who are not seldom in a problematic individual situation: addictions, mental problems, anti-social behaviour; people who have difficulty functioning in society. These households more easily cause conflicts.

External features may exaggerate the situation. A very important feature is the supply in the housing market. Landlords consider this the most important cause of vacancies. When more housing is available in the market, the less popular estates show vacancy and operating problems. The completion of many new housing units within a short time may be disastrous for the living climate in the less popular estates. Potential movers prefer the new houses to the less popular estates. The problem of an ample housing market first became visible in the Netherlands in the mid-1980s.

Figure 11.1 Problems on post-war housing estates



	Causes and effects	Indicators	Measures
Unfavourable price/quality ratio	- Characteristics of the estate (physical, social) - External factors	- High living expenses - Low quality - Rental problems - Unfavourable location for target group	- Adjustment of rents supplementary charges ↓ - Change of design
	- With new houses: moderate initial quality	- Difficult first tenancy	
Declining quality of living environment	- Willingness to move ↑ - Commitment ↓	- Tenants leaving ↑ - Turnover ↑	- Change of target group - More precise allocation - Careful management - Residents' guidance
	- Social control ↓ - Vandalism and crime ↑	- Deterioration ↑ - Damage ↑ - Complaints ↑ - Offences ↑	- Supervision ↑ (caretaker, police) - More intensive maintenance
	- Image ↓	- Negative publicity ↑	- Visible measures - Campaign
	- Living enjoyment declines further		
	- Outflow ↑ - Influx ↓ - Influx of 'problem households' ↑	- Turnover ↑ - Refusals ↑	- Combination of all preceding measures
Problems with exploitation	- (Risk of) vacancy - High costs of tenants leaving - Much repair	- Vacancy rate ↑ - Costs of management ↑ - Costs of repair ↑	- Clearance - Renovation - Demolition

↑ Increase

↓ Decrease

Progressive deterioration: the residential quality decreases

Dwellings that are known for having a low initial quality, are vulnerable to an increase in problems and a declining quality of life for the residents. The desire to move is great and the residents' commitment both to their housing environment and to each other is small. There is less chance of community-building among the residents. People remain strangers to each other, which causes an absence of informal social control and further undermines the quality of life: more visible deterioration, damage, pollution, graffiti and ‘broken windows’, according to the theory of the same name introduced by James Wilson and George Kelling (1982). They stated that litter, vandalism and pollution accumulate. If a few broken windows in a building are not repaired, vandals will break a few more. Eventually they break in, small fires are started, and so on. The same applies to litter on the pavement: rubbish attracts more rubbish. Wilson and Kelling strongly advocated quick repairs and cleaning. Deterioration causes more deterioration. Negative publicity in the local media perpetuates and sometimes magnifies the negative image (see Chapters 15 and 16).

When problems increase, so do financial problems. House prices fall and houses cannot be sold easily. Landlords are confronted with rising vacancies, high turnovers, many refusals and people leaving without a trace (but with a rent debt). The existence of vacancies also depends on the situation in the housing market. Vacancy causes a loss of rental income. A high vacancy rate discourages residents; it is an uncomfortable feeling to have an empty house next door. Vacancies cause more vacancies.

There is a real danger that landlords lose faith when the situation gets to this stage, and begin to follow a policy of laissez-faire. If there is much vandalism, a choice has to be made between spending a lot of money on repairs, or refraining from repairs and maintenance altogether. The latter decision will stimulate ‘erosion vandalism’: destruction attracts destruction.

11.4 The local and national context

The Bijlmermeer area is a clear example of progressive deterioration, illustrating all the factors mentioned above. This is dealt with in the following chapter. Having said that, we have to repeat that at the same time the Bijlmermeer is an exception in the Netherlands. There are more problematic estates, but not on the same scale. And there are many estates, much smaller ones but of a similar appearance, that are not problematic and whose residents enjoy living on them. The process of decline is not a phenomenon on all large housing estates in the Netherlands.

The great diversity of issues and problems in Dutch and other European cities can be explained by various reasons, such as the size, location and history of the areas and specific local and regional developments and circumstances. For example, when global forces changed the worldwide industrial landscape, former heavily industrialized countries such as in Britain, Germany and Belgium had to cope relatively more often with vacant industrial plots that needed transformation and restructuring. In France, Sweden and the Netherlands, relatively many inexpensive and sober social housing units were produced in the three decades following the Second World War. When prosperity increased and people could afford other types of housing, these mass housing neighbourhoods increasingly proved to be unpopular, resulting in a renewal focus on these post-war areas. In Southern European countries, owner-occupancy predominates and urban renewal activities focus on the upgrading of central districts. In eastern European countries, most changes started from the 1990s onwards after the political changes. Despite general trends across Europe, local and national circumstances, path dependencies and interests influence outcomes of the process of urban renewal (see Levy-Vroelant *et al.,* 2008, 2012; Malpass, 2008).The recognition that local contexts are different does not make comparisons useless; on the contrary, they show that local circumstances offer particular chances and prospects.

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12 Problems and early measures in the Bijlmermeer

12.1 Persistent problems

Problems in the Bijlmermeer rapidly increased in the 1980s, as some figures in this chapter will demonstrate. As a reaction, all kinds of measures were taken, before a drastic integrated approach was adopted in the 1990s. However, such an approach takes a couple of years before any results become visible, and in the meantime daily life – and daily annoyances and frustrations – continues. Problems proved to be very persistent in the 1990s, and did not suddenly improve when an integrated approach was adopted. The area and the problems were just of a too large scale for a new approach to work at once, and in all places.

I deal with problems and partial measures in this and the following chapter, and focus on the integrated approach and the drastic renewal in the following part. The history of the Bijlmermeer is very eventful. For easy reference, I have put the Bijlmermeer milestones in one scheme in Figure 12.1.

High-rise trouble in paradise

In the article *High-rise trouble in Paradise*, Van Kempen and Wassenberg (1996) described the situation as follows: “In the 1970s, Bijlmermeer was repeatedly in the news. It got very bad press, which did not help its image. Then as now, the news coverage highlighted degradation, vandalism, lack of safety, crime, and the high rate of unemployment. More and more problems arose. In the mid-1980s, a new area south of Bijlmermeer, named Gaasperdam, was ready for occupation. The new development, with its high share of single-family houses, attracted many households from Bijlmermeer. When they moved out, Bijlmermeer was faced with yet another problem: vacancy. In 1984, there were 3200 vacant dwellings in Bijlmermeer, a quarter of all units. At present, residential mobility is between 40 and 50% per year. Thus, the high ideals were soon unveiled to reveal a harsh reality.”

The problems in the Bijlmermeer were manifold, multiple, related and wicked, and could not be solved. Later in this chapter, we demonstrate that all conceivable single measures were taken, but virtually without result. Later on, it was recognized that the multitude of problems could be solved only by a multitude of solutions, in an integrated way and on a large scale. However, this understanding grew only from the 1990s (and is the subject of Part IV). Until then, the estate had to go through a long period of misery.

12.2 Problems in figures

The situation in the Bijlmermeer progressively became dramatic in almost all respects. In Chapter 14 an article is presented, earlier published in Cities, in which problems are clustered into three major groups. Here, we provide some

Figure 12.1 Milestones Bijlmermeer, 1974-2012

1974	19th century area renewal / Anti high-rise feelings increase
1975	**Surinam got independent / Last completions**
1976	New town constructions around Amsterdam
1977	
1978	Competitive family housing in the region
1979	
1980	**Metro opens**
1981	
1982	**Hoptille built / Gliphoeve rebuilt**
1983	**Rehabilitation programme (1983-1988)**
1984	**Vacancies peak / Hoptille rebuilt / First residents survey ('Veldkamp')**
1985	Experimental measures
1986	Liveability and safety further decrease
1987	**Main shopping centre opens / Intensive management ('IWW') / Evaluation Rehabilitation Programme**
1988	
1989	**Experiment Caretakers & flatguards**
1990	**Task Force report / Future survey**
1991	
1992	**El Al boeing crash / Experiment Daily management / First Restructuring Programme**
1993	More socio-economic measures
1994	National City Policy starts (1994-2014)
1995	**Experiment Camera control (CCTV) / First visible changes / Second Restructuring Programme / Future survey (F-area)**
1996	**Arena stadium opens**
1997	
1998	**Experiment: Personal involvement**
1999	**Evaluation so far / Future survey (G-area)**
2000	
2001	**Future consultation all remaining blocks /** More demolition **/ Final plan for all remaining blocks**
2002	Bijlmer museum
2003	Rehousing increasingly determines renewal
2004	Sale of old high-rise flats
2005	
2006	
2007	
2008	**Future consultation Heesterveld**
2009	
2010	**Kleiburg last block**
2011	
2012	

event within one year event during more years

background information to make the problematic situation clearer. Facts and figures have been drawn from many sources; in most of these the local housing association Nieuw [New] Amsterdam was involved. Some important reports are:

- *Effectrapportage 1987* [Effect report 1987];
- Report *De Bijlmer blijft, veranderen* [1990 Report of the Task Force Future Bijlmermeer, the predecessor of the renewal];
- Report *Bijlmermeer 1984-1989*, showing developments and figures;
- O+S, Statistical Office Amsterdam;
- (1st and 2nd) 'Saneringsaanvraag' [two claims for financing the major renewal], (Nieuw Amsterdam, 1992, 1995);
- A range of annual reports by the Nieuw Amsterdam housing association;
- Brakenhoff *et al.*, 1991; Dignum *et al.*, 1992; Ouwehand, 1999; Kwekkeboom, 1999, 2002; Wassenberg et al: all residents' surveys (see Appendix 1 and 2).

Box 12.1 The Bijlmermeer as the national problem site

The situation in the Bijlmermeer had turned out disastrous. The Bijlmermeer became synonymous with problems. The image of the area was probably by far the worst in the whole country. 'The drain of Dutch society', as it was called.

According to a worker of the housing association in 1989: "The Dutch broadcasting companies are based in Hilversum, a nearby city. It seemed that whatever problem occurred, and they needed some shots, they jumped in their vans and drove to the Bijlmermeer to start filming. Whether it was an item about living in flats or in an anonymous high-rise, about pollution, about drugs, about immigrants, about violence and crime, about one-parent households, …., name it, and they illustrated the item on television with shots of the Bijlmermeer. It is clear that this emphasized the negative image of the area in the country over and over again."

We do not provide a comprehensive overview of all problems, but just mention some figures that illustrate the enormous scale of the problems and the enormous task to combat these.

Vacancies – While general housing shortages had been a major political issue in the country for generations, vacancies increased in the Bijlmermeer, despite its location in the tight Amsterdam regional housing market. During the early years of the Bijlmermeer (the late 1960s), there were still the usual long waiting lists, but in the 1970s vacancies became a real problem. Brakenhoff and colleagues reported a vacancy rate of 4.6% in 1972 at one of the housing associations involved. This figure steadily rose to reach 25% in 1984, or 3,200 of all high-rise dwellings. These high rates had an immense impact on the financial position of the owners.

High mutations – In the early 1980s, the Bijlmermeer had to cope with turnover rates of 40-50% in some blocks. To make this clear: a mobility rate of 50% means that on average, each year neighbours on both sides move away, and this happened year after year (assuming that one stays). Not a promising start for decent social cohesion between inhabitants. Moreover, it was a huge debit for the owners. The turnover rate slowed down to 17% during the period 1985-2000, but was still three times the municipal average.

Divided ownership – From the start, all 13,000 dwellings were divided among 16 housing associations, all located in the city of Amsterdam. Allocations, maintenance, inspections and control: all activities had to be organized from far away. One of the first rehabilitation measures in 1983 was to unite the owners into one single organization located in the area.

A low quality of life – This was the main reason for inhabitants to move. The burglary rate was 2.5 times the Amsterdam average in 1987, and almost 10 times the Dutch average. The rate of car theft was even higher: 3 times Amsterdam's average and 20 times the national average. Over 50% of the inhabitants were a victim of crime in 1988, half of them (thus 25% of the total) of more severe crime. 'Safe, whole and clean' were the top three frustrations of residents for many years. In the mid-1990s, a third of the inhabitants wanted to move out as soon as possible.

Rents arrears and rent debts – Only 20% of all tenants paid their rent on time, 60% left with a rent debt and another 10% left without leaving their new address (but leaving a large rent debt). The remaining 10% were evicted for not paying their rent (all figures 1988). The rents were high compared with other housing in and around Amsterdam (about €180 a month). On top of that came additional costs of €90 for the maintenance of common spaces and facilities, costs that did not exist elsewhere.

High maintenance costs – As well as high eviction costs, the housing association(s) had to cope with high maintenance costs. These were three times Amsterdam's average. Vandalism in the semi-public spaces (corridors, stairways, lifts) was four times the city's average.

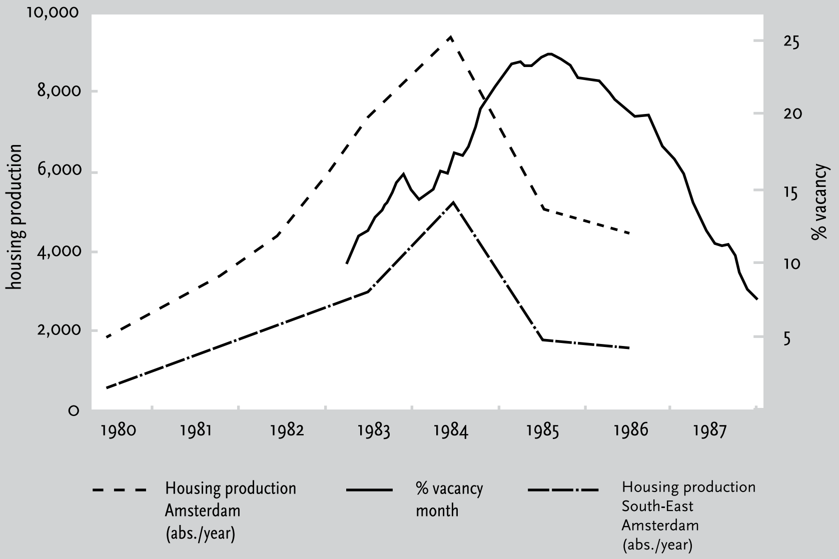
A problematic population – The Bijlmermeer increasingly became a place of second choice, and attracted only those who could not get housing elsewhere. Figures about new tenants were registered from 1984 onwards, and showed an increase in the problematic population. In 1986, 50% were born abroad (mainly in Surinam); 60-70% had a minimum income or less; 50% were single, 15-20% were one-parent families and only 10% were complete families; 60% were starters and 70% were under 35 years. The Bijlmermeer became a refuge for groups that found it difficult to get what they wanted in the regular housing market. The Bijlmermeer increasingly became a starters' market, but most of them moved out rather soon (Kwekkeboom, 2002, p. 75). High-rises in the Bijlmermeer were definitely at the bottom of the list for Amsterdammers who were seeking a place to live. In 1994, 45% of the labour force was unemployed, over double the Amsterdam average.

Financial capacity – Losses rapidly accumulated. The Nieuw Amsterdam housing association, which had been established in 1983, faced losses of about €40 million in 1990, which were increasing by €12 million a year. The Bijlmermeer, the new housing association, all contributing 15 'mother' housing associations, and the city of Amsterdam as guarantor would get into financial problems, or even become bankrupt.

Vacancies and housing production

Although the problems continued, the enormous vacancy rates decreased, as

Figure 12.2 New housing construction in Amsterdam and vacancy rates in the Bijlmermeer, 1980-1988



Source: Wassenberg (1988)

did the turnover rates. These rates peaked in 1984 and have since decreased, mitigating at least the financial position of the Nieuw Amsterdam housing association. These decreases were mainly caused not by the Rehabilitation Programme (see below in this chapter), but mainly by external circumstances, especially the increased nearby housing production in Amsterdam Southeast and in the rest of the city. The 1987 *Evaluation Report* stated that the unattractive Bijlmermeer high-rises got rented because of a lack of alternatives. Figure 12.2 clearly shows that the completion of many new houses in Amsterdam led to an increase in the number of empty properties in the Bijlmermeer (part of Amsterdam-Southeast), being the weakest part of the regional housing market.

Vacancy rates in areas with unpopular housing drop when nearby alternatives are limited. A similar relation was found for some other areas in the country (Heeger, 1993). In later years, Van Gent (2009) pointed once more at the important role of the availability of alternatives for residents in the housing market. It was clear that external factors were of great influence on the popularity and exploitation of the Bijlmermeer.

The normal business model goes out of control

Between 1966 and 1975, all focus in the Bijlmermeer had been on the construction efforts, a huge task. When the last high-rise blocks were being built, public opinion about high-rise living had changed completely, and the Bijlmermeer was among the last high-rise estates to be constructed in the country. High-rise production made way for small-scale initiatives and suburban styles of housing. Family houses with gardens were produced en masse in the surrounding towns, but not in Amsterdam, where it was not until 1982 that

Table 12.1 Early solutions: specific measures in the Bijlmermeer during the 1980s and 1990s

	Measure	Remarks
A.	**Eviction and renovation of the 'Gliphoeve' estate, 1982**	The large concentration of newly arrived Surinamese created unliveable conditions, and increased stigma
B.	**Rehabilitation Programme, 1983-1988**	Many measures, containing:
	Physical	
	Colouring the façades	Painting the grey concrete
	Isolation and double glazing	Also to limit housing expenses
	Extra repair of concrete	Showed to be necessary soon
	Extra lifts	Deleted in the original plans, but added once more
	Splitting up boxes	All storage rooms were on the ground floor, and (too) easily accessible
	Improving and closing off lifts, halls and inside streets	For reasons of safety
	Splitting up dwellings	All dwellings were spacious, while demand rose among singles
	Environment	
	Improving the greens	For reasons of attractiveness and safety
	Make parking free	Just like in most of the rest of the city
	Demolish parking garages	The use was far less than expected. Some empty top floors were shut off, or demolished
	Allow parking near the flats	Instead of the unsafe parking garages
	Management	
	Lowering the rents (by 15%, €30 a month)	Possible by a single subsidy of the ministry of Housing; high expectations did not come true, as most tenants received housing allowances
	Create one single housing association for all dwellings	Instead of 16 as before
	Locate management within the area	Instead of offices located downtown
C.	**Improvements in the wider area**	Outside the area itself; 1980-present
	Train connections	Station Bijlmer Arena at present is one of the larger stations of Amsterdam
	Metro connections	Five years later than planned (because of protests of central urban residents)
	Shopping centre	Centre Amsterdamse Poort opened in 1986, now a major regional shopping centre
	Office area Amstel III	Close to the Bijlmermeer high-rises, with the shopping centre serving both
	Major facilities	Gradually, the ArenA Boulevard developed with regional facilities such as the ArenA stadium for Ajax football club, the Heineken Music Hall, Pathé Arena, Ziggo Dome
D.	**Housing related measures, 1989+**	Experiments to improve liveability
	Appointing concierges	For safety reasons
	Low level daily management	To shorten mental and physical distances
	Camera control (CCTV)	The first one in housing in the country
	Intensive involvement of tenants	Local serveillants, children participation, debt help
	Physical transformation and social and economic empowerment	Integrated approach, see Part IV

any new single-family houses were built (in the large social sector). The Hoptille estate (Chapter 9) was the first to incorporate some terraced houses.

Moreover, policymakers and planners rapidly turned their attention to the renewal of the old 19th-century neighbourhoods that had been neglected in the first post-war decades. So, after the completion of the Bijlmermeer the focus rapidly switched to other parts of town, and less to the remote new high-rise area. Major attention was not paid to them until the problems became really serious.

The business model for all dwellings in general and for social housing dwellings in particular, was that after completion simple maintenance would be enough. Only after some 20-30 years would major maintenance activities be considered necessary, and the dwellings would last for at least 50 years. However, it would soon become clear that this normal business model would not work at all for the Bijlmermeer high-rise estate.

12.3 The early solutions

Four types of specific measures

Increasingly serious problems appeared, and many measures were tried during the 1980s and 1990s. All of these measures can be called the early solutions and all were aimed at specific problems, but not for the Bijlmermeer as a whole. In Part IV, we deal with the integrated approach that was adopted from the 1990s onwards. However, it needs to be stressed that it was years before most residents became aware of the integrated approach, let alone notice any results. In the meantime, the large majority of all remaining blocks of flats were afflicted by persistent problems and annoyances.

When problems in the Bijlmermeer started to become serious in the early 1980s, a series of measures were taken. In Table 12.1 four types of these early or specific measures are distinguished and numbered:

A. The total renovation of the Gliphoeve block
B. The Rehabilitation Programme 1983-1988
C. Improvements in the wider area
D. Experimental measures in the 1990s.

A. Gliphoeve

One of the first controversial and drastic measures was the total eviction and renovation of the Gliphoeve estate, two of the high-rise blocks in the Bijlmermeer. The blocks became symbols of decay, similar to Hoptille (as described in Chapter 9) but for other reasons. Verhage (1987, p. 48) wrote about this in an expressive way. Gliphoeve was under construction when the former Dutch colony of Suriname became independent in 1975. Many Surinamese did not wait for that moment, but migrated to the Netherlands; in total almost half of the country's population left. The only place in the country where dwellings were immediately available was the Bijlmermeer, where by that time vacancies had grown. Gliphoeve – which is close to Schiphol Airport – became a magnet for all new arrivals, many of whom had never seen a high-rise building. Overcrowding and deviant behaviour ruined the estate, and within a few years there was nothing to do but carry out a complete renovation. The director of the housing association at that time, René Grotendorst, would much later declare that the arrival of the many Surinamese had actually been the salvation of the area. They arrived in a period during which the mass estates were produced on a large scale, but were increasingly not occupied. The Surinamese filled the empty dwellings. Without them, the demolitions would have started much earlier (in: Boer, 2012).

B. The Rehabilitation Programme (1983-1988)

Many solutions were tried. The first was to stop building new high-rise estates. Bijlmermeer-South was originally to be built on the southern border of the 'old' Bijlmermeer. Later, a single-family housing area replaced it and as a result 'emptied' the old Bijlmermeer. It was called not 'Bijlmermeer-South', but Gaasperdam. What is (not) in a name…

In 1983, to counteract the rising problems, the first Rehabilitation Programme was drawn up for the whole of the Bijlmermeer, published in 1984 under the name 'De Bijlmer in de lift' [Lifting the Bijlmer]. It was an elaboration of the Deltaplan that resident committees had proposed in 1980. They stated that the problems and the poor housing market situation of the Bijlmer started because of the economizing of the original plans. Without budget cuts, the Bijlmermeer would have been constructed properly, no problems would have occurred and the image would not have been problematic. Examples are Verhage (1987), Bolte and Meijer (1981) and the resident committees.

The Rehabilitation Programme was intended to solve some of the most obvious shortcomings. It consisted mainly of measures to improve the ratio of rent to quality, as it had become clear that the housing was seen as too expensive. Therefore, the measures included financial measures to reduce the cost of living. Rents were decreased; until then, the Bijlmermeer flats had been among the most expensive social-rented housing in the city. The fees for the parking garages were dropped, and double glazing was introduced to decrease energy costs.

Second, structural improvements were made to the buildings and the environment. Entrances and the immediate surroundings and green spaces were improved. Extra lifts were added, storage rooms were separated, and a start was made on splitting some large dwellings into units for small households.

A third improvement was organizational. It included the creation of a single housing association, based in the area, and named Nieuw [New] Amsterdam. Until then, almost all the high-rise housing in the Bijlmermeer had been owned by 16 housing associations, each of which had an office in the centre of Amsterdam. Large differences existed in the way the housing associations rented their flats (see Brakenhoff *et al.,* 1991; Dignum *et al.,* 1992). Some of them used serious selection criteria, and took care of their properties quite well. Others were less strict, and when evictions, vacancy rates and refusals rose drastically they were increasingly happy to rent the dwellings to whoever asked for them. All but one housing association handed over their property in the Bijlmermeer to Nieuw Amsterdam.

The programme was approved in 1983, started at once, and lasted until 1988. The costs of this ambitious programme were financed by the state, the

Box 12.2 Isolated location

The Bijlmermeer was built as a new town some ten kilometres from the city centre. At the time, there was no train or metro connection. It was hard to find, particularly for first-time visitors. As an employee of the housing association said: “The distance was a problem: new tenants came to the office in the centre of Amsterdam to sign their contract and receive their keys. They were then told to find their way to the Bijlmermeer by themselves, find their block, their dwelling and their own storage room, among the other 13,000 look-alike flats. Nobody accompanied them, nor were personnel available on the spot. Some people never managed to find their dwelling at all…”

municipality and the 15 housing associations. These 15 associations each paid a ‘bride’s portion’ to Nieuw Amsterdam.

The Rehabilitation Programme is not a success

The Rehabilitation Programme dated from 1983. Some ideas were mentioned about demolishing flats, but these were regarded as ridiculous in those days when housing shortages still set public opinion and the political agendas.[1]

Those preliminary ideas were abandoned as a result of widespread societal protest. Part IV will show that later on demolition would return to the agenda.

In the course of the 1980s, it became clear that the measures were inadequate, since the dwellings remained unpopular and the liveability problems, like crime, pollution and violence, persisted. The awareness arose that all measures were not enough to solve the problems. The financial exploitation became increasingly negative, resulting in rising vacancy rates and increasing debts for the housing association. Reducing the rents did not improve occupancy rates, as at the national level the system of housing allowances was improved, so that lower rents resulted in smaller allowances, and not so much in lower costs for the inhabitants.

Policy reaction: support the ‘Bijlmer believers’ and control the others

The Rehabilitation Programme was evaluated in 1987, before the programme had ended (Melger *et al.*, 1987). An earlier evaluation in 1985 turned out to have been done too soon to be able to measure any results. The report made it obvious that a more structural intervention was needed. The policy reaction came shortly after this evaluation report (Gemeente Amsterdam, Nota IWW, 1987). This policy report focussed on more differentiation in the area, not through radical physical changes, but by continuing the measures in the Rehabilitation Programme of 1983, and changes in housing allocation and management.

The proposed allocation measures were new. The plan suggested accepting that the market for 13,000 similar high-rise dwellings is limited. The solution was to make one third of the high-rise dwellings (about 4000) attractive to people who prefer to live in the Bijlmermeer high-rise blocks, and help them to live there as comfortably as possible. Despite all the severe problems, negative news coverage and other housing alternatives, there was still an enthusiastic core group of Bijlmer inhabitants, many of whom were pioneers from the early start. They had witnessed the early ideas and the later deterioration of the Bijlmermeer. They blamed a major part of all problems on the financial cuts to the early ideas, resulting in a more sober realization of the buildings and the surroundings, and advocated further improving the plans more in accordance with the original ideas. Later on, the early adapters, the people who believed in the ideas behind the Bijlmermeer, were labelled 'the Bijlmer positives' or 'Bijlmer believers', referring to their optimistic view about living in the Bijlmermeer high-rise blocks.

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[1] Housing shortages had been on the top of all political agendas for decades. Ministers were dismissed when they did not meet the required numbers of housing construction. Squatting became common practice in urban areas, particularly in Amsterdam. The queen’s coronation festivities in 1980 were seriously disturbed by a major protest against housing shortages. The economic crisis of the time induced austerity. The demolition of recently built houses of appropriate physical quality, however problematic, was out of the question in the early 1980s.

The 1987 *Nota IWW* recognizes these Bijlmer believers, but states that it is better to accept that there are not 13,000 of them, that is, people who prefer to live in the Bijlmermeer high-rise blocks. Not now, nor at any time in the future. Therefore they plead for intensive management for the remaining two thirds of the high-rises for people who do not want to live there but who see the Bijlmermeer as temporary and their second (or third) choice. These people will not take care of their housing, so the housing association has to do it for them. The plan called for intensive management at high costs for a long time, expenses that had to be paid by the national government. However, this was refused by the minister of Housing (Enneus Heerma).

C. Improvements in the wider area

Major improvements in the vicinity of the area have been made since the mid-1980s, but these were not part of the Rehabilitation Programme. The long promised metro line finally opened in 1980, some five years later than planned.[2]

Adjacent to the Bijlmermeer high-rise blocks, a large, attractive regional shopping centre was opened in 1987. Just opposite the railway station, one of the most expensive office areas in the Netherlands was built, profiting from the valuable location of the wider Bijlmermeer area in Amsterdam-Southeast, which lies between Amsterdam, Schiphol airport and the centre of the country. The shopping centre served both the high-rise inhabitants and the office

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[2] The metro line from the Bijlmermeer to the city centre was planned to open in 1975, but was severely delayed by massive protests. The same protest that changed the public opinion and urban planning towards more attention to the refurbishment of the old housing stock and the environment within the old areas, led to a major delay of the planned metro line to the Bijlmermeer suburb, as the track had to cross some of these old neighbourhoods. The first metro train finally ran in 1980.

Arena stadium and shopping malls next to the Bijlmermeer.

workers, a critical combination that nevertheless worked out well. In the 1990s, major facilities would arise, including a new stadium for Ajax football club, and large cinemas and a major music hall: all facilities with a regional or even national scope. In fact, the location of the Bijlmermeer changed from being an isolated satellite town in the 1960s and 1970s, into being a hot spot in the 1990s (Van Kempen & Wassenberg, 1996).

D. The Bijlmermeer as experimental garden

The deplorable situation in the Bijlmermeer made the area unique. The area was regarded as one of the worst, and by many as the worst housing area in the country. This created an atmosphere that was open for experiments. As a former employee of Nieuw Amsterdam explained: “The Bijlmermeer is an exciting place to work. Everything in society happens here first, or worst, or both. There is plenty of room for experiments. We’re always looking for new ways to tackle problems, in the country and abroad. If you have a good idea, please come and show it. This makes the Bijlmermeer an exciting place to work, where things are tried first.” The deplorable situation made national subsidies for experiments more easily available.

Some measures were introduced to enhance safety and liveability, and thus residents’ satisfaction. Safety, pollution and vandalism – ‘Safe, whole and clean’ – had been shown to be the most problematic issues in the resident’s views, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter. Four experimental measures were evaluated by OTB, namely:

The appointment of concierges or caretakers – These people function during the day and in the early evening, both helping people and keeping an eye on things in order to increase safety. Later on, flat guards were appointed, who later stayed on as security guards. The latter functioned more during the evening and early night, and focused on control and safety. These experiments were evaluated in 1989-91.

Improving the daily management – The ‘Model flats’ experiment focused on involving inhabitants in the daily management of their flats. In several flat blocks, employees of the large housing association settled in the flat blocks themselves and coped with all the daily issues of inhabitants. Together with active residents, 49 concrete measures were carried out (like cleaning actions, debt help, rubbish bags control, a play garden, a know-your-neighbour-project, noise nuisances, etc.). This experiment was evaluated in 1992-94. Later on, neighbourhood management would be organized more in this style. The wijkenaanpak policy is similar (see Chapter 20).

Camera control (CCTV) in a block of flats – the first CCTV inside a housing block in the country – This experiment took place, and was evaluated, in 1995 and 1996. Camera control was under debate, as a balance between security and privacy. It was remarkable that none of the residents had problems with aspects of privacy. Cameras would be introduced more widely in public spaces (squares, streets, stations) later on, under set conditions,

Intensive personal involvement – Experiment to increase liveability, a project with a combination of several smaller measures, such as an increase in local surveillance, the involvement of children, and intensive personal involvement with people with debts. These experiments were evaluated in 1998 and 1999. This project focused on personal involvement by personal approach. As such, it can be compared with the successful 'behind the front door approach' (Achter de voordeur aanpak, Chapter 20) in the country at present.

These four approaches had some commonalities. They were all experimental in the Bijlmermeer, in deprived areas, in Amsterdam, and in the country as a whole. As such, they were new, and probably also of use in other situations. Government subsidies were provided from several sides, because of the experimental status and the poor situation of the Bijlmermeer. All experiments were implemented more or less after each other, and all were evaluated by OTB by analysing residents' opinions, combined with available relevant 'objective' data from the housing association, the local municipality, the police and other parties. All evaluations were carried out ex ante and ex post, although sometimes the time for the ex post evaluation was rather limited to measure the final results. Most experiments were carried out in one or a few blocks of flats, with other similar blocks nearby as the control. Finally, it is worth mentioning that all evaluations were carried out as contract research projects, with an external actor financing the project. These were a ministry, a housing association or the local municipality.

There were other measures and experiments as well (not evaluated, or not by OTB):

- Consultation groups (leefbaarheidsoverleg): a group of residents discusses environment issues with the housing association and local government. Good to do as such, but the disadvantages were the long action lists and a limited involvement (Nieuw Amsterdam, 1995, p. 43). Later on, these consultations would be replaced by joint inspections by management staff and inhabitants.
- Some physical measures, including closing off entrances, storage rooms

and walkways.[3]

- First experiments with an underground system of rubbish disposal, as the use of containers did not work.[4]
  This made an obvious improvement.

12.4 Results of the early measures

Did the experimental measures, evaluated by OTB, help? Evaluations of all four projects show that although they were quite successful, there were things that could be better. But on the whole, specific effects were positive. A second main conclusion is that the scope of all measures was limited, and that individually they were not able to improve the overall situation.

No effects, but an experienced success

These two main conclusions need some explanation and remarks. The first is that most of the positive effects were not objective facts, but subjective feelings. Let us take the concierges as an illustration (1991 report, p. 103): “The concierges unfortunately have no or hardly any measurable results on the actual quality of life. Residents’ satisfaction, amounts and experienced pollution and vandalism stay the same, there were more victims of crime than before, and residents complain about the same things (‘safe, whole and clean’ on top).”

However, from a subjective point of view, the concierges are very successful. Almost everyone appreciates their presence, most people think cleanliness and vandalism have improved, people appreciate the extra surveillance, and almost all want the project to be continued. Thus, no effects are measured, but an improvement is perceived.

After debates, the concierge project was continued and expanded. It changed in character from a service-oriented daytime caretaker, to flat guards who mostly operated in the evenings. The concierge project was started in 1989 in three blocks, was stopped in 1991, and was restarted a few months later. The restart was the result of the increased focus on liveability issues, together with the creation of jobs for the local unemployed (see Chapter 20).

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[3] The storage rooms were situated under each flat on the ground floor. Totally out of sight, they were commonly broken into, and tramps and junkies used the boxes as places to sleep. In the 1990 residents’ survey, 55% of the respondents reported not to use their storage rooms and never to go there. The main reason was the threat of scary persons (68%).

[4] Rubbish was collected in large metal containers that were kept in a common room in the main inside alley. Not all rubbish was neatly packed in plastic bags, some was just dumped on the floor and there was a stink everywhere. The rubbish rooms were considered dangerous as people could easily hide themselves there.

The restarted project continued with flat guards patrolling in the evening hours. In 1995, there were 13 blocks involved, and in 1998, 16 blocks.

The limited scope of experiments

Another remark is the limited scope of the projects. All projects were based on subsidies that had a limited time scope. The poor area deserved some national support, and the experiments were new and daring, so subsidies were easy to get. Moreover, most subsidies were provided for specific purposes: to improve safety, to improve the housing improvements or for educational programmes. However, when the subsidies expired, other financing was needed. The housing association was almost bankrupt and could not afford to invest, unless the tenants wanted to pay; they refused as a result of already high living costs, low satisfaction rates and low incomes. The result was that measures were stopped after the subsidies were withdrawn. Sometimes, new projects with new subsidies were found, and a new project started. These could be in the same deprived place, for the same deprived people and with the same goal. Later on, this would be called the 'project carousel' (Veth, 2009).

Problems move on

A third remark is the area-based scope of the experiments. The project with camera control was clear: muggers would rob someone outside the camera's view, and dealers would sell around the corner; obvious developments that where calculated before starting the CCTV. We will return to these spill-over effects in Chapter 21. Nevertheless, this experiment – the first with camera control on a housing site – was very much appreciated by the inhabitants. The experiment was extended to other blocks in a limited way, because of the high costs and the fact that all the flats would soon be refurbished or demolished.

In 1999, there was an overall evaluation of the renewal process in the Bijlmermeer (Ouwehand, 1999). As part of this, we evaluated the liveability situation (Van Veghel & Wassenberg, 1999). We concluded that liveability had improved in the (then few) areas where renewal had been completed, but that liveability in other parts was rapidly decreasing. This was surprising, as it was expected that, according to national prognoses, the impact of improving some blocks would spread out positively to the adjacent blocks. However, local improvements did not work that way, and instead aspects of liveability in nearby blocks decreased dramatically. The report asked for intensification of the management in the nearby blocks. As we will see in Part IV, another decision was also made: to speed up the renewal process and to include all remaining parts at once.

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13 Residents' praises and grievances in the Bijlmermeer

13.1 Research reflections

Reflections on methods used

Several methods were employed in the Bijlmermeer research projects upon which this PhD study is based. The most important consideration with regard to the choice of research method is that the method that is used should serve the goal of the research. The methods employed in this study are commonly known and applied, including literature reviews, surveys, key-person interviews, focus groups, street interviews, group idea creation and evaluation research. The most commonly employed method in this study was the resident survey. In all, thousands of residents answered questions about their housing situations and their opinions regarding their prospects for the future. When comparing all of these surveys, which were conducted over a range of years, several methodological remarks can be made.

First, response to the surveys differed according to the method used, as well as according to the aim of the survey. In some years, the questionnaires could be answered on paper, returned by post (free of charge) or delivered to several central points in the apartment blocks. In other years, a research team went door to door, asking the questions or delivering the questionnaires personally, making appointments to collect then as well. In yet other years, the questionnaires were distributed by volunteers in the apartment blocks or by employees of the housing association. In the ex-ante and ex-post surveys used to evaluate experiments, the same method was used consistently. During all rounds of evaluation, various efforts were made to promote the cooperation of residents (e.g. advertisements, stimulating cover letters, messages in the local newspaper, posters on the walls, small gifts in exchange for participation, questionnaires in different languages, multilingual researchers). Experiences with all of these techniques suggest that a personal approach is most effective. Practices that enhanced cooperation included beginning with promotional activities and early announcements, being present on location during the fieldwork, approaching residents repeatedly in order to gain their cooperation and checking the completed questionnaires in order to avoid incomplete information.

A second remark concerns the aim of the research. Unfortunately, many surveys are conducted for either academic or commercial aims that are of no interest to inhabitants. We definitely noticed that residents were more likely to cooperate when the activities involved issues that were of greater concern to them. We also noticed that residents were more willing to participate in surveys regarding the future of their own housing situations than they were to participate in surveys designed to evaluate experiments. Although the latter survey was specifically aimed at improving the residents' living conditions, the residents were more willing to respond in the survey regarding future housing options. The conclusion is that people tend to cooperate when

Box 13.1 Residents' quotes about living in the area (from several surveys, see Appendix 2)

"The green areas are marvellous, also for children. Only the junkies and the attitude of some residents are annoying; it makes me cold and reserved."
"I think there should be more focus on people who throw rubbish off the balconies or leave it in the wrong places. In short, polluters must be addressed – and that includes the children."
"The biggest problem the Bijlmermeer suffers from is the inhabitants themselves. They make the flats dirty, and unreliable people are present in the flats. I have noticed that the inhabitants have a wrong attitude. People don't blame each other if they do something wrong. They live apart from each other, with eyes only for themselves."
"I would like them to take some measures to improve the car parks. There are many men hanging around, so as a woman I do not feel comfortable or safe in and around the garages."
"The Bijlmermeer could be very nice: many nationalities, green, spacious and quiet, but a number of people spoil it."
"I think that your people should first provide safety for all people. Last week I was robbed. Now I can't carry money or a telephone with me or wear gold, because I am afraid. That's no life. So please provide safety first and put some cameras in the elevator."

their personal interests are at stake.

Achieving high response rates

Taken together, the two remarks made above suggest that an active approach and a high level of personal interest can encourage people to cooperate. Although we had been warned by experts that responses in such a disadvantaged area as the Bijlmermeer were unlikely to exceed 40-50%, we achieved far higher responses. Participation in the large-scale future-oriented study conducted in 2001 was 77% (with 3,550 participants). In the last survey, which was conducted in Heesterveld in 2008, the response rate reached 86%, with only 2% (6 people) not participating at all. These high response rates were due to the personal interest of the residents in the research subject, as well as to the highly intense field work conducted by Strabo Research. The fieldwork started with a festival, including food and beverages (prepared by resident volunteers) and announced by a brass band circulating throughout the estate. The fieldwork team was located in the middle of the estate, visible to all. They continued to 'nag' all of the residents until they completed their questionnaires. A thermometer graphic was used to display the response rate publicly each day.

High response rates have obvious advantages. The involvement of residents in the research project is high; it is their own project, which involves their own future. The same applies to involvement with results. It is obviously possible to compensate for low response rates by comparing the respondents to the total population and weighting the responses for a range of variables, if necessary. Higher response rates require less weighting, under the condition that there is a clear view of the non-respondents. If non-response rates exceed 60-70% (which is common, particularly with non-personal

Box 13.2 Who likes living in a high-rise?

All features give a general overview of the opinions of residents, but differences do exist. In Figure 13.1, two of these figures are combined: residents' satisfaction with living in a high-rise flat (horizontal), and satisfaction with living in the Bijlmermeer (vertical). The average is where the dotted lines cross.

Top right (section B) are the people who like living both in a high-rise and in the area. Section C (bottom left) are the people who dislike both. Those in the top left (section A) like the area but not the high-rise. Bottom right are the opposite: they like the high-rise but dislike the area. Several groups' characteristics are showed. Most positive are the older residents, who have lived there for a long time (they would have left had they not liked it). Most negative are (not surprisingly) people who want to move. Native Dutch people and singles like the high-rises more than average, but dislike the area. Most surprising is the positive view of Surinamese, Antilleans and Ghanaian (with the Dutch natives the four largest groups of countries of birth), who like living in the Bijlmermeer but not in a high-rise flat.

This figure is provided because conclusions may be valid for high-rise buildings in general, not only in the 2001 situation.

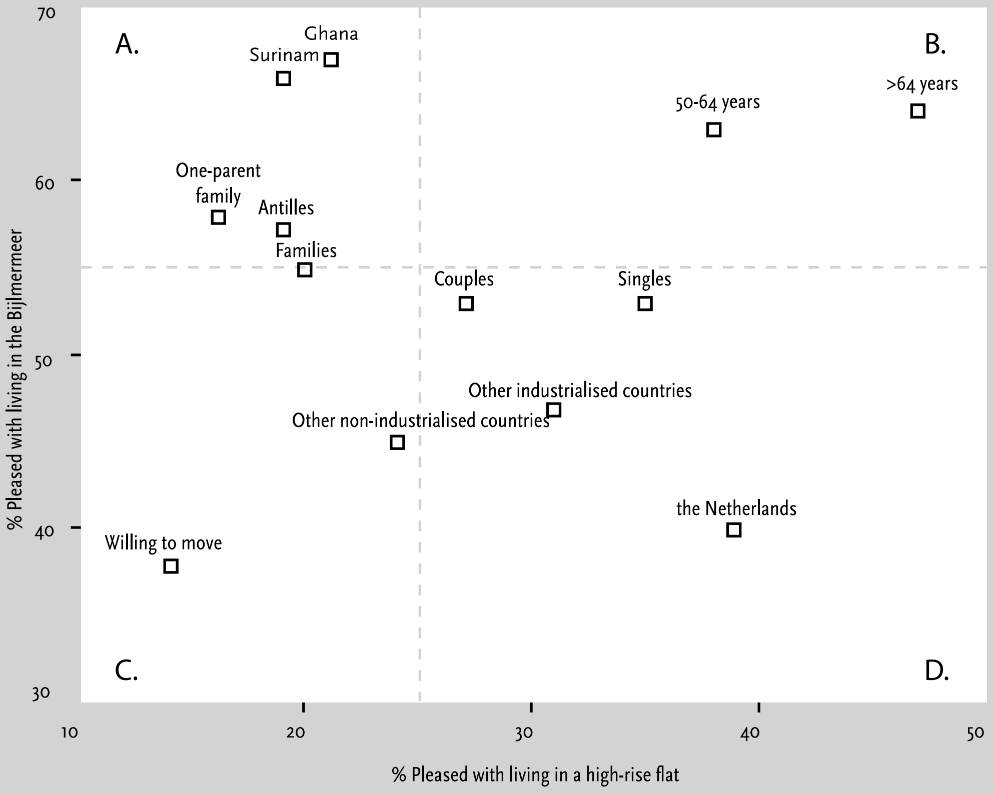
Countries of birth (among the 3500 residents of the 12 blocks): Suriname (31%), Netherlands (22%), Ghana (15%), Antilles (10%), other non-western (17%), western (3%). There is a surprisingly large concentration of Ghanaians in the Bijlmermeer. See the 2001 report, and an article on housing demands for non-Dutch natives (Helleman & Wassenberg, 2001; see Appendix 2).

approaches), it is often not possible to chart the reasons for non-response. Moreover, weighting results is difficult in disadvantaged areas like the Bijlmermeer, where there is no clear overview of the entire population. The governmental administration and the actual housing patterns simply do not coincide. Moreover, residents differ in many ways, making it difficult to determine which characteristics should be weighted. In addition to increasing the value of the research and its results, high response rates increase the value of the outcomes.

Clear methods and wide cooperation result in broad public support. Most of the questions in the Bijlmermeer studies were described in straight statistics. One advantage of this approach is that it produces results that are easy to read and understand – they simply summarize answers to the questions to which the residents have already responded. In this case, no multivariate techniques were used. The results were clear reports that provided straight answers. The high rate of cooperation reduced the level of questions or doubts concerning the results and the methods that were used in order to attain them.

The large-scale future-oriented study conducted in 2001 (see Chapter 14) provides an illustration. Preparation for this study was started in 2000, following a similar survey that had been conducted in two blocks in 1999. Based on this example, committees were formed in four sub-neighbourhoods, in which more than 100 residents discussed the questionnaire and the method, with many residents participating in more than one discussion. Several versions of the questionnaire were prepared, and an external office was asked

Figure 13.1 Satisfaction in living in the Bijlmermeer area and in a high-rise flat according to some household characteristics (in %), see Box 13.2



for a second opinion. After six months, consensus was reached with regard to the methods and questions. The fieldwork was then started in an intensive manner, as described above. When the report was published, it became evident that the response had been overwhelming, the results were clear, and the methods and outcomes were not questioned at all. The conclusions were approved by all participants (residents, housing association, local government), and they were incorporated almost in their entirety into a policy report within a few weeks (PVB, 2001). The conclusion is that taking care to ensure broad support at the start of a research project pays off in the end.

13.2 Residents' opinions

Surveys held among residents continuously uncovered the same grievances, the most common of which were lack of safety, pollution and vandalism. Complaints were not about the dwellings themselves, which were highly appreciated, just as the designers had intended. The area itself, living among the green parks, was appraised as well.

Complaints were related to the public and semi-public spaces: the walkways, entrances, lifts and public green areas. Especially the storage rooms, the

Box 13.3 Residents' quotes about what to do (in the several surveys, see Appendix 2)

"I think the Bijlmermeer is very nice. I hope that not all the green will disappear for buildings and that the elevated roads will not be lowered. It's great: no traffic, and safe for schoolchildren and the elderly."

"The idea of the Bijlmermeer – huge concrete blocks overlooking even more concrete, and you know that behind it there is even more concrete – is psychologically bad for Europeans, and even worse for other cultures or people from the countryside. They end up in a cold country living in a concrete jungle."

"I think a housing policy has to be made. The Bijlmer was once a neighbourhood with a good reputation. Since the socially weak were 'dumped ' here en masse, the district has become pauperized. With a good mentality it's wonderful living in this neighbourhood. Demolition is capital destruction. And as long as people don't change, demolition doesn't help."

"Why don't they demolish this block, just like that one over there? The flats are all dirty. I hope I'm not living there at the time of renovation. I want to move to a new house with a playground for my children. So then they won't need to play far from home, and there are also no strange people around."

"In the Bijlmer are too many people housed who need to find their place in Dutch society. Ex-offenders, ex-psychotic patients, political refugees and other foreigners. This creates a range of social norms that leads to a society without norms. Everybody does what he likes because his neighbour is even worse than he is."

"Oh, Mr, I still have so much to tell, but I wonder if it will help. And a lot of people in this apartment do share this opinion. The house is great, brilliant shopping centre, the idea that you live outside. What more do you want? I know it: more safety in the elevator, lower the crime rate, clean away the rubbish. Deal with the people who throw rubbish from their balconies or dump it in the elevator."

staircases and the inner corridor were considered negative and dangerous.

Since 1989, a survey among inhabitants of the Bijlmermeer has been carried out almost every year. Most have been ex ante or ex post evaluations of experimental measures, as mentioned in the preceding chapter.

During these surveys, the residents of the respective blocks where the experiments were implemented as well as the residents of the control blocks, were asked their opinion about living in the area. Each survey was carried out in three to five blocks, depending on the experiment. We refer to the respective publications in Appendices 1 and 2 for all details. Here, we combine some of the results.

Table 13.1 shows some report grades on issues concerning living in the area. We made a selection of all available results, and combined in one table surveys executed in different blocks in different years. As stated, there were some differences between the blocks, but the table shows interesting results, pointing at the positive and negative issues in the Bijlmermeer according to the residents. Report grades are provided on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 = excellent, 1 = horrible). National surveys show that most people are satisfied with their housing situation. The 1998 WBO national survey, for example, showed that only 4.5% of all Dutch inhabitants were not satisfied with their housing situation, and only 6.5% were not satisfied with their living environment. These

Table 13.1 Residents' opinions on quality of living, 1989-1999 (several years) (report grades on a scale 1-10)

	1989	1990	1992	1994	1995	1996	1998	1999*
Issue								
Size of dwellings	7.2	7.3	7.0	7.2	7.1	7.3	7.1	6.8
Living in the neighbourhood	6.4	6.2	6.0	6.0	5.5	5.9	5.7	5.7
Rents	5.5	5.5	4.7	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.6	4.2
Social contacts	5.8	5.6	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.4
Cleanliness in the blocks of flats	4.1	3.9	3.6	4.2	3.6	4.8	3.8	4.3
Cleanliness around the flats	3.6	3.7	3.4	4.5	3.8	4.8	3.6	4.3
Safety in and around the flats	4.3	4.2	3.4	3.9	4.0	5.3	4.4	4.7
The use of common spaces	3.4	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.8	3.0	3.4
Blocks of flats	4	4	3**	3**	6	3	4	6
Number of respondents	641	603	534	388	1176	452	419	849

* The 2001 survey is not included in this table. This covered 12 blocks, with a collaboration of 3,556 respondents. In that survey statements have been asked instead of report marks.
** The airplane crash block (see Chapter 11) was on one of the investigated blocks.

Sources:
1989+1990: Experiment on concierges (4 blocks, p. 27);
1992+1994: Experiment on model flats (3 blocks, p. 22);
1995: Experiment on camera control (3 blocks, p. 48), plus Future survey (3 blocks, p. 14);
1996: Experiment on camera control (3 blocks, p. 48);
1998: Experiment on intensive involvement (4 blocks, p. 47);
1999: Experiment on intensive involvement (4 blocks, p. 47), plus Future survey (2 blocks, p. 9).
For further details see Appendix 1 and 2

figures illustrate the exceptional position of the Bijlmermeer area: a report grade of 5 or less is very low.

Table 13.1 shows the positive and the negative issues. Most appreciated, and stable over the years, is the opinion about the dwellings themselves, the large sizes in particular. Living in the wider Bijlmermeer neighbourhood is also appreciated; the most mentioned aspect was the atmosphere (many mentioned the 'Caribbean atmosphere', as most of the inhabitants originate from Surinam, the Antilles or West Africa). In addition, for many people having their friends and relatives around makes it attractive to stay. The third reason residents mentioned was the nearby facilities. This last issue has improved; only the (very few) people from the early years can remember the isolated location the Bijlmermeer once was, and the lack of even the most basic facilities.

The most negative aspects concern the daily quality of life: safety and cleanliness inside the blocks, and outside around the blocks. These issues resulted in a negative score in all years, illustrating that none of the early measures succeeded in improving the quality of life. The use of common spaces by fellow tenants was least appreciated: in all years, people gave on average a score of between 3 and 4 (out of 10), which is extremely low. Only some 15% of all residents thought it was satisfactory (score of 6 or more).

What is remarkable is the decreasing satisfaction with the rent levels during the 1990s. Rents in the Netherlands are controlled by central government, which decides on maximum annual rent increases. For political reasons (to make housing associations more solid), rent increases were higher than the inflation rate (and increases in incomes) in most of those years. As a result,

Table 13.2 Attitude to move, and main reasons to move (in %), Bijlmermeer, 1989-1999

	1989	1990	1992	1994	1995	1996	1998	1999
Issue								
Intending to stay	79	75	70	69	64	73	54	42
Willing to move in one year	21	25	30	31	36	27	46	45
Reasons to move*								
Cleanliness/pollution	51	59	65	55	62	46	63	60
Safety	46	55	66	61	67	45	54	48
Vandalism	40	52	60	47	52	42	53	48
Do not like area	27	43	33	37	57	37	42	47
Do not like dwelling	26	16	16	13	10	25	22	22
Too expensive	24	27	42	57	62	68	54	49
Blocks of flats	4	4	3	3	6/3**	3	4	6/4**

* More reasons could be given; a selection is provided; only for those residents with plans to move.
** 6 blocks for Propensity to move; 3 resp. 4 blocks for Reasons to move.

Sources and notes: see Table 13.1

the already high rent levels in the Bijlmermeer increased even more, which led to increasing debt problems. This observation resulted in the experimental measure to control individual debts, which was mentioned in the previous chapter.

Intention to move

The importance of these liveability issues is also illustrated by the reasons to move mentioned by people. Table 13.2 shows residents who intend to move within a year.[1]

Two conclusions can be drawn. First, an increasing desire among inhabitants in general to move during the years. This is probably stimulated by the emergent visible results of the renewal activities in the area, making residents aware of alternatives to their current housing. The second conclusion supports the importance of quality of life: safety, pollution and vandalism.

13.3 Good and bad in the Bijlmermeer

In 2001, we conducted a very large survey among all residents of the blocks that had not been improved and were not yet part of the planning process. These 12 blocks had almost 5,000 dwellings. The net response rate was very high: 77% of all residents participated (3,550 respondents). Unlike in the earlier surveys, in this one we asked explicitly about nine good things and nine bad things in the Bijlmermeer. The items arose from earlier research. Table 13.3 shows the results.

The problems are similar to those mentioned in the previous years: the lack of safety, the high crime rates, pollution and vandalism. The high rent levels and the behaviour of fellow residents are next, as in earlier years, and as

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[1] In national surveys (WoON, formerly WBO), this question is asked for propensity to move within the next two years, which will provide higher figures. Although this makes the Bijlmermeer figures not comparable, figures are above national.

Table 13.3 Good and bad things in the Bijlmermeer, 2001 (according to the residents)

Positive aspects (that should not be changed)	%	Most important problems	%
1.The public green spaces	59	1.Pollution/vandalism	79
2.The shopping centres	54	2.Unsafe/crime	78
3.The mixed (multicultural) society	52	3.The high rent levels	56
4.The many walk- and cycle tracks	51	4.The behaviour of co-tenants	52
5.The car free space between the flats	44	5.The many high-rise buildings	40
6.The affordable rents	26	6.Too little low-rise buildings	39
7.The quietness	25	7.The quality of the dwellings	26
8.The dwellings	25	8.The quality of the public greens	9
9.The high-rise buildings	17	9.The mixed (multicultural) society	8
There are no positive aspects	7	There are no problems	2
Total (abs.) = 3,421	-	Total abs. = 3,505	-

Note: More answers were possible (among the categories 1-9).

in the very first survey among residents in the Bijlmermeer in 1984 (Bureau Veldkamp), where safety and pollution also topped the list of problems. However, this survey mostly focused on measures for improvements (see the previous chapter).

The positive features refer to things that should not be changed in the Bijlmermeer. In 2001 (the year of the survey), the area was in the middle of the large regeneration process, so changes were visible to all. Highly appreciated were things that reflect the original design: the many green areas, the pedestrian paths and cycle tracks, the car-free spaces between the flats (called the maaiveld). In addition to the shopping centre – the regional centre Amsterdamse Poort (Chapter 12) – the appeal of the mixed multicultural society is remarkable. This scores high among the positive aspects, and is hardly considered a problem.

In 1995 and 1999, we asked residents in some of the other blocks similar questions about good and bad features of living. As categories differ, these could not be incorporated into one table. However, the results show the same tendency: safe, whole and clean score highest. These are followed by the high rent level, which was more of a problem in 1999 than 1995, corresponding to the previous conclusion.

At last, we have to mention that in addition to the presented tables, other results of the surveys indicate the same residents' praises and grievances, including answers to statements, preferences for future options and satisfaction in general.

The green spaces: praised and abused

The residents' surveys clearly show the appreciation of the public green spaces. The green spaces are mentioned most as a positive point about living in the Bijlmermeer, followed by the possibilities to walk and cycle around without car traffic annoyances. These are according to the original ideas of the designers in the 1960s.

The position of the green public spaces is remarkable. Despite the high appreciation, there are numerous complaints about the use (more precisely: the misuse), the unsafe feelings and the polluted environment. The top-

Box 13.4 The Bijlmermeer among 29 reference estates

In a large European survey (RESTATE), 29 large housing estates in 10 European countries were compared on a number of characteristics. The Bijlmermeer is one of these estates. In the spring of 2004, a similar survey was carried out on all 29 estates, so that comparisons could be made of residents' characteristics, satisfaction, social networks and thoughts about the future. The results of the Bijlmermeer survey (Aalbers et al., 2005) provide in general a more positive view than the range of the other surveys as described in this chapter, but this could be related to the low response (23%; 100 persons), and the inclusion of mainly new (family) housing projects (63%; and only 37% in the high-rise).

The comparisons with the 28 other European estates are interesting. Musterd and Van Kempen (2005) provided an overview of all 29 estates on the investigated features. It is remarkable that the Bijlmermeer estate is often at the edges of the graphs, thus scoring among the most or the least of all. The Bijlmermeer is one of the largest estates, with the most non-natives, a high labour market participation, fewer low incomes, more recently moved in (will be influenced by the new constructions), large dwelling sizes and high housing costs. Residents are more than averagely satisfied with their home, with the accessibility of services, with the population structure (see the remarks on the mixed cultural society in the main text) and the neighbourhood quality, and have a large local social network. They are aware of the renewal of the estate (not surprisingly, as most live in a newly built house) and are optimistic about the future prospects of the area.

rated problems all occur in the outside environment, including the public green spaces. People appreciate the large green areas, but complain about the misuse and failing management of the public spaces. The inability to manage all these green areas (up to 90% of the area) was the reason for the separate research in 1999 into possibilities to privatize the green spaces.

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Wassenberg, F.: see Appendix 2 and 3.
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14 The renewal of what was tomorrow's idealistic city: Amsterdam's Bijlmermeer high-rise

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www.elsevier.com/locate/cities

One of the finest and best-known examples of a CIAM-planned area is the Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam, one of Europe's leading examples of high-rise estates. Over the years, the Bijlmermeer has been a shining example of the high expectations and ideas of CIAM-planning, the disappointment, problems and stigma of numerous improvement trials and nowadays of a radical redesign and integrated approach. This paper describes and analyses developments in the Bijlmermeer and places them within an international and historical context. The aim of the paper is to show how negative developments strengthened each other and how the early improvements were not sufficient. Nowadays, drastic renewal is taking place, with overall promising results, although there are still major problems. The paper will show that the present policy in the Bijlmermeer goes further than possibly any other measure in the world. As a consequence, there is only a marginal future left for high-rises in the Bijlmermeer. The paper will also show what conditions support the success in the Bijlmermeer: connecting the area within the region, an integrative approach, no fear of radical solutions, financial support and the participation of inhabitants.

14.1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest all over the world in improving the large-scale housing estates of the 1960s and 1970s. Despite historical variations in economical development, housing policy and social-cultural traditions, the kind of problems are very much the same across different countries around the world. High-rise estates are associated with problematic living conditions, deprived areas, isolated locations, a poor population, a negative image, social isolation, pollution and crime (Turkington *et al.,* forthcoming; Krantz *et al.,* 1999: p. 1). In short: they are not the most popular areas in town. One of the finest and most well-known examples is the Bijlmermeer high-rise, located in the south-east extension of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Over the years there has been only one thing constant in this area: the ongoing call for change (Luijten, 2002). In the beginning, in the 1960s, the area was promoted as the most modern place to live, with its daring and innovative design influenced by the ideas of the CIAM-movement (*Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*). Later on, the area became well known for its numerous problems. The media found it easy to report time after time about disappointed residents, pollution, drugs, crime and other misery. Since the 1980s, the Bijlmermeer has continuously received attention because of a wide range of innovative measures and promising experiments to improve the living conditions. Nowadays, the Bijlmermeer is in the limelight because of an integral, very radical solution. After thirty years of being the most impressive, expensive and largest example of modern housing it is now the most impressive, expensive and largest renewal area in the Netherlands. The Bijlmermeer probably is the most discussed area in the whole country. The developments, the solutions and the experiences are significant from both a city and national point of view.

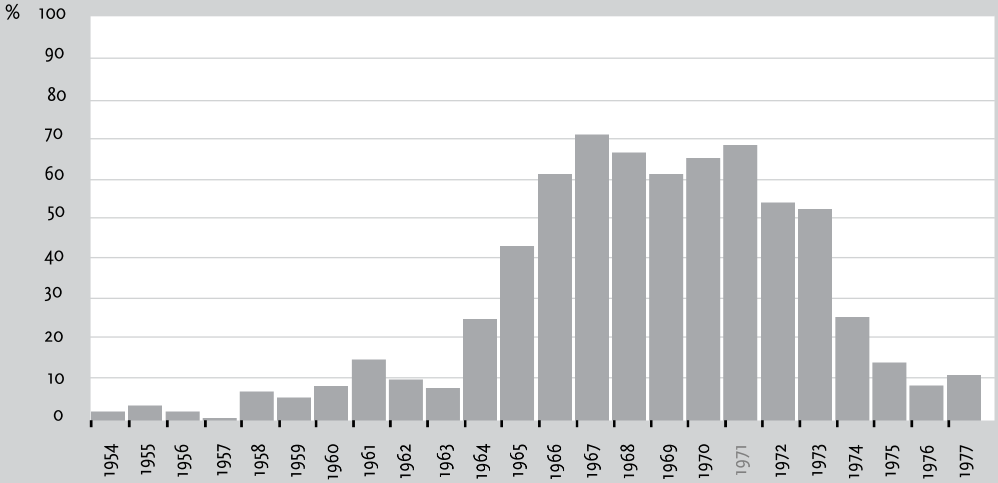
This paper reports on the approaches used to improve this famous high-rise estate over the last 30 years. We distinguish several phases: upgrading the environment, improving the management, fighting crime and safety, setting up participation projects and formulating integral approaches. The last phase will result in demolition on a large scale. The Bijlmermeer is renewing its own future and stands out as the leading example of Dutch renewal policy, not only because of the size of the operation, but primarily because of its integral approach. The question can be asked whether other high-rise estates around the world will be renewed as radically as the Bijlmermeer? Will the exponent of tomorrow's idealistic city become history? Without doubt the solutions and experiences in the Bijlmermeer provide ideas and useful knowledge for many other problematic large-scale housing estates.

The article starts with a short introduction to the emergence and ideas of high-rise estates in European countries like the Netherlands. After that, we describe the origins, the problems, the former solutions and continuous improvements and the most recent renewal developments in the Bijlmermeer. We then analyse the shift in renewal approaches and, before ending the article with some concluding remarks, we analyse the conditions behind the ongoing renewal, which appears to be successful.

14.2 The rise of high-rise estates

Between 1960 and the mid-1970s high-rise buildings were constructed in all western countries. Peak productions in housing were reached during this period, with a significant part in high-rise. The high-rise wave was an answer to the enormous housing shortages, especially in cities, in most European countries. There are numerous reasons for these shortages: the Second World War (a freeze on new building, war damage and lack of materials), poor housing quality, the internal migration to cities and in later years international labour-motivated migration and the continuing decrease in the average number of persons per dwelling. During the 1950s, reducing the housing scarcity was given highest priority in all countries. The State played an important role

Figure 14.1 The high-rise wave in the Netherlands: dwellings in high-rise (over five storeys) as a percentage of all social sector flats



Source: Helleman & Wassenberg (2001)

in organising and financing new initiatives. However, despite all the political priorities and efforts, housing shortages still persisted in most countries at the beginning of the 1960s.

As far as we know, there has never been a period in house building in which the similarities between countries have been as great. High-rise estates dominated the building in this era, and these years proved to be the time of peak housing production in the Netherlands and many other European countries. Figure 14.1 illustrates the Dutch high-rise wave that started around 1965 and disappeared ten years later as quickly as it had appeared. In countries like France, Sweden, Germany, Britain and the Netherlands the majority was built as public housing. Housing production had to be optimised by reducing the variation in dwelling types, repetition of construction patterns and using new construction techniques.

Besides the shortage argument, high-rise housing should be seen as the result of a period in which planners and politicians aimed to build in the tradition of the CIAM movement philosophy. This group of European architects, with the Swiss architect Le Corbusier (1887-1965) as leader, met between 1928 and 1959 to work out modern ideas about architecture. In the ideas of these modern architects, high-rise served as a potent symbol of a ‘new architecture for new people’ in a modern age of multi-family living, communal facilities and social equality. The modern architect had the task of supporting and creating a new, modern, and egalitarian society, where everybody was equal. In the eyes of architects, town planners and civil servants, high-rise was the symbol for this modern society. The following design principles played a central role (Mentzel, 1990: p. 369): repetition, regularity, symmetry; the separation of functions; the use of open blocks; uniformity, straight lines; the large-scale nature of housing blocks and open spaces; the use of modern materials and building methods; the provision of communal facilities. Another feature is the location: almost always on the outskirts of town, away from the city centre and amidst industry, railway lines and highways, though carefully separated from these functions (Turkington *et al.*, forthcoming). A last characteristic was the production process – quicker, cheaper and more efficient. High-rise with prefabricated components, standardisation and rationalisation of the building process did fulfil all these aspects. This resulted in a factory-like working style. Le Corbusier compared the production of houses in 1921 with the production of cars (the Model T Fords), and argued for standardised and industrialised housing units in series (Hilpert, 1978: p. 27). Applying industrial methods significantly reduced the average time taken to produce a dwelling, in France, for example, by two-thirds (Power, 1993: p. 47).

14.3 The Bijlmermeer: the idea

As in other countries in Europe many high-rise apartment buildings have been built in the Netherlands since the mid-1960s, the Bijlmermeer being the most extreme case and most well-known. It was built in response to the enormous housing shortage in the Netherlands as a whole and Amsterdam in particular, to create “a modern city were the people of today can find the residential environment of tomorrow”, as the information folder announced in 1968. Between 1968 and 1975, 13,000 dwellings in 31 very large blocks (300-500 dwellings each!) were built, each 10 storeys high and 200-300 meters long. The balcony access apartments were laid out in a honeycomb pattern, as previously built in Park Hill, Sheffield and Toulouse-Le Mirail near Paris. About 90% of the area consisted of high-rise. All of the ideas of Le Corbusier and the CIAM on modern living were applied: separation of functions (living, working, recreation), a great deal of space between the apartment blocks, large-scale park-like landscapes, parking garages and separation of traffic flows by an orthogonal system of raised main roads (three meters above ground level).

Contrary to the long-term process of individualisation of home life, the Bijlmermeer Plan emphasised collectively (Mentzel, 1990: p. 365). The designers imagined that the new social spaces would compensate for the limitations of high-rise living. Covered walks linking buildings would be lined with shops and recreate the feel of traditional streets. Using communal facilities would encourage neighbourliness and collective life (Blair & Hulsbergen, 1993: p. 284). The dwellings themselves were, and in some respects still are, of high quality: large floor space, luxurious sanitary facilities, central heating and their own storeroom. Most of the dwellings are in the social rented sector, though definitely not in its least expensive segments. The aim of the planners was to attract households with children and a middle-income, because the city of Amsterdam already had enough dwellings for low income groups.

14.4 The Bijlmermeer: three groups of problems

With the urban design philosophy of the thirties and the techniques of 1965 'the city of the year 2000' was built in seven years. However, soon after its realisation problems began and multiplied in the following decades. All these 'troubles in Amsterdam's high-rise paradise' are described in Van Kempen and Wassenberg (1996). Verhagen (1987) gives a colourful description of the situation in the mid-1980s, describing early protests against the then high rents, the deviant behaviour of some residents, the negative image building in the media, the mix of cultures, the first black town in the country and the policy changes that led to the start of building new single family houses nearby.

We divide the problems into three groups of connected issues. First of all, there is the unfinished character of the district. A lot of ideas and planned facilities, like stores and spaces for sport and recreation were not realised because of lack of finances, this despite a plea from the neighbourhood association for the promised amenities to be realised (Wijkopbouworgaan, 1980). Research has shown that the absence of such amenities can be a great stain on a neighbourhood (Greenberg, 1999: p. 604). Other facilities, like public transport, were realised too late. The Bijlmermeer became, instead of a city district with the appropriate level of facilities, a satellite town of Amsterdam without good transport links to the centre of the municipality (Luijten, 1997: p. 17).

The second category of problems is the enormous liveability-problems in the Bijlmermeer. It became clear very quickly that the normal process for managing the stock was not sufficient for high-rise blocks. The numerous uncontrollable semi-public and collective spaces like entrees, alleys, corridors, 13,000 storage spaces on the ground level, 110 kilometres of galleries and 31 parking garages turned out to be blind spots rather than cosy places where people could meet each other. Because the flats were in the hands of 16 different housing associations, all based in downtown Amsterdam, management was chaotic. Kwekkeboom (2002: p. 78) states: "Each of the buildings has got over 400 apartments, contain thousands of square metres of public and semi-public space, and elevator and intercom unlocking systems that require constant maintenance. Because the buildings were almost built in the same period, they all began to show signs of wear at the same time. The rubbish collection system is laborious, and some residents had the inclination to dispose of garbage bags in the quickest manner, by 'air mailing' them over the balcony." In 1972 Oscar Newman visited the Bijlmermeer (Newman, 1972) and blamed the problems on the numerous indefensible spaces in and around the high-rise estates, where 'eyes on the street' were missing (in Wijkopbouworgaan, 1980, p: 30). No one was willing to assume responsibility for the large tracts of public green space, which had been laid out in such a way that any form of surveillance was impossible (Luijten, 1997: p. 17). Alice Coleman worked out Newman's ideas in her famous book *Utopia on trial*, in which she states that a wrong design was the main cause for all the problems. Ideals in housing and living environment (Utopia) were based on the ideas of Le Corbusier and the CIAM movement as the base behind many high-rise estates (Coleman, 1985).

Surveys held among residents uncover the most important grievances: pollution, degradation, vandalism and lack of safety. Almost 80% of all residents mention these aspects as the main problems (Helleman & Wassenberg, 2001: p. 36). Greenberg shows (1999: p. 619) that crime and physical deterioration are the most critical factors associated with poor neighbourhood quality. Adding, for example, more public services and recreational opportunities are important, but, as the study shows, will not succeed unless crime is halted and physical decay is stopped.

The third group of problems refers to the housing market. Demand and supply did not match properly. Even during the construction of the flats there was insufficient demand for them (Kwekkeboom, 2002). The intended inhabitants, middle-class families, preferred other towns around Amsterdam where single-family houses with gardens were built. Many new inhabitants in the Bijlmermeer moved on to these areas, and others decided not to come at all. Socioeconomic factors, like increased incomes, more free time and mobility, led to a process of individualisation which did not go hand-in-hand with the collective living of the Bijlmermeer (Blair & Hulsbergen, 1993: p. 286). In 1974, the turnover rate was 30%. The pressure of the housing market meant that new residents were initially found, but it was clear that many people did not favour high-rise. Letting the flats became a severe problem, which was thought unthinkable in a period when the housing shortage was at the top of the national political agenda. The Amsterdam area was one of the tightest housing markets in the country, but obviously not in the Bijlmermeer!

As a result dwellings were allocated to people with less choice, who did not want to wait long and accepted the Bijlmermeer as second best. They were mostly starters in the housing market, with low incomes, different facility wishes and for example no cars (leading to empty parking garages). From the late 1970s, the gap between supply and demand was closed by rentals to poorly-housed, low-paid workers, needy social groups and immigrant ethnic minorities.[1]

The Bijlmermeer became more and more a single class, low-income and unemployed, ethnically diverse and increasingly non-white urban enclave (Blair & Hulsbergen, 1993: p. 287). In short, to summarise, a lot of the planner's ideals changed into disadvantages. Privacy became anonymity, the collective and egalitarian ideas did not catch on, the advantages of traffic security turned into disadvantages of social insecurity, parking garages were hardly used and instead of friendly meetings in the covered walks and hallways, the numerous semipublic spaces were filled with litter, drugs-dealers and homeless people. The Bijlmermeer changed from a citadel of modernism to that of a problem estate, a place of poverty, of aliens and illegal immigrants, petty crime, unemployment, with a high incidence of truancy and drug abuse (Blair & Hulsbergen, 1993: p. 289). Thanks to all this and the negative stories in the media the image of the Bijlmermeer got worse every year. As a matter of course, this did not help to solve the vacancy problem and led to a critical financial situation.

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[1] In 1975, before Suriname, the former colony of the Netherlands, became independent, thousands of Surinami people moved into vacant dwellings in the Bijlmermeer. Nowadays, they still form the largest group in the area.

14.5 The Bijlmermeer: early solutions

Many solutions were tried. The first one was to stop building new high-rise. Originally, another Bijlmermeer-South was planned, later replaced by a single-family housing area which ‘emptied’ the old Bijlmermeer. In 1983, as a reaction to all of the occurring and growing problems, a rehabilitation program was drawn up. The aim was to adapt and to improve the existing spatial concept. At the beginning of the 1980s the Bijlmermeer started to become less isolated when the metro was realised. Public services like a sports hall, indoor swimming pool, police station and mosque were built and at the end of the 1980s a big shopping centre was completed. Management was consolidated into one large housing association called New Amsterdam, rather than being dispersed over 15 different associations (one refused to join). Rents were reduced and people were given free use of the parking garages. Structural improvements were made on the buildings. Entrances and the immediate surroundings were improved, covered walks between parking garage and flat were closed, extra elevators and security cameras were installed, the buildings were colour painted, storerooms were closed or transformed into houses with a garden and some of the dwellings were divided up into smaller homes to meet the demand for single-person and two-person households (Van Kempen & Wassenberg, 1996; Luijten, 1997; Kwekkeboom, 2002). Assistance for and welcoming of new inhabitants was initiated as well as other social actions, such as co-operation between the maintenance-team and the inhabitants, were started. Employees of the housing organisation say that “all thinkable measures have been tried and tested in the area”. Regrettably, without great success.

During the 1980s vacancies rose again, and in 1985 around 25% of the apartments were unoccupied. These high turnover rates and the level of vacancy led to a critical financial situation of the housing association. It also destroyed or even prevented the existence of sustainable social structures.

14.6 Urban renewal in the 90s

Despite all the efforts the dwellings remained unpopular and the liveability problems were not resolved. Extra maintenance, surveillance, manpower, management, participation and control could not match the huge scale of the area, individual housing preferences and the behaviour of some of the inhabitants. The Bijlmermeer was unable to gain a respectable position in Amsterdam's regional housing market. Worse still, the new consolidated housing association had run up so much debt that it was close to bankruptcy, along with its guarantor, the municipality of Amsterdam (Housing Department Amsterdam, 1987). After years of debate, maintenance experiments, adaptations and partial solutions, it became clear that the urban concept had to change structurally. The Bijlmermeer's physical layout was considered to be a fundamental mistake in urban design: too massive, with too much high-rise and especially having too little differentiation in the housing stock. Only one dwelling type was available: a high-rise rented apartment.

As an answer to this monotony, radical plans were introduced in 1990 and worked out in 1992. Step by step, these plans are still being realised. The plans included the demolition of a quarter of the housing stock, another quarter sold and the remaining part improved or upgraded, while new types of houses were planned, including owner-occupied low-rise dwellings. Previously, inhabitants who wanted a single-family dwelling were forced to move out of the Bijlmermeer. Improvements in the residential environment should encourage present inhabitants to stay and offer a housing career in their own neighbourhood, as well as attracting newcomers. With this differentiation of living forms and ownership categories, the renewal parties intend to differentiate the population structure and to stop the ongoing concentration of poverty.

Improvement and differentiation of the urban environment was also included in the plans. The lack of facilities and liveability problems are part of the environment, as we have already shown. Thus, following the plans, more functions are being introduced into the living area, like small shops and firms. Parks between the blocks have been, for safety reasons, cleared of bushes, leaving only trees and greens, easy to look through and hard to hide in. The separation of traffic, one of the basic principles of the Bijlmermeer layout, has been mostly changed, by lowering the dike roads to ground level and mixing motorised and nonmotorised traffic. The argument of social safety wins over traffic safety. Most of the 31 large parking garages have been demolished or converted into other functions, while in some blocks parking fields are created next to the block.

Besides the physical renewal the plans are supplemented with both social-economic measures and an intensification of the maintenance to improve liveability. All three elements are important. The Bijlmermeer can be considered as the precursor and the spearhead of Dutch renewal policy, which targets a diverse urban population by transforming the housing stock from the social rented sector to a mixed housing stock. Where traditional urban policy was predominantly concerned with housing issues, the new policy also has goals concerning the social and social-economic position of the residents (see Priemus & Van Kempen, 1999, p. 404). Social renewal in the Bijlmermeer is strongly focused on job creation. For example an employment advice bureau has been established, there is education for adults, ethnic entrepreneurship is encouraged and the unemployed are involved in the building activities. Other social interventions support multicultural activities and religious celebrations.

The third element in the plans is to improve safety and liveability and reduce degradation and vandalism. There are watchmen to patrol the buildings and daily management tasks on site. While these measures increase safety, it also helps to combat unemployment. Police patrols in the Bijlmermeer were intensified because of a national redistribution of police forces in favour of the big cities. Measures were taken to reduce pollution by introducing an outdoor underground garbage collecting system, instead of the stinking containers in the ‘internal streets’ within the blocks. And several participation projects were carried out to involve people in their own living environment.

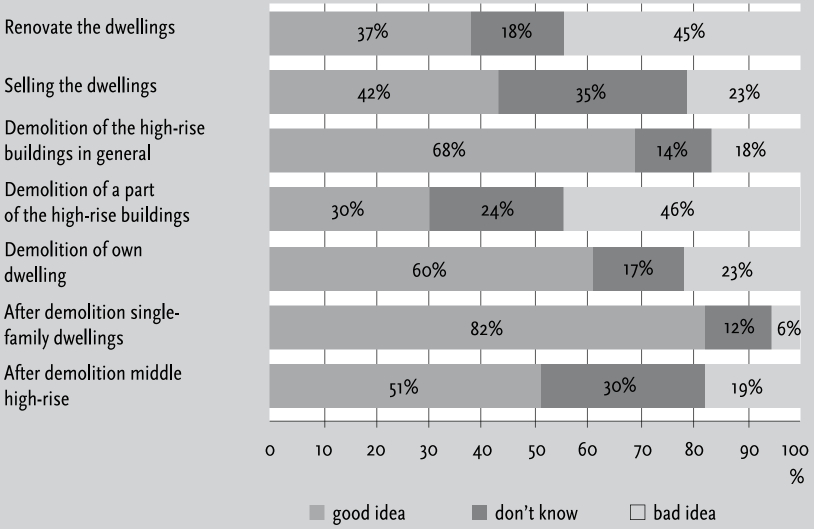
It is also worth mentioning that the relative location of the Bijlmermeer itself has changed radically. In many European cities, large housing estates were planned far out of town on cheap land available in large quantities and the Bijlmermeer was no exception. In the first years, living in the Bijlmermeer meant living far away from the rest of the world, hardly connected by public transport and far away from shops, work and leisure. However, since the mid 1980s, various facilities have been opened close by: a metro line to the city, a new stadium for Ajax football club and large cinemas and theatres. This whole area is called the ‘Amsterdam ArenA’. One of the most expensive office areas in the Netherlands was built just opposite the railway station. All these positive developments nearby have helped to rebuild the image of the Bijlmermeer, provide demand for extra housing and create a lot of jobs at all levels. In fact, the location of the Bijlmermeer has changed from an isolated ‘satellite of a core city’ into a national hot spot, the ‘core of a network city’ (Kloos, 1997: p. 71).

In 1999, after the first years of renewal, a broad evaluation took place (Ouwehand, 1999). The question arose of whether the physical renewal should be intensified, whether more high-rise dwellings should be demolished, renovated, sold or refurbished.

14.7 Listening to the people

These new plans are made in close consultation with the residents. In 2001 a large questionnaire was conducted in the areas to be renewed researching which physical renewal measures residents supported (Figure 14.2). The re-

Figure 14.2 Opinion about the physical renewal per measure (in percent)



Source: Helleman & Wassenberg (2001)

sponse rate was extremely high (77%), with more than 3500 households participating, 79% of whom were born outside the Netherlands and represented 81 different nationalities. At present, about 40% of the population comes from Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles, another 40% from other countries, particularly West Africa, and only 20% have Dutch roots.

The results were remarkable, with almost 70% of the inhabitants agreeing that it is 'a good idea' to demolish one or more of the remaining high-rise blocks. The respondents visualise the demolition of the whole building rather than just part of it. Even when it includes their own house, 60% still support demolition! Renovation and the sale of dwellings are less desirable options, but still over 40% support the idea to sell some flats.

Why are the inhabitants in favour of demolition? Firstly, there is the disappointment with the current situation. In spite of all the renewal efforts, problems still exist. The survey confirms the assumption that the inhabitants blame the concept of the high-rise estate. Almost half of the inhabitants are content with the dwelling itself, for example because of the size, but only a quarter is happy living in a high-rise estate with all the afore-mentioned problems.

Another explanation is the benefits for inhabitants when their house is demolished. For example, present inhabitants of the high-rise blocks are given preference for the newly built houses in the Bijlmermeer. If they prefer to leave the Bijlmermeer, they are given high priority to choose from almost every vacant dwelling in Amsterdam, suitable to their type of household, instead of waiting years for vacant social dwellings. For many this is a great opportunity. Moreover, in the Bijlmermeer, as in the Netherlands in general, residents who are forced to move because of demolition receive compensation for their relocation costs, which varies between 3,000 and 4,500. Many people consider demolition more of an opportunity than a disadvantage. People can, which some already wanted, move out of the Bijlmermeer and even receive

Table 14.1 Opinion about the physical renewal per measure in 1995, 1999 and 2001 (in %)*

	Survey 1995 (1500 dwellings, response 55%)		Survey 1999 (800 dwellings, response 63%)		Survey 2001 (4900 dwellings, response 77%)	
	good idea	bad idea	good idea	bad idea	good idea	bad idea
Renovation of dwellings	62	21	73	21	37	45
Sale of dwellings	38	25	53	24	42	23
Demolition of high-rise blocks in general	65	20	**63-74	19	68	18
Demolition of a part of high-rise blocks	43	39	37	49	30	46
After demolition single-family dwellings	78	9	81	12	82	6
After demolition low-rise flats	65	12	63	22	51	19

* Category 'no opinion/don't know' is left out of consideration.
** 63% wanted to demolish both buildings, 11% one of the two buildings.

Source: Helleman & Wassenberg (2001)

some money or get a new dwelling of a type they prefer. The rents of the new houses are comparable to the present high-rise flats, which are still above the average rents for social housing in the city. If their new house is more expensive, the Dutch rent subsidy compensates for it.[2]

Research in the Netherlands supports this explanation (Kleinhans & Kruythoff, 2002), showing that many movers were able to take advantage of their priority status. Their certificate of urgency gives them a head start over regular househunters and, as a consequence, the majority of relocated residents improved their housing situation.

A third reason to support demolition is the great success of the new housing developments in the 1990s. Because of the popularity of the new houses, renovating the old high-rise blocks has become a much less attractive solution. A comparison of the 2001 survey with two similar earlier surveys in the Bijlmermeer confirms this view. In 1995 a survey was carried out among inhabitants of three blocks in the so-called F-neighbourhood (one of the first renewal projects) and in 1999 a similar, but smaller survey was carried out in two buildings (Grunder and Grubbehoeve). Although the surveys did not involve the same respondents, it is possible to distinguish a pattern (Table 14.1). A growing number of people dislike renovation and support demolition and new building. The 2001 survey supports this conclusion.

14.8 Urban renewal in 21st century

After the evaluation and the resident survey, in 2002 the 'Final Plan of Approach' was approved for the urban renewal of the Bijlmermeer for the period until 2010. It is called the 'final approach' because it concerns the last areas

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[2] Depending on the household composition, the age, their taxable income and the rent, people can receive a contribution to the housing costs via the rent subsidy (rental allowance). The aim of the rent subsidy is to enable people on a low income to live in a dwelling of good quality. In this way the mixing of income groups at neighbourhood level is achieved (Ouwehand & Van Daalen, 2002: p. 44).

Table 14.2 Physical renewal in numbers

	1990	%	Demolition	New construction	2010	%
High-rise apartments	12,500	100	6,550	0	5,950	44
Low-rise apartments	0	0	0	4,600	4,600	34
Single-family dwellings	0	0	0	2,850	2,850	21
Total	**12,500**	**100**	**6,550**	**7,450**	**13,400**	**100**

Source: Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer (2002)

in the Bijlmermeer not physically renewed yet. The Final Plan agrees with the residents' opinions, as researched in the survey mentioned above. According to their preferences, more differentiation is needed, and, indeed, almost 70% of the thirteen remaining high-rise blocks will be demolished and replaced with new buildings.

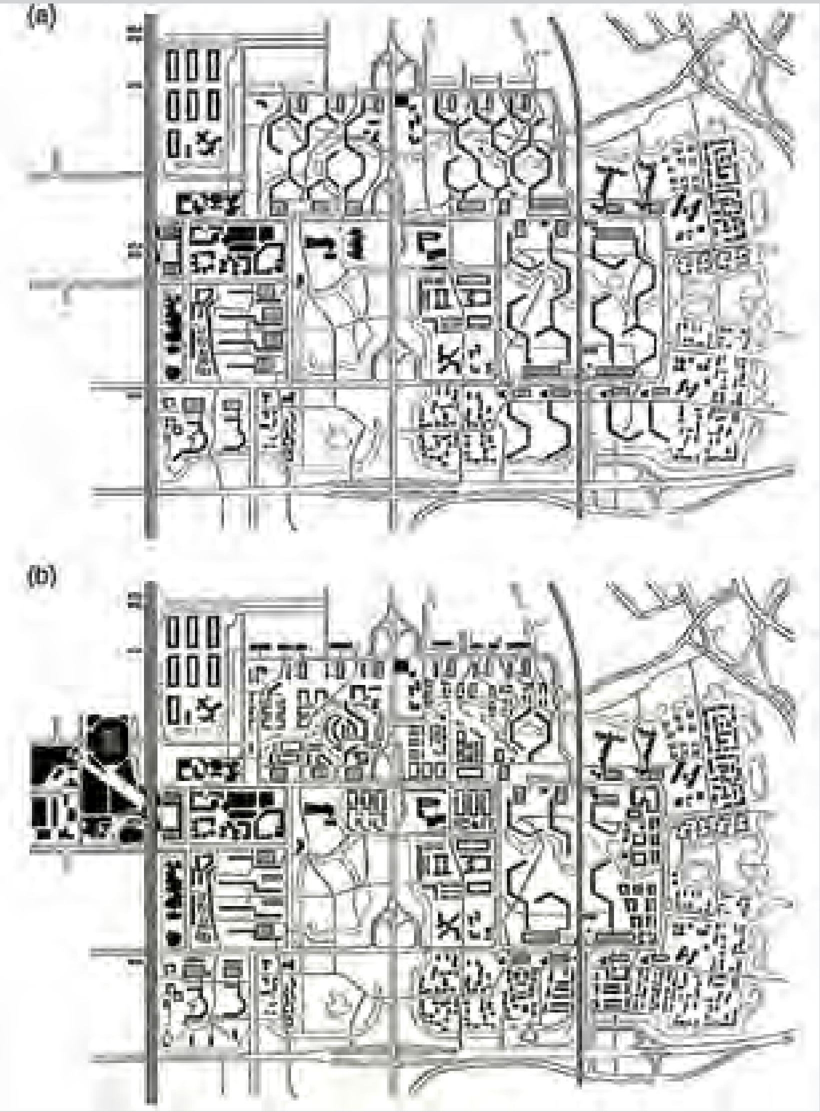
The total investment – the investments in the ArenA area not included – is over €1.6 billion. About €450 million of this investment will produce no returns, which is about €35,000 per household. This includes all physical and management costs and not the social and economic measures. Of this, almost 50% is contributed by the City of Amsterdam and over 50% by the housing corporation sector, primarily by the Central Fund for Housing (Kwekkeboom, 2002: p. 79). The latter is a national public housing fund, paid by all housing associations and therefore by all tenants of social housing (see Ouwehand & Van Daalen, 2002: p. 84). The renewal is also supported by a grant from the European Communities URBAN fund for related social-economical measures.

Figure 14.3 shows at the top the situation in 1992, before any plan was started and below in 2010, after the whole Masterplan has been carried out. It is easy to see that little will remain of the characteristic honeycomb structure of the large blocks that were built. After the renewal of the Bijlmermeer is finished, more than half of the original high-rise blocks will have disappeared and been replaced by low-rise apartments and single family dwellings (Table 14.2).

Although 15,000 dwellings per year (of the total dwelling stock of 6.6 million) are being demolished in the Netherlands, the revitalisation of the Bijlmermeer is the largest Dutch restructuring project so far. Only in Hoogvliet, a satellite city of Rotterdam, are similar numbers of dwellings in one area being dealt with. In the new Bijlmermeer 15 blocks, or parts thereof, will remain of the original 31. Six of them, in the eastern part of the area, together form an ensemble. This is called the 'Bijlmer museum', which will remain on the instigation of active residents who were against demolition. In the middle of this area is the monument on the site where the El Al Boeing crashed into an apartment block in 1992.

The total amount of dwellings will have grown slightly by 2010 compared with 1992 (+7%), a precondition set by the central municipality of Amsterdam. A consequence of the change of high-rise into low-rise is that large parts of the public area will vanish, which will reduce the costs of maintenance. There will be a greater variation between neighbourhoods, including suburban areas with dwellings on the waterfront and real urban life styles with new apartment buildings. Whereas there used to be only one living environment, namely living in high-rise, the new living environments should attract new occupants and offer opportunities to people who until now had to leave the area

Figure 14.3 The situation in 1992 (above) and in 2012 (below) before and after physical renewal



Originally the layout was dominated by honeycomb-shaped high-rise blocks. Many blocks are demolished and replaced by low-rise buildings. In the south-east corner the refurbished ensemble 'Bijlmer museum'.
Source: Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer (PVB) (2010).

when, for example, they wanted a single family dwelling, an owner occupied dwelling or an apartment designed for elderly persons. These new types are being built, within new environments.

When new houses are completed in the Bijlmermeer, they are first offered to people who have to leave their homes because of the demolition activities. As a second priority, the rest of the residents in the Bijlmermeer are then offered the dwellings. Third and fourth, people from Amsterdam and the rest

From left to right: Park-like landscapes between the blocks. Half of the 13,000 dwellings and adjacent parking garages have been demolished.

of the country (and the world!) get priority. Until now, almost all new developments have been taken by people from the first two categories. This illustrates the popularity of the new living environments and the dwelling types offered within them.

The integrated policy of the 1990s is continued in the 'final approach' in the 21st century. There is a wide belief that an integral approach is necessary because the problems cannot be solved by new housing developments alone. That is why the plans also include new parking facilities, public transport, educational facilities, recreational facilities as well as more social and economic facilities like business spaces, churches, mosques, hotel, day-care centres, and studios. Besides that, the 'Amsterdam ArenA' area will be developed further on. This new centre also houses two major education institutes and an academy striving to assist young and unemployed people with basic education. The social-economic renewal, the second constituent of renewal, started at the same time as the physical renewal. Recently, an overview has been made of the results of the last eight years (Stadsdeel Zuidoost, 2002). About a hundred projects, both large and small, have been set up at a total cost of €56 million. Some examples are a Women Empowerment Centre, sport and play facilities, a centre to care for drug addicts, surveillance by guards and cameras, facilities for entrepreneurs starting out in business and school facilities. The third ingredient, better maintenance to improve liveability, also has to be intensified, especially as the last blocks will not be demolished before 2008. Intensive maintenance is necessary to guarantee a safe and quiet living for the remaining residents.

14.9 Conditions for success

We began this article by mentioning that many large scale housing estates suffer from similar problems. In all countries, questions emerge about which measures have to be taken to prevent or solve problems. Obviously the answer lies in the location-specific situations. Different areas ask for specific solutions. Nonetheless, many analogous high rise estates are in a position comparable to the Bijlmermeer and may consider similar renewal approaches.

For some reason, the renewal of the Bijlmermeer remains an exceptional example because of the scale of the area and of the renewal approach. However, five conditions can be distinguished that support the success so far.

From left to right: The other half have been renovated. Storage rooms have been transformed into houses with gardens.

These conditions are characteristic of the Bijlmermeer approach. Identifying them can be useful for the transferability of the approach to other estates in other circumstances. The first condition for success is the improvement of the surrounding Amsterdam ArenA area, which is being used as a catalyst to improve the nearby problematic high-rise area. This removed the isolation of the Bijlmermeer area and made it part of the network city.

The second condition is the integrative approach, in which a combination of three different strategies is set up. These are worked out separately, but in combination with each other. The physical renewal results in more popular housing types and environments. Social and economic renewal results in an improvement in the personal situation of deprived people. Improvement of the liveability and maintenance results in a safer and cleaner place to live. All three mingle with each other, and it is seen as essential that all three interrelated problems will be tackled.

The third condition of the Bijlmermeer's renewal is the search for radical solutions. Even with improvement, renovation, maintenance and residents' involvement the Bijlmermeer did not become an attractive proposition, and vacancies and high turnover rates persisted despite the pressure on the Amsterdam housing market. Liveability problems, like a lack of cleanliness and safety, caused major problems over the years. Moreover, the Bijlmermeer never rid itself of its very negative stigma. As an ultimate and radical solution low-rise flats and ordinary single-family houses will replace half of the high-rise blocks. This radical solution puts the Bijlmermeer approach on the frontline in Europe. An interesting question is whether other high-rise estates in Europe will follow the example of the Bijlmermeer. At the moment, demolition is not being considered in most countries, at least not to the same extent as in the Bijlmermeer (Turkington et. al., forthcoming). This is rightly so, as demolition should not be the starting point of any renewal process, it should rather be, as argued above, considered in relation to measures that can solve social and economic problems. In the Bijlmermeer, these approaches proved not adequate enough to solve the problems that are correlated with the urban design and the housing type (high-rise). Demolition here is the drastic, but only way.

The fourth condition is financial. This includes costs for the whole project and for individual inhabitants. First of all, there is money for major investments, in which an important factor is the role of the Central Housing Fund, which pays half of all costs, but which is not government money. The whole renewal process is very costly because technically reasonable and dwellings not yet paid off are demolished. The other financial condition is the residents. New dwellings are sold at moderate prices or have the same rather high rent level as the former high-rise blocks. People who cannot afford it get allowances.

The fifth and last condition for success is the way it is done, together with the inhabitants. In other cases demolition goes together with a lot of protest, displacement of poor people, breakage of social networks and loss of affordable housing. In the Bijlmermeer, inhabitants have an important vote in the whole process, something that was not the case in other countries in the past and even nowadays is lacking. Blair and Hulsbergen (1993: p. 294) conclude: "Most renewal approaches are one-off design strategies, initiated without surveys of development needs or guidelines to measure the success and benefits of renewal for the inhabitants. [...] There is a high failure rate of urban renewal projects in meeting the needs of residents. Words and political promises are not translated into workable concepts; designs are only partially pursued." More recent research by Turkington et al. (forthcoming) supports this conclusion. Residents must not only have a say, but the starting point of the renewal approach must be that the present inhabitants will profit, either by getting a better house in a better area in the Bijlmermeer, or if they prefer it, somewhere else. To offer alternatives to inhabitants is one of the basic elements for success in renewal. In this way social networks, can be preserved and a stronger bond to the neighbourhood can exist.

Nevertheless it would be wishful thinking to suspect that all the problems like litter, crime, drug abuse, and unemployment will be completely solved. This might be a major problem in the future for various reasons. Firstly, economic growth has had very little impact at the neighbourhood level. Secondly, improving some of the blocks results in a concentration of problems with drug addicts, crime and safety in the remaining blocks (Van Veghel & Wassenberg, 1999; Ouwehand, 1999). The results halfway pointed to a displacement of problems, where the renewal works like a waterbed: sit on one place and it goes down there, but another spot comes up (Ouwehand, 1999: p. 100). This was one of the reasons both for making the final plan immediately rather than leaving some blocks, and for intensifying the integral approach: the only way to solve all the problems instead of spreading the problems by relocating residents. At this point we support the thesis of Crump (2002) that demolishing and relocation of inhabitants is not the answer to spatially-concentrated poverty. Poverty is a social-economic problem and should also be solved by social-economic measures.

Another concern is where all the drug addicts, delinquents, tramps and other people with anti-social behaviour will move to, when the safety situation is seriously addressed in the Bijlmermeer. People who destroy the living climate are not welcome in the newly built areas, but neither will they disappear. Allowing the continued spread of the problems is not a sustainable solution, it is the roots of the problems that need to be addressed, however difficult this will be.

14.10 Conclusions

The Bijlmermeer originated on the drawing-board as the peak of modernity and as a shining example of housing where 'the people of today could find the residential environment of tomorrow'. Unfortunately, it became clear at an early stage on that residents avoided this city of tomorrow. Problems occurred and, in spite of numerous improvements, only grew. The history of the Bijlmermeer is symptomatic of high-rise estates as tomorrow's idealistic cities. The outcomes of the high-rise wave of the 1960s could originally be formulated in a positive way: high-rise offered the ultimate, ideal, egalitarian and modern dwellings, ideally designed and located. Soon criticism arose, which interpreted this as: high-rise offers too many, similar and not attractive dwellings for non-existent average people in the wrong place.

The failure of tomorrow's city resulted from the start in renewal strategies. The ideas in the 1960s were astonishing, the problems were astonishing, the several measures were astonishing and the present renewal is astonishing. When the renewal is finished in about 2010, the Bijlmermeer will have been for 40 years a shining example for people who are interested in large housing estates all over the world. Right now, the renewal approach for the Bijlmermeer aims to demolish over half of the original high-rise blocks and to relinquish the original ideas behind the area. It has to be emphasised that this demolition is not based on the idea of deconcentrating poverty, as is the case in many American cities (Crump, 2002: p. 582). The inhabitants choose the measures and the new houses are being built, at moderate prices, for them. Problems are being tackled using an integral approach. History has proven here that neither maintenance, nor socialeconomical measures, nor participation, nor physical measures alone are sufficient to solve the large problems. The biggest problem in the Bijlmermeer was, and still is, that several factors occur in combination. This implies that strategies have to be in combination too. A combination of continuous liveability problems, a long history of partial improvements, changes in the surroundings of the Bijlmermeer, a firmly set negative image and pessimistic future prospects led to the understanding that a radical redesign was inevitable.

This drastic redesign involves an intensive process with residents, in which their preferences are one of the starting points of the renewal. The challenge in the Bijlmermeer is to end up with a neighbourhood that is attractive to those of the present residents that want to stay, that gets rid of its negative stigma, that will offer several kinds of dwellings and living environments and that offers future prospects for both residents and the housing association.

Conditions for success are the incorporation of the problematic high-rise area into the wider region, the integrative approach, the radical solutions, an adequate financial structure and decent participation of the residents involved. If this approach is successful, it will be an example for other cities with problematic large housing estates.

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15 Large housing estates: from stigma to demolition?

Frank Wassenberg, in: Journal of Housing and the Built Environment (2004), Editorial, 19 (3), pp. 223-232. http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10901-004-0691-2#page-1

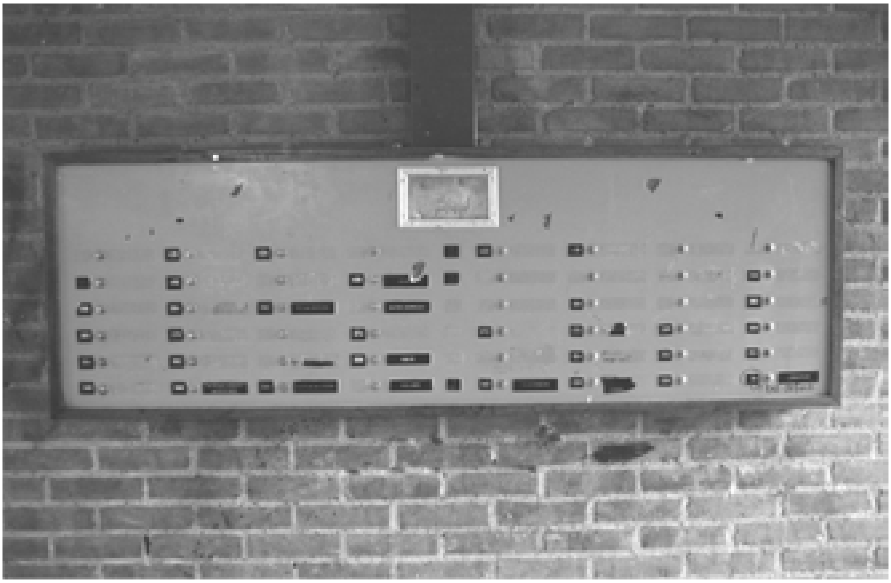
15.1 Stigma and large housing estates

It is curious that the most frequently reviewed and well thought-out large housing estates are now the areas with the worst image. In these areas the high expectations of the planners were not realized, as demonstrated by the deplorable image of some estates. Image is an important factor of a neighbourhood's popularity, affecting its position in the local or regional neighbourhood hierarchy. Many studies and reports about problematic areas indicate that a negative image – a stigma, see Section 15.3 – is one of the aspects of urban decay. However, far less is known about the specific role of image and stigma in the development of housing estates.

This special issue is an attempt to fill that gap. The aim of this issue is to analyse the relation between large-scale housing estates and negative territorial images. It shows how images are experienced and whose images are concerned. It differentiates between internal and external images and presents examples of how policy-makers deal with stigmatised housing areas. A negative image is both a result of and a cause for further decay. In a spiral of decay, stigma plays a distinct role, exacerbating the problems that already exist. The papers in this special issue concentrate on the image factor, though without ignoring the fact that serious problems are often found in these areas.

The residualisation or marginalisation of social housing leads to deprived neighbourhoods where socioeconomically disadvantaged tenants are being concentrated. These areas increasingly take on a problematic reputation. The residents are socially stigmatised merely for living in a stigmatised area. Some papers in this issue go into the topic of social exclusion.

Large housing estates, which were built in the postwar decades when chronic housing shortages determined the political agendas, are an important part of present urban renewal efforts in all West European countries. Nowadays renewal is a complex and integral process embracing all kinds of measures and strategies. However, hardly any attention is being paid to possibilities to influence the image – i.e., to image renewal – or to the way in which an improved image influences the success of an urban renewal process.



Vandalized and empty bell boards make a negative impression on visitors.

15.2 Large housing estates: optimism and disappointment

There is something intriguing about large housing estates. At the time they were developed, large housing estates were the product of idealistic thoughts, futuristic views and great expectations. The 1960s was the heyday of Utopian thinking; the prevailing view was that planners could make and shape society. Those were the days of putting a man on the moon, of invaders from Mars, Star Trek and the Thunderbirds. Inner cities were rebuilt to make way for motorways, parking garages, tower blocks and shopping facilities. In the field of housing, the high-rise estates of the 1960s and early 1970s were literally highlights of modern planning. In most Western countries, a significant proportion of these dwellings were rental apartments, often in the social sector. They formed an attractive alternative to the narrow and stuffy inner-city flats. Large housing estates were supposed to provide healthy housing, with 'light, air and space'. The CIAM movement of modern architects (*Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*), with famous names like Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Mart Stam, led the way. According to these principles millions of houses were built all across Europe and the rest of the world. In fact, most of the neighbourhoods in the post-World War II generation are heavily influenced by CIAM ideas. Le Corbusier and his colleagues of the CIAM movement were the most influential architects of the 20th century, although Le Corbusier's actual production was rather low. Turkington et al. (2004) give seven reasons why high-rise blocks were developed and which great expectations existed. After a more or less comparable start, high-rise living subsequently developed in different ways. The authors calculate that in 15 selected European countries, about one out of every seven dwellings was built in high-rise blocks, an average that is boosted by practices in Eastern and Southern Europe.

Considering their idealistic and Utopian foundations, it is remarkable that these well thought-out areas have so many problems. Not all large housing estates are problematic, but in many countries many problematic areas are concentrated in large housing estates. Problems express themselves as low demand, vacancies, high turnover rates, a problematic exploitation, a lack of knowledge of the area and, on top of that, a stigma.

15.3 On stigma

In this special issue of the journal, the similar terms image, reputation and status are used in a neutral sense. An image, a reputation or a status of an area can be both positive and negative; as such, these are relative notions. A stigma, on the contrary, has only a negative connotation. It is associated with shame and disgrace, with the uncomfortable and unacceptable: all negative things. An area with a negative image has a stigma. In this issue, the term stigma denotes a negative image or reputation, and we use these terms in turn.

Identity is a related concept. In a pioneering study, Kevin Lynch (1960) worked out how people experience urban spaces and how the appearance of an urban area gives meaning to identity. Sluis has developed this concept further, calling identity the way in which different spatial elements in the city, like streets and blocks of houses, differ from each other. The wider the differences and the more landmarks or distinctions individuals experience, the more 'imageability', in Lynch's words, an area possesses. This mental aspect of an urban environment contributes directly to individuals' psychological well-being (Sluis, 2003).

Identity reflects the specific characteristics of a neighbourhood. One of the characteristics of the postwar proliferation of large housing estates is that these areas are not differentiated enough – some say not at all – and are lacking in identity and imageability. Many of these neighbourhoods look alike, especially in Eastern Europe; "When you have seen one estate, you have seen them all", according to Tsenkova (2000). In the West, according to policy-makers, the large-scale neighbourhoods need more variation, as diversity makes for quality. Neighbourhoods need an identity of their own.

It is easy to find examples of areas that carry a stigma, a bad image. Just open a local newspaper and any local resident can point out negative events in certain areas, especially those on the other side of town. Table 15.1 gives some examples of the external conceptualisation of a particular area and the negative impacts of its stigma.

The examples in Table 15.1 are not listed in a random sequence. On top we see the more general examples, as experienced by the wider public. Going down the table we see examples that are more hidden expressions of a stigma, or manifestations that only are observed by some people or by persons with more specific knowledge. Obvious examples of image building are tele-

Table 15.1 Examples and consequences of stigma in certain neighbourhoods

- Programmes or articles about the area focussing on crime, drug abuse, pollution, etc.
- Programmes or articles about crime, drug abuse, pollution, etc. using the area as a case
- Visible pollution, graffiti, vandalism, drug addicts hanging around, etc.
- Vacant houses, empty shops
- Poor schools
- Friends, relatives and colleagues are reluctant to visit
- Services won't deliver, taxis won't come to the area
- Shortages of doctors, teachers, etc.
- Discrimination on labour market
- Higher insurance premiums; credit and financial services are denied
- Advertisements for easily available houses
- Property values lag behind

vision programmes showing the misery of the area and photographs and articles in the newspaper, etc. Some researchers just

Programmes or articles about the area focussing on crime, drug abuse, pollution, etc. count the reports in the papers to follow the news coverage about an area. Pollution, vacant houses or certain characteristics of the residents can be observed by simply walking around. Friends who are unwilling to visit, financial services being refused or a perceived discrimination on the labour market – these are things people may experience only after a while. Lagging property values or concentrations of advertisements for available properties are only visible to experts in the field. All these situations contribute to the creation of a stigma.

According to Dean and Hastings, it is not appropriate to refer to the image of an estate. Rather they prefer to speak of fractured images (Dean & Hastings, 2000, p. 13). Individuals emphasise different aspects of the estate and perceive it differently, depending on their own characteristics and experiences. Insiders within the area (inhabitants, daily workers) may have a different image than persons from outside the area. These images are called internal and external images or reputations, and both kinds are related (Suttles, 1972; Hortulanus, 1995). The internal reputation is based on physical and social characteristics of the neighbourhood. The external reputation, which is formed by outsiders, is often based on simple stereotypes, especially when the image is negative. Areas are compared to one another and assigned a place in the urban neighbourhood hierarchy. The reputations of the good and bad areas, as represented by their image, are mostly shaped by persons from outside the area. Forrest and Kearns write about "residential identities that are embedded in a strongly comparative psychological landscape in which each neighbourhood is known primarily as a counterpart of some of the others (…) Neighbourhoods seem to acquire their identity through an on-going commentary between themselves and this continuous dialogue between different groups and agencies shapes the cognitive map of the city and establishes good and bad reputations" (Forrest & Kearns, 2001, p. 2135).

The inhabitants are being influenced by negative external reputations, although maybe not as clearly and directly as Forrest and Kearns suggest. In some estates the inhabitants do have big problems, namely with liveability, pollution and safety, and these problems only confirm the external image. In other estates the problems mainly exist in the minds of outsiders, not in the experience of the inhabitants. People live well there, but sometimes they have to cope with negative judgements about their area.

Stigmatisation of areas is part of a discourse about social exclusion, the underclass concept and the residualisation of the public housing sector. Both the Australian and the Belgian papers in this issue focus on this discourse. They go into the discussion on the growing Stigmatisation of public housing. They also consider the question of whether marginalised public estates form a last resort for the most excluded tenants or are the cause of the problems: exclusion through housing or exclusion from housing. Stigmatisation also plays an important role in discussions among social scientists about the concept of the ghetto. Recently, the French-American sociologist Loïc Wacquant made an analytical concept out of the term ghetto. He identified four features of a ghetto: stigma, constraint, spatial confinement and institutional encasement (Wacquant, forthcoming). All ghettos do have a stigma, but not all stigmatised areas are ghettos.

Discussions about images have an ambiguous character. On the one hand, there is a large body of literature describing problematic estates where stigma is an issue. On the other hand, there is hardly any specific literature about the role of image in particular neighbourhoods. In a contribution to this issue, Hastings states that within the housing and regeneration literature, there is a strong emphasis on behavioural and cultural explanations for the problem of stigma. Yet she points out that within this literature, there are actually few detailed studies of the phenomenon of stigma itself. Earlier, Hastings did research on how the factor of image is dealt with in renewal projects. She found that it is difficult to get rid of a negative image in three British housing estates that are being renewed, and it takes a great deal of effort (Dean & Hastings, 2000). Buys concluded earlier that little is known about the factor of status (or reputation or image). A negative status of a neighbourhood may have a strong impact on the local housing market position. His conclusion is based on findings from an area in Tilburg, the Netherlands, where intensive social management was not enough to change the local stigma. Hardly any literature exists on status and how it can be influenced (i.e., improved) (Buys, 1997, p. 95). There are many studies and reports about problematic areas in which a negative reputation is one of the factors but not about the specific role of stigma.

15.4 Urban renewal and image renewal

A stigmatised public opinion, once established, is a result of all the problems that are present in an area. In the literature on the decay of estates, a worsening reputation is often mentioned as the result of all kinds of serious problems. The media are eager to confirm these stigmas. In this way, a bad image can cause further decay. Inhabitants are confronted with the sequence of factors listed in Table 15.1, and outsiders will think twice about going into the area. The decline of a problematic estate is often described as a vicious circle, a stigma being one of the factors pulling it downward.

In such a situation, renewal of a neighbourhood is necessary. Urban renewal is an important policy all across Europe. More and more, the large housing estates of the 1960s constitute a major share of this renewal burden. The measures may be housing oriented – calling for refurbishing, modernising or demolition of old estates and building new types of houses that people prefer. The measures may also call for improving the immediate setting, the semi-public spaces like entries, halls, storage areas and corridors. Or they may be aimed at the wider surroundings and involve upgrading the green space and amenities like schools and shops. Moreover, measures may be directed toward the residents themselves, who often suffer from a range of personal problems like inadequate schooling, unemployment or financial problems. Measures may also be oriented toward the way people live together, stimulating integration, mitigating nuisance and promoting involvement. Or an integral approach could be taken, pursuing all of these aims.

Large housing estates, as areas where problems tend to concentrate, are being renewed all over Europe, but it is important to consider whether their image will improve as well. Image renewal is only effective when the reality is changing as well. In practice, the image of a neighbourhood, and especially a negative one, is hardly treated as a factor. In most renewal strategies, image-building is not explicitly mentioned. There are possibilities to actively promote the image of a neglected area. What often happens is that large amounts of money are put into various measures, mostly for physical improvement. Various social and economic measures are taken at a lower scale, but efforts to promote an area are almost entirely neglected, especially after the euphoria of the renewal programme has faded away. The old negative reputation proves to be persistent, and after some years everything looks the same as before.

Improving the image of an area is a long-lasting process. In problematic areas image promotion always needs to be combined with (a range of) other measures. Even when the actual situation is being improved, a stigma can last for many years, maybe even a lifetime. Moreover, it takes a long time to remove a stigma once it has taken root – if possible at all – even when a large renewal programme is taking place. Atkinson and Kintrea (2000) and Beekman et al. (2001) confirm this point, in the light of research in areas that have been regenerated through changes in housing types and tenures. The neighbourhood may change more quickly than its image. Sometimes it is easier to change the area itself than to change its image. Image-building may be one way to move forward, at least to some extent, in this complicated process.

High-rise is massive, impressive and dominating, but also impersonal, anonymous and monotonous.

15.5 Editorial: contributions to this issue

This special issue deals with the relation between large housing estates and image-building. Each paper concentrates on this relation but places it in the context of a specific topic. All papers treat stigmatised large housing estates that are being neglected, renewed, refurbished or demolished and replaced. Altogether, these papers describe the range of relations between a deprived area, the image it has and the way policymakers are dealing with it.

In the first paper, Annette Hastings (from the UK) elaborates on the causes of stigma, distinguishing pathological, structural and area effects. Furthermore, she concentrates on the actors behind a stigma. The focus is on people and their positions, actors experiencing, making or dealing with images. Hastings differentiates within the groups of internal and external actors, distinguishing normalisers and pathologisers. Her aim is to understand why deprived estates remain stigmatised, even after processes of regeneration have started. While many actors are involved in image-building, few are actively involved in challenging the negative images.

In the second paper, Kathy Arthurson (from Australia) connects the marginalisation of the social sector in her country with the wider debate about social exclusion. She asks whether people are excluded from decent housing or if people are excluded through housing, excluded because they live somewhere. The paper concentrates on the small and residualising position of the social rented housing sector. In three comparable cases, opposite strategies – ranging from holistic approaches to demolition – were followed to get rid of stigmatised areas.

Frank Wassenberg (from the Netherlands) expands on the topic of internal and external images. A negative external image accelerates the development of internal problems and lowers the reputation of a neighbourhood. He considers the extent to which urban renewal leads to a better image and in what way image renewal is possible. Wassenberg states that images of neighbourhoods could be more actively promoted, using image-building as a supplementary strategy alongside other renewal activities. He presents a framework in which to position neighbourhoods according to insider and outsider images. The respective positions make it possible to envisage a strategy for image promotion, dependent on local circumstances.

Pascal De Decker and Isabelle Pannecoucke (from Belgium) launch the notion of the incapable tenant in the social housing sector. They concentrate on the contradiction between two images: on the one hand, the external image of stigmatised tenants living in ghettos amidst loads of problems and stereotyped by the media; on the other hand, the internal images of the tenants themselves, who can cope with the situation and are rather satisfied. The authors also mention the role that politicians play in marginalising the social sector in Belgium. This process has been going on for over ten years, leading to a stigmatisation of large housing estates, which are the neighbourhoods where the social rented sector is concentrated.

The last paper is by Ingar Bratbakk and Thorbjorn Hansen (from Norway). Even in one of the wealthiest countries on the continent, problems are appearing in large housing estates. Compared with other countries, Norway's problems are moderate, but this case demonstrates that every housing situation has to be considered within its own local or regional context. A stigmatised area is low in the regional housing hierarchy, no matter which country it is in. This makes local or regional situations in different countries comparable. Brattbakk and Hansen concentrate on the role of declining images in the process of decay. There is a growing polarisation between good and bad areas. An interesting aspect of the Norwegian situation is the positive role of housing cooperatives. Unlike other West European countries, many large housing estates are not in the social rented sector but are owned by a cooperative in which an individual has a share. This arrangement offers perspectives for improvement.

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16 Renewing stigmatised estates in the Netherlands: a framework for image renewal strategies

Frank Wassenberg, in: Journal of Housing and the Built Environment (2004), 19 (3), pp. 271-292.
http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10901-004-0694-z

16.1 Introduction

This paper discusses the relation between images of estates and their approaches to renewal. It starts from the observation that many large housing estates are coping with an unforeseen negative image, a stigma, and goes into the factors that determine such an image. The paper elaborates on the differentiation between the images held by internal and external participants. Stigmatised problematic areas, among them many large-scale housing estates, are being renewed in the Netherlands, like elsewhere in Europe. The question is raised whether urban renewal approaches will change a stigma. A second question in this paper concerns the possibilities to improve a stigma and the strategies that can be used. This article underlines the active use of image-building strategies as a complementary part of an urban renewal process. Moreover, the article provides an analytical framework to be able to differentiate between strategies according to the experienced internal and external image. Especially when the internal and the external image of a particular neighbourhood differ from each other, image-promoting activities can be useful. The article goes into the various possibilities for renewing the image of the distinguished areas and elaborates on situations where internal or external image promotion can be more successful. These possibilities are illustrated with the negative image of the Bijlmermeer high-rise estate in Amsterdam, where a large renewal programme is taking place. It is shown that in this case image renewal concentrates on the internal participants.

16.2 The remarkable image of large housing estates

Debates about large housing estates in the Netherlands are, as in many other European countries, about housing built in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. During this period, housing was characterised by chronic shortages, and political priority was given to housing production. Nevertheless, it lasted until the 1950s before large amounts of housing were produced. In the 1960s new techniques became available to increase the housing production by building higher in a shorter time at lower costs (Turkington *et al.*, 2004). During the 1960s, the construction of high-rise flats predominated in many cities in Europe, culminating in a high-rise boom that in most Western countries lasted for no more than 10 years. After the high-rise wave a countermovement started in the Netherlands, as in many other countries, with the emphasis on building single-family houses in small-scale developments, on curved streets and 'back to the human scale'. Large housing estates dominate the post-war developments. About 40% of the total housing stock in the Netherlands was built in the period 1945-1975. Peak production was achieved in 1972 and 1973, with over 150,000 houses a year. That is twice the present volume of housing production.

Neighbourhoods from the 1950s are a mix of low-rise blocks of flats and single-family dwellings, most of them in the rental sector. They are characterised by half-open blocks of buildings, arranged in a fixed pattern with a communal courtyard. The urban design was strongly influenced by the CIAM movement, *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*, the international movement for modern building. They organised a series of conferences between 1928 and 1959 that were of great influence on urban planning in post-war decades, with much attention to light, air and space. Neighbourhoods from the 1960s and early 1970s were still a mix of housing types. Although high-rise dominated visibly many new developments, the majority of the new housing was single-family houses. Most urban neighbourhoods still were a mix of housing types, among them high-rise blocks. The ideology of these neighbourhoods still consisted for a major part of the CIAM ideas. Notions of rational, efficient, healthy and functional building found their way into many large-scale neighbourhoods. With the ideas of the 1930s and the techniques of the 1960s, many new areas were developed. These were to be modern alternatives for the stuffy and narrow tenements in the inner cities.

Many of the large housing areas were very well thought of when they were built. This is especially true of the high-rise estates of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Plans from those days contain well-founded ideas about how people should live, about privacy, optimal position for sunshine, separation of traffic flows, and large greens with common uses. An influential report of the Dutch government of those days describes the advantages of high-rise living as follows: High-rise living offers opportunities for privacy as much as possible, together with a maximal perception of visual contact with nature, space and society, making it outstanding for the people of tomorrow (Commissie Hoogbouw-Laagbouw, 1961).

Because of the very tight housing market of that time, all new housing was welcome. Qualitative remarks were rarely made, and if so, nobody listened. The Amsterdam Bijlmermeer is a good illustration of the way new areas were developed in the 1960s (see the case). Mentzel (1990) gives an overview of the realisation of this large high-rise area, an example that urban planners all over the world should take to heart. What has gone wrong since then and what drastic measures are being taken in the Bijlmermeer at this moment are

From the outside it is obvious that many immigrants live here.

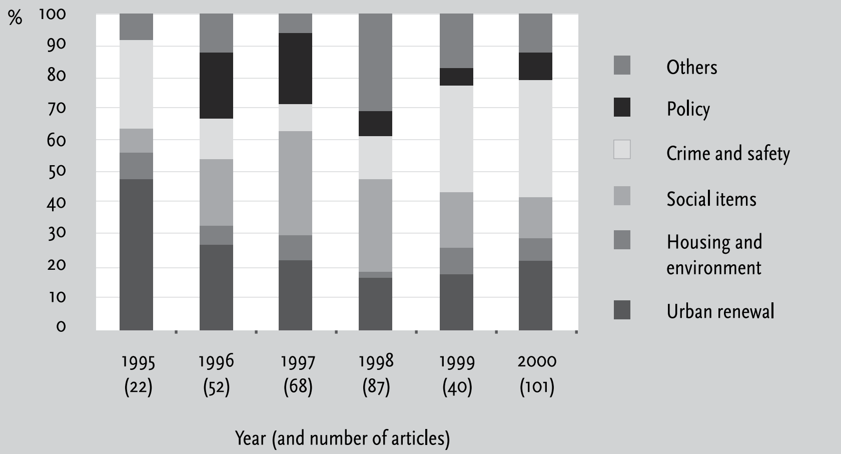
some of the issues addressed by Helleman and Wassenberg (2004).

In later years, when opportunities became available, many large-scale neighbourhoods of the post-war decades lost their favoured position on the housing market they had occupied in the early years. Gradually, satisfaction made place for complaints about the house, the neighbours and the surroundings; the once long waiting lists were replaced by refusals and vacancies and, important in this discussion, the reputation gradually changed.

16.3 Internal and external image creation

People within and outside an area form images of that area; these are called internal and external images. The participants can be divided according to the interest they have. Three groups of actors can be distinguished that may value a neighbourhood: inhabitants, the local government and other parties concerned, like shopkeepers or house owners (Nelissen, 1976, p. 13). Literature about images of neighbourhoods is often based on surveys about the satisfaction of the inhabitants (Hortulanus, 1999). The more satisfied people are with how they live, the higher their appreciation and the higher their internal image will be. All other parties not bound to the area form external images. Hortulanus states, in a description of reputation theories, that an important characteristic of external image creation theories is that neighbourhoods are compared with each other. Whereas inhabitants look at satisfaction and a good dwelling, external actors define neighbourhoods in relation to each other and give them a place in the local neighbourhood hierarchy (Hortulanus, 1995, p. 42). These comparisons make use of ordinary but recognisable names: a working-class district, a slum, a middle-class area, and the gold coast. Neighbourhoods are associated with status. The local 'high-rise district' is labelled too, and it is given a position in the personal housing hierarchy. By giving areas names, external participants get an image of that neigh-

Figure 16.1 Press coverage Bijlmermeer in categories (%)



Source: Nauta *et al.* (2001), author's calculation

bourhood, perhaps without knowing the area itself. It is important to note that images and stigmas are connected to the physical appearance of an area. Both the appearance (housing types, layout) and the name can stigmatise a neighbourhood.

The role of the media

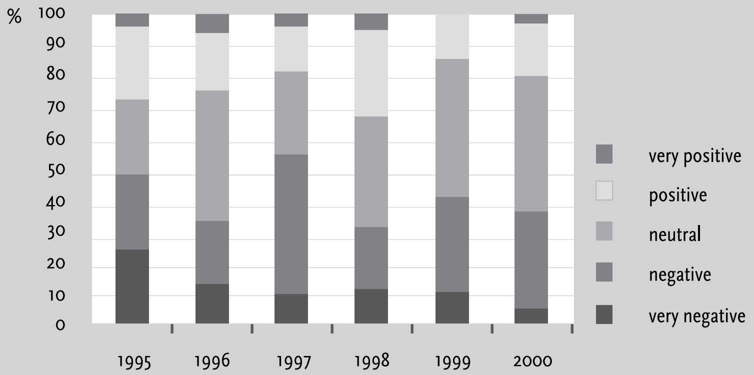
External images are both shaped and initiated by the media: press, television, radio, music, and so on. Unless a journalist is living in the area, something that hardly ever happens, media images are externally set. As the lines in the newspaper and the minutes on television are scarce, journalists have to be short; they opt for stereotypes and leave out the nuances that scientists are used to making. A stereotype, once set, is hard to change.

The way the media can confirm, set or change images should not be underestimated. The Amsterdam high-rise area Bijlmermeer is probably the most stigmatised area in the Netherlands (see Section 16.7). Nauta et al. (2001) conducted a survey on the way the Bijlmermeer was covered in the newspapers in the period 1995-2000. They counted all articles in three main papers (*Volkskrant, Parool* and *Algemeen Dagblad*) that were written about the Bijlmermeer neighbourhood.

The amount of articles about the Bijlmermeer area has risen over time, with a strong dip in 1999. Figures 16.1 and 16.2 show the results of the review of press coverage. After a dip in 1997, the amount of coverage of crime, safety and nuisance rose substantially. Over one-third of all articles were about these negative items. Attention for social items (about people, employment, schooling) gradually dropped after a peak in 1997. In 1995, the first urban renewal of the Bijlmermeer was visible: demolition, refurbishment, new low-rise developments. These got much attention. After that year, the press coverage of urban renewal activities dropped down gradually to a stable level of about 20% of all articles written about the Bijlmermeer.

The judgement in the articles fluctuated but slowly improved after the first

Figure 16.2 Judgement of press coverage Bijlmermeer (%)



Source: Nauta *et al.* (2001), author's calculation

years under review (1995-1997). During these years, over half of all articles were (very) negative, while this decreased to about one-third during the last 3 years (1998-2000). During the last years, more articles were neutral in tone. Interestingly, the most positive articles were the longest, while negative articles, especially those about crime, were shorter.

A conclusion we might draw from the press coverage survey is that image-building about the Bijlmermeer area became slightly less negative.

Internal and external participants

Dean and Hastings (2000) distinguish six groups of inhabitants: residents, leavers and incomers, and each of these three groups divided into those with a positive or a negative view. The survey covered three stigmatised large-scale neighbourhoods that were being redeveloped. While they only looked at the inhabitants, other parties are involved too, and the latter form their own image of the estate. In Table 16.1 we have extended these six categories and put together a range of participants that may form an image of an area, both internal and external, both inhabitants and others. In the table we mention some specific features that are characteristic of these groups. We are aware that this list is not complete. The first six features are according to Dean and Hastings' division and the characteristics they attribute to them. In fact, these first six apply to the inhabitants – as those Dean and Hastings refer to – but also to shopkeepers, house buyers, investors, etc.

16.4 A framework for neighbourhood images

Both internal and external participants can have a positive or a negative feeling about a particular neighbourhood. Their image can be good or bad. This can be depicted in a diagram in which the participants are at the borders (in the column and row headings) and the several neighbourhoods can be placed in the matrix (in cells), according to their experienced internal and external images. Table 16.2 shows schematically the four categories any specific neigh-

Table 16.1 Participants and their image of an area

Participant	Internal or external	Some characteristics
Committed residents	Internal	Choose to stay, positive self-image, blame the media for the unjust stigma, blame the council for neglect
Budding incomers	External	Rather positive about the estate, often lived here before, blame media for the unjust stigma. May come soon
Potential leavers	Internal	Differentiate between parts of the estate, uncertain future
Doubtful incomers	External	Differentiate between parts of the estate, uncertain future
Probable leavers	Internal	Overall negative image of the estate, blame council neglect and people. Want to leave
Improbable incomers	External	Negative image of the whole estate, blame residents' own behaviour. Surely will not come
Media, journalists	External	Looking for news, exaggerating facts, most influential external image builders, stereotyping stigmas
Politicians	External	Diverse, image influenced by public opinion
Civil servants	External	Serving the 'general interest'
Police	External	Confronted with the problems
Public housing association	External	A main concern is the rentability of the estate
Public housing employees	Internal/external	Confronted with results of bad image (removals, refusals, maintenance costs)
Market parties, investors	External	Counting risks, hesitant to invest in bad areas

bourhood can be positioned in.

A neighbourhood that is positioned in the left upper corner (1) is acceptable. When both the internal and external image are good, the area will be a pleasant neighbourhood where things are going well and few problems exist. A position in corner (2) is worse: The internal image is reasonable, but the external image is not good. Neighbourhoods positioned in this corner are often isolated and unknown areas, and non-residents do not see any reason to move there. Sometimes large housing estates have been built on abandoned sites, often for financial reasons (cheap land, easy building methods). Committed residents complain about the stereotyping in the media, especially by journalists who hardly know the area. If external participants were to come there, they would probably be content, but unfortunately they do not know the area.

Corner (3) is not satisfactory either, but for different reasons. The external image is reasonable, but the internal image is not. Often there are many problems that deal with liveability in the surroundings, like pollution, crime, noise, traffic congestion, neighbourhood quarrels, etc. Houses may look attractive at a first glance, but the inhabitants complain about the poor quality, their size and their noise; similarly, they complain about the liveability problems in the direct surroundings. Generally speaking, the area is bad according to the experience of the insiders, but external participants judge it without first-hand experience. If they were actually to go there, they would

Table 16.2 Neighbourhoods situated according to internal and external images

		External image	
		Good	Bad
Internal image	Good	(1) nice neighbourhoods	(2) unknown qualified neighbourhoods
	Bad	(3) unsatisfactory neighbourhoods	(4) problematic neighbourhoods

be confronted with the same kinds of problems that the internal participants face at present. Actually, this means once the outsiders become insiders, their experienced image would decline. Examples of neighbourhoods in this corner can be found just outside the city centres in areas with older housing stock.

Neighbourhoods in corner (4) are in the worst position. The image held by both internal and external participants is bad. The number of committed residents is low, budding incomers are few, complainers about all kinds of things are numerous. Moreover, professional external parties are consistent in their negative view. It depends on the overall housing market whether there are many vacancies or if it is scarcity that fills up even the worst housing estates, obviously not with people who would prefer to live there. The most problematic housing estates are positioned in this corner.

16.5 Image as a factor of decline

A bad image is both a result of and a cause for decay. In the literature on spirals of decay, a deteriorating reputation is often mentioned as an important factor. Skifter Andersen gives an overview. He followed developments in 500 deprived Danish housing estates, in which a bad reputation was mentioned to be the third biggest problem, just after integration of foreigners and technically run-down buildings (Skifter Andersen, 2003). A series of problems causes a stigma, and a stigma worsens the existing problems. Prak and Priemus built a model in 1986 to explain why a process of decay, once it has begun, apparently leads, of its own accord, to further decay. Spirals of physical, social and financial decay intensify each other, thus deepening the process of decay. A decreasing image of the estate is one of the many factors in the model. Heeger elaborates on this model and points at the repeating effect of a negative image: a stigma worsens the already existing problems. He also points to the fact that a stigma of one block of flats can radiate to blocks nearby and even to the whole area (Heeger, 1993, p. 74). In an intensive study of mass housing estates in North-Western Europe, Power (1997) disentangles a range of factors that determine their poor position on the housing market. Starting with unpopular design and management difficulties, they lead to low demand and social stigma, ending up with threat of ‘ghetto’ conditions. Power emphasises the interrelationship of the distinguished factors.

One of the characteristics of such a spiral of decay is that it is circular. It is hard to point to where the problems start, one of the criticisms of the original model of Park and Priemus. Elsinga and Wassenberg (1991) tried to expand on this point. On the basis of a large survey on crime and flats, they state that a certain sequence of problems can be observed. Causes of decay do not all

Haverleij
Kasteel Wuyvenhaerd

A new housing area is promoted as ‘castles on an estate’.

start at a given moment, but are usually part of a particular sequence. Problems cause new problems, creating a continuous feedback. They place the factor of a decreasing image amidst an ongoing process of decreasing living quality, a process that started after a poor introduction of the estates on the housing market. The main indicator they distinguish is negative publicity.

In Table 16.3, without pretending to be complete, we list the factors that determine the image of any estate or neighbourhood. We have clustered the factors that the above-mentioned authors refer to and divided these into physical (including technical, environmental, spatial) factors, social aspects (behaviour, characteristics of inhabitants, norms and values, incomes, schooling, integration, etc.), and factors that have to do with management and organisation. Besides these, there are factors that lie outside the competence of participants dealing with the specific area, like societal developments and national policy-making.

Not all neighbourhoods get off to an equal start. The price/quality ratio may be bad, technical failures may occur, a group of anti-social people can be moved in all together, or the new dwellings may come on the market just at the wrong time. Knol conducted a survey of how the status of 3,500 Dutch neighbourhoods has developed during the period 1971-1995. Status was defined as the aggregate of education level, income and (un)employment. He concludes that the changes in status in those 25 years can be explained largely by their position at the start. The most important feature is the type of dwellings, especially the share of owner-occupied dwellings. The more owner-occupied dwellings, the higher the status. A negative and declining status is found most in neighbourhoods in the larger cities, with many small rented flats built in the 1950s and 1960s (Knol, 1998).

After the first year, neighbourhoods develop according to several factors. Both the start and the ongoing developments determine the present image of a neighbourhood. The table includes negative factors that contribute to a declining image of a particular estate. Reputation is an important characteristic to understand the developments and the decay of neighbourhoods. Hor-

Table 16.3 Factors determining the decreasing reputation of a neighbourhood

	Neighbourhood level			General level
	Physical aspects	**Social aspects**	**Management/organisation**	**External/context**
At the start	- Housing features and quality - Quality surroundings - Relation price/quality - Location in region	- Characteristics of first inhabitants - Motives to move in	- Allocation policy - Recruiting policy - Advertising and publicity	- Overall housing market situation - Changes in economic climate
Ongoing developments	- Decreasing attractiveness of housing types - Physical quality fails - Property values lag behind - Basic problems with liveability (safety, pollution, crime)	- Dissatisfied population, complaints - Unstable population, many removals and high turnover rates - Indifference and low involvement - Growing anti- social behaviour - Selective migration process - Concentration marginalised groups - Decreasing socio-economic status	- Insufficient maintenance - High maintenance costs - No physical adjustments - Lower housing requirements -Exploitation problems, refusals, vacancies	- Alternative and attractive new building areas - Developments in prosperity - Demographic changes - National housing policy
Effects	**--> --> Decreasing reputation <-- <-- <-**			

tulanus elaborates on the role of reputation, the attractiveness on the housing market and the future expectations of a neighbourhood. He states that when you ask people to rank all neighbourhoods in a list in order of pleasant and attractive places to live, everybody can do it easily. Physical and social aspects play a role. People look at the visible features of the surroundings: the appearance, the built environment, neglect of buildings and the environment and the kind of people living there (Hortulanus, 1999). This is supported by Parkes et al. who conducted a series of studies on neighbourhood satisfaction. They conclude that housing satisfaction and the general appearance of an area were the two main factors related to neighbourhood satisfaction. Renewal should at least include these two elements (Parkes *et al.*, 2002).

16.6 Urban renewal in the Netherlands

Renewal of the image of a neighbourhood is only possible by improving all of the factors that determine that image, as listed in Table 16.1. Moreover, improving the image is never the main goal; it is a means that contributes to the main goal, which is the well-being of an area. A stigma of a problematic area only can be changed by improving the overall living situation in that area. Dean and Hastings (2000, p. viii) conclude that attempts to challenge images will not be effective unless they are grounded in a changed, or at least changing, reality. According to the circumstances, physical, environmental, economic, social, juridical or other measures may be necessary. When the real facts, the problematic liveability, do not improve, both internal and external image-builders will easily see through the policy. As Van Riel states, referring to corporate identity, actual behaviour has a much greater influence on the image than communication and symbols (Van Riel, 1996). The conclusion may be that when an area is problematic, renewal measures are necessary.

Active renewal of decayed areas has been a policy in the Netherlands since the 1970s. The Dutch approach to renovating old neighbourhoods became famous. Cities like Rotterdam, Deventer and (a bit later) Amsterdam were international precursors for renewal projects. The keywords were physical renovation, inexpensive social housing and involvement of inhabitants. The credo was to build for the neighbourhood and promote participation. Renewal of the post-war large estates was not deemed necessary, because these had just been built and were technically adequate. Once the ‘classic’ renewal process was started, it kept on going, renewing one street after the other, as ‘the urban renewal train passing by’.

The present urban renewal policy in the Netherlands was shaped during the 1990s (see an overview in Priemus and Van Kempen (1999)). Urban renewal nowadays is both more complicated and more integral than the relatively easygoing urban renewal of the period 1975-1995. Moreover, instead of old neighbourhoods, renewal now mainly concerns post-war areas, often the large-scale housing estates that are central to this paper. Most renewal plans are made in the Netherlands for low-rise flat areas dating from the 1950s and 1960s, high-rise areas mainly from the period 1965-1974, and areas with austere and simple single-family houses in rows (mainly in smaller towns and villages).

Nowadays, more kinds of measures are carried out, more points of view have to be reckoned with and more participants are involved. Moreover, the role of the population has changed. The present inhabitants have more individual demands, more prosperity and more choice than their parents did 30 years, or more, ago. They ask for more quality and are able to pay for it. This is also clear from experiences with forced relocation due to demolition. Many relocated residents succeed in improving their housing situation by moving to better dwellings in the same or other areas (Kleinhans, 2003). People with less choice are doomed to live in the stigmatised areas, to fill up the places people who can afford it will avoid. The present economic recession may expand their numbers, but the main trends are those of prosperity and higher demands, compared with the period when the large housing estates were originally built.

During the years that the Dutch economy did rather well, around the turn of the millennium, change, big plans were made and partly started. At the moment, it is not certain whether there will be sufficient financing to implement these costly plans. Moreover, due to the low volume of building production, the overall housing market has tightened again. The number of vacancies, hard to let dwellings and refusals has dropped, but also the necessity, and the possibility, to renew on a large scale.

HET NIEUWE
GROENEVEEN

Public relations material (internal promotion) shows the residents how their buildings will look after being refurbished.

16.7 Working on the image of the most stigmatised area in the country: Amsterdam's Bijlmermeer

Without a doubt, the country's most well known large-scale housing estate is the Bijlmermeer, located in the south-east extension of Amsterdam. High-rise apartment buildings may be found throughout the Netherlands, but nowhere as many as in the Bijlmermeer, with originally 13,000 dwellings in 31 huge blocks. Since the very beginning, the Bijlmermeer has continually attracted attention, initially because of its daring and innovative design and later on for its chronic problems. Nowadays, the Bijlmermeer is an example of large-scale renewal. The Bijlmermeer was built between 1968 and 1975 with 90% high-rise in a mono-functional area dedicated to what was then considered modern living. All modernistic ideas were represented: separation of functions (living, working, recreation), a great deal of space, and park-like landscapes. Traffic flows were separated: pedestrians and cyclists circulate at ground level, while cars drive up above. The planned image of the Bijlmermeer was to develop the neighbourhood of tomorrow for the inhabitants of today. People, middle-class families at first, were expected to stand in line to obtain one of the high-rise flats, eager to escape the dark, narrow and unhealthy slums in the city.

Soon after its completion, its problems began. The dwellings did not correspond to the housing preferences of the intended families, who were more attracted to other cities around Amsterdam where single-family houses with gardens were built. The result was a large number of vacancies, rising to 24% in 1984. These flats were allocated to people with less choice on the market, among them many immigrants. Nowadays, only 20% of the population have Dutch roots. Moreover, there were enormous liveability problems – issues of safety, pollution, nuisance, robberies, degradation, etc., – which the management could not handle. The media found it very easy to confirm the negative image over and over again. The Bijlmermeer was associated with problematic living, not only in the Amsterdam region, but throughout the country and even abroad.

Many solutions were tried. During the early 1980s, the management was improved, physical improvements were made, public facilities were opened and the high rents were reduced. Furthermore, improvements to the wider area have taken place since the mid-1980s, including a metro line to the city, a large shopping centre, a new football stadium for Ajax, and large cinemas and theatres. Just opposite the railway station, one of the most expensive office areas of the Netherlands was built. In fact, the location of the Bijl-mermeer changed from an isolated satellite town into a hot spot (Van Kempen & Wassenberg, 1996). There had been discussions, and trials, about only using the name Amsterdam-Southeast instead of Bijlmermeer. One reason this was not done is that the name Bijlmermeer was too well known. Actually, the name of the first refurbished block was indeed changed. The former block 'Gliphoeve' had so many problems in the mid-1970s that a few years after construction it was emptied, renewed and renamed 'Geldershoofd' and 'Gravestein'.

Drastic renewal

Despite the makeover, the area remained unpopular and the liveability problems were still unsolved. After years of debate, maintenance experiments, adaptations and partial solutions, radical plans were introduced in 1992. A quarter of the area was to be demolished, another quarter sold and the remaining part improved. New types of houses were planned. Besides the physical renewal, socio-economic measures were introduced along with better maintenance to improve liveability. These included job creation, education for adults, stimulation of ethnic entrepreneurship, measures to improve safety, neighbourhood warden schemes, and plans to decrease the uncontrolled public spaces.

A broad evaluation took place in 1999. The question was whether the renewal effort should be intensified. Residents have an important say in these decisions. In 2001 all residents of the remaining blocks were interviewed (Helleman & Wassenberg, 2001). The results were telling: two-thirds were in favour of more demolition, and 60% were in favour of the demolition of their own house. Demolition gives residents the right to choose another dwelling in the Bijlmermeer or in Amsterdam, and they are given compensation for expenses. In 2002 a final plan was accepted, in which an additional 3000 high-rise flats will be demolished and replaced by the same number of dwellings. All the blocks will be demolished, except for two blocks where residents had other preferences. Besides houses, the plans contain measures for more local businesses and amenities, parking facilities, green areas and water (for more about the Bijlmermeer: see Helleman & Wassenberg, 2004).

The aim of the renewal strategy for the Bijlmermeer is that it should function in a normal way on the Amsterdam housing market, instead of being at the very bottom. The image of the area has to change from inside out. The target groups for new houses are satisfied residents who prefer to live in the Bijlmermeer. Often these are former immigrants, who like the area but not high-rise living. While the internal image has improved, the external image is improving too. It is a slow process, and most Dutch people may still have the same negative image; they may even keep it for the rest of their lives. However, the renewal process takes 16 years in total and is now halfway. When enough progress on the internal image has been made, the external image-building can begin.

16.8 Internal and external strategies for image renewal

Large housing estates can actually be renewed, but will their image change as well? Image-building can be done for any neighbourhood, which is good, but this in itself is not sufficient when real problems exist. Changing an image of a problem estate without doing anything else is not an option. In practice, the image of a neighbourhood, and especially a negative one, is hardly treated as a factor. Most strategies neglect image building, and when it is considered, it is often a reaction to unexpected events. However, it is possible to treat image-building, and stigma renewal, as an active programme and as a part of an overall renewal approach. Images of neighbourhoods can be actively promoted, just as in the commercial sector, where all kinds of products are being promoted.

A framework for image renewal strategies

Image-promoting activities can be directed at both the internal and the external participants, as noted earlier. In Section 4 we introduced a framework to position neighbourhoods according to images of the internal and the external participants. In Table 16.4 we fill out this framework with strategies for image renewal. It is interesting to see in which of the four corners of the scheme a neighbourhood is positioned. This makes it useful to differentiate between several image promotion activities. Is image promotion aimed at internal or external participants? Which measures are adequate? Which problems are tackled or focused on? And what are the targets?

Table 16.4 gives an overview of the different roles that image renewal through public relations may have. In both of the opposite corners (1) and (4), image renewal activities can be rather small scale, but for opposite reasons. In corner (1) many neighbourhoods are positioned where people just live their lives, while very problematic areas can be placed in corner (4) where drastic measures are necessary instead of extra promotion of the area. On the con-

Table 16.4 Strategies for image renewal of neighbourhoods

		External image	
		Good	Bad
Internal image	Good	(1) nice neighbourhoods No special strategy is necessary The image is okay P.r. can be small scale	(2) unknown qualified neighbourhoods Image promotion Accent on 'selling advantages of the area' Active involvement of the media Accent on external p.r.
	Bad	(3) unsatisfactory neighbourhoods Visible improvements in the area P.r. directed to inhabitants Show progress Internal p.r.	(4) problematic neighbourhoods Image renewal is following concrete results Priority to intensive integral renewal P.r. can be small scale, awaiting results

trary, inhabitants and outsiders will probably see through this 'window dressing' when real improvements do not materialise. The policy for such an area only can be one of severe intervention. Just some physical renewal, just some better maintenance or just some schooling or work programmes will not be enough. This is not to say that just an image improvement campaign won't make any sense there at all.

Image renewal of unknown qualified neighbourhoods

In the corners (2) and (3) image renewal can be an important part of a renewal process. However, the accent fundamentally differs. In corner (2) are neighbourhoods where inhabitants are rather satisfied, but outsiders do not see that. Image promotion can sell the area to the wider public, making the area itself known as well as the advantages of living there. Making the area known may be the motto. Public relation should be aimed mainly at external parties. Some possible strategic activities for neighbourhoods positioned in this corner are:

- Create new landmarks or renew a central part in the area, promote it as a landmark and use it as a platform for further projects.
- Create major events to gain external attention.
- Consistently give all positive events in an area wider publicity.
- Seek contacts with relevant journalists and get to know them personally. Explain and show them the considerations behind any policy.
- Work on an identity of their own for 'grey and superficial' neighbourhoods.

The last item deserves some explanation, which is called 'branding of neighbourhoods'. This is a marketing tool to clarify a product's identity with the aim of giving it a clear position on the market. The product is the neighbourhood; the marketers are trying to create a characteristic identity, to distinguish it from other areas. There is a discussion going on in the Netherlands on whether a new identity can be created from the top down by using marketing techniques. Reinders (forthcoming), after Raban (1974), differentiates between the 'hard' city as developed by architects, planners and politicians and the 'soft' city as experienced years later by the users, who are often the inhabitants. The large-scale areas, which this paper is all about, experience big differences between hard and soft, between the nice planning ideals and the blunt truth that emerges afterwards.

Image renewal of unsatisfactory neighbourhoods

In corner (3) the public image is reasonable, though the inhabitants themselves voice complaints. In a situation like this, a start should be made on improving the liveability situation. Often minor improvements can help. Image promotion should emphasise the present inhabitants, to give a better picture of the positive things that are taking place in the area, and to show that actual improvements are being made. External promotion could be small in scale. Some possible strategic activities for these neighbourhoods are the following:

- Create positive events. Organise them or stimulate groups to make them to happen. Budgets for a sporting tournament, a neighbourhood party, a barbecue, are peanuts compared to costly renewal or maintenance expenses.
- Tackle the inconveniences; people do not complain for no reason.
- Consistently give all positive events in an area local publicity.
- Intensify contacts with relevant journalists and get to know them personally. Explain and show them the considerations behind any policy. Show them both good things and bad.
- Cherish the committed residents in the area, who endure the problems. Protect them and help them, for example, by taking steps against notorious troublemakers. Be clear about values and rules.
- Support positive initiatives and make these known to all inhabitants, including the potential leavers.

Long process

Even when the actual situation is being improved, a stigma can last for many years, maybe even a lifetime. Moreover, it takes a long time to improve a stigma once set, if possible at all. Buys (1997) and Dean and Hastings (2000) point out the difficulty of improving the perceived image of a stigmatised area. Along with that, they note the difficulty of improving the neighbourhood hierarchy position, even when a large renewal programme is taking place. However, there are some more optimistic reports. The case of the Bijlmermeer shows that first the internal and later on the external image are changing, but it is a slow and long-lasting process. In a Danish evaluation of the renewal of 500 deprived estates, 55% of the estates found that problems of a bad reputation were reduced, while only a few have deteriorated (Skifter Andersen, 2003). However, this research was conducted only shortly after the actual renewal activities. It would be good to explore effects in the longer term. The conclusion might be that image renewal takes a long time, and sometimes it is easier to change the area itself than to change its image. Image-promoting can be a way to make progress, at least to some extent, in this complicated process.

16.9 Conclusions

Image-building and stigmatising of neighbourhoods do not get much explicit attention in the literature. This is remarkable, because in case studies concerning problematic housing estates, the image factor always is mentioned in connection with the process of decay. A stigma, defined as a bad image or reputation, is both a result and a cause for further decay. It is determined by a series of related factors that often occur in a certain sequence.

Images differ per person or groups of persons. Image-building can refer to internal or external images. Image building is a mental process for both internal and external groups. A stigma can be associated with the appearance of an area, or simply with its name. Neighbourhood types are associated with status; this is accompanied by an image and a position in the personal housing or neighbourhood hierarchy. It is interesting that the most frequently reviewed and well – thought-out large housing estates are probably the areas with the worst images.

Renewal of the image of a problematic neighbourhood is only possible if tackled along with actual improvements. This means a combination of physical, environmental, social, economic and organisational measures, according to the local circumstances. Images of neighbourhoods can be actively promoted, just like a commercial product. Image promotion is one of the possible measures which are seldom used in renewal processes. It depends on local circumstances which strategy should be the best, but strategies should be aimed at the existing internal and external images. In areas where the external image exceeds the internal image and inhabitants complain about unsatisfactory living conditions, image promotion may be best directed to internal participants to convince them the situation really is improving. In neighbourhoods that are hardly known by outsiders, public relations could be directed to external participants, to promote the area and to counterbalance prejudices. It is important to analyse first in which local situation a neighbourhood is seen by internal and external actors.

Image promotion may be an important strategy, but the actual situation will be more important for both the internal participants like the inhabitants and the external participants like possible incomers. Changing the stigma of large housing estates is a process that takes a very long time, as shown by the case of the Amsterdam Bijlmermeer. It may be easier to change the whole neighbourhood than to change its image, at least its external image. It takes a long time to improve a stigma once set. Despite these limitations, it is very useful to work on a stigma and to give active image promotion explicit attention in any renewal process.

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17 Reflections on Part III

This part described the decline and fall of some of the large housing estates. All across Europe, problems in large housing estates increased during the late 1970s and the 1980s, when housing construction was high, the most urgent housing shortages had been solved, suburbanization and mobility increased, more alternative choices became available for the urban population, and weaker groups in society ended up in particular estates. Many large housing estates – and especially high-rise housing – did not prove to be the glorious housing solution that many had expected. To summarize: problems accumulated and were not solved by the early solutions, and liveability did not improve (not safe, not whole, not clean); thus the satisfaction of residents remained low, renting problems continued, and the area was repeatedly stigmatized. The problems increased during the 1980s and proved to be very persistent during the 1990s. The most deprived areas can be characterized by:

- wicked problems, which are not easy to solve;
- multiple problems, with no single solution;
- related problems, pushing each other into further decay;
- concentrated problems, in both place and time;
- massive problems, as a result of the concentration in particular areas and among particular residents.

Furthermore, when a deprived estate is large scale, the volume of the problems will also be large scale, which makes solutions even harder to find.

The Bijlmermeer experience illustrates this. In Part II, the Amsterdam Bijlmermeer area was considered one of the most enlightened, modern and future-oriented neighbourhoods ever built in the Netherlands. In this part of the book, the Bijlmermeer high-rise area is an example of a sink estate, where all the problems mentioned in the previous part came together on a scale never before seen in the country. The physical characteristics were poor (too many dwellings of a not wanted type at a not wanted location), as were the social characteristics (the intended middle-class families refused to come or to stay in the Bijlmermeer and were increasingly replaced by multiple-problem households, or by no households at all) and the external circumstances (attractive alternative housing nearby).

Partial measures produce partial outcomes

Problems increased during the 1980s, and were very persistent during the 1990s. Various solutions were tried, including physical improvements and a range of social, economic and other measures. These measures had varying results, as successes were also dependent on external circumstances. Moreover, partial solutions succeeded in bringing about only partial improvements, and on the scale of the whole estate positive effects were hardly or not at all noticeable. Most measures can be characterized as:

- temporary, and set up as separate projects with a beginning and an end;
- subsidized, by external (government) financing;

- incidental, not connected to other initiatives;
- initiated per sector, like education, care, crime prevention, housing, language, employment;
- fragmented, in a coincidental neighbourhood, block or street;
- implemented per sector.

The sector approach is illustrated by Kwekkeboom (2002, p. 83), who spoke about the Bijlmermeer high-rise renewal programme: "From the inception it was clear that stimulating participation in labour, schooling and social activities had to be an integral part of the revitalisation operation. However, (…) it very quickly became clear that this task would be a good deal more difficult than spatial renewal, even if this was for the simple reason that the sparkplugs for the revitalisation (the city, the district council and the housing association) had little command of this field. In many cases very different parties had to be moved to action. Furthermore, the world of labour and schooling, with its grant regulations and institutions, is extremely compartmentalised."

In other words, it is far more difficult to implement an integrated policy than traditional sector operations. However, sink estates will not improve without such an integrated approach. This will be the focus of part IV.

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Part IV Integrated approach: recovering estates

Introduction to Part IV: towards integrated strategies

The switch from specific measures to integrated strategies is presented in this part of the book. The support for drastic solutions grew in the early 1990s. It was obvious that disadvantaged areas needed a combination of physical, environmental, social and economic measures. This would eventually lead to the integrated approaches that are now common in most deprived areas. A sustainable approach is now developing in urban renewal.

Part III ended with the deplorable situation in the Bijlmermeer and the failure of the partial and experimental measures because each measure on its own could not turn the tide. The size of the area and the scale of the problems were simply too large. During the late 1980s, it became clear that the situation had not improved. The combination of high unemployment rates, high crime rates, a derelict appearance, a poor image, a high incidence of truancy and drug abuse among youth, the numerous ethnic minorities and the large number of single-parent families did not make the Bijlmermeer a popular area. It was certainly not well regarded by outsiders. The Bijlmermeer had just not been able to gain a respectable position in Amsterdam's regional housing market. In addition, the housing association had run up so much debt that it was close to bankruptcy – as was the municipality of Amsterdam, as guarantor.

It was obvious that a more structural intervention was needed in the Bijlmermeer. A new and totally different policy was announced in 1990. In the next chapter, we will continue with the Bijlmermeer experiences. We will look what the structural and integrated approach in the area has brought.

The most visible result is the total change of appearance. Anyone who has not visited the area in the last 15 years would be shocked. The Bijlmermeer used to be an entirely high-rise district, but over half of the high-rises have disappeared, the most drastic solution possible. In many parts only high-rise blocks are visible in the background; the rest have been demolished and replaced by mostly low-rise housing. Chapter 19 analyses the decision-making process behind this major intervention. The drastic demolition is a major part of the integrated approach, without stating that demolition on such a scale should always be part of an integrated approach. Demolition was considered the ultimate solution when all other options had been tried for many years. The chapter also shows that the scale of the demolition has gradually increased.

Chapter 20 widens the scope. The renewal of the Bijlmermeer was not an isolated renewal. Many areas in the Netherlands are being or have been renewed, but not or not nearly on the same scale as in the Bijlmermeer. The local Bijlmermeer policies were dependent on national renewal pol-

Box 1 International experiences stimulate structural solutions

Demolition in Les Minguettes, Lyon (France).

The Bijlmermeer was not the only newly built problem estate, but is was by far the largest in the country. The scale and the multitude of problems asked for comparisons with international experiences. In 1984, a much talked about debate was organized by TU Delft, called ‘Post-war public housing in trouble’ (see: Groetelaers *et al.*, 1984; Prak & Priemus, 1985), which provided an international background. There were international experiences with problems and with solutions.

A radical solution was the demolition of tower blocks. The case of Pruitt-Igoe in St Louis (see Chapter 7) received coverage (but this was considered ‘typically American’, so it was less transferable to other areas). However, the blowing up of Les Minguettes, a Lyon suburb, in 1987 was more comparable with the Dutch housing estates. In France, only a couple of blocks of flats were demolished in the 1980s and 1990s – only in the 2000s would demolition grow in importance in bringing about mixed communities – but the attention of the Dutch media had been caught. These international experiences stimulated the thinking about structural solutions for the Bijlmermeer.

icies, but as we will state in this chapter, the relationship was reciprocal. The national policy has influenced the developments in the Bijlmermeer, but probably more than any other area, the Bijlmermeer was a forerunner of national policies. What has happened, and is happening, in the Bijlmermeer is of interest to the rest of the country.

In Chapter 21 some ingredients for an integrated approach are presented, using the experiences gained from the Bijlmermeer. These ingredients are intended to change the ‘one-size-fits-all’ character of large housing estates.

Part IV ends with Chapter 22 on sustainable urban renewal, defined as an approach that leads to a sustainable area, that is, an area that functions well in physical, social, economic and ecological terms, and has enough internal vitality and flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances, uses and preferences. It should be clear that the estates that were in decline and fall, did not have a high degree of sustainability.

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18 Urban renewal in the Bijlmermeer: changing strategies

18.1 'The Bijlmermeer problem' is persistent

In the prelude to the integrative renewal of the 1990s, the Task Force on the Future of the Bijlmermeer (Werkgroep Toekomst Bijlmermeer, 1990, p. 19) formulated what they called 'the Bijlmermeer problem' (in an own summarized translation): "Despite all the measures taken, the Bijlmermeer did not get a stable position on the housing market. The area is for many a temporary refuge, while they wait for something better. The area is inhabited by laggards and people without choice, people often in a poor position in society. However, just a concentration of deprivation is not a reason to call the Bijlmer a problem area; instead, it is a challenge to solve social and environmental problems on the spot. A larger problem is that most people do not want to live here. They are not interested in the area, social cohesion is lacking, involvement in the own situation is lacking and there is no social control; all of this results in a poor quality of life."

According to the Task Force, the multiple problems are caused by several elements: the permanent lack of people who prefer the high-rise environment, the lack of a stable social cohesion, a large deprived population, a poor quality of life and safety, and high maintenance costs.

18.2 1990: A radical change of plans

The previous plan proposed in 1987 to accept long-term losses on the intensive management of the Bijlmermeer was dismissed. Instead, a Task Force Group was installed to propose alternatives that were to result in a more structural solution. In January 1990, the Task Force Group published a trailblazing report: *De Bijlmer blijft, veranderen* ('The Bijlmermeer will stay, but has to change'). The Task Force in fact made a similar analysis to the one in 1987, but came to totally different conclusions. It stated that the problems were structural and manifold, that most people do not choose the area for positive reasons, and that the financial situation was continuously worsening.

Their proposal was spectacular. There should indeed be more differentiation, first in the built environment. The poor position on the housing market should not be accepted (as the 1987 plan had), and the physical structure of the Bijlmermeer had to change radically. The proposal was that:

- a quarter of the high-rise dwellings should be sold and upgraded for new tenants with higher incomes (called repositioning);
- a quarter should be demolished and replaced with other, more popular housing types;
- the remainder should be refurbished for people with modest incomes.

Demolition was once again in the picture. In 1983, public opinion had led to the scrapping of the demolition plans. In 1987, local politicians had chosen intensive management and accepted the short-stay perspectives of the inhabitants who considered the Bijlmermeer their second choice. Now, in 1990, the proposal was to demolish a quarter of the high-rise housing. Chapter 19 elaborates on the process behind the decision making on demolition.

The reaction to these far-reaching plans was rather lukewarm. There were no major protests, probably because of the negative results of the measures up to then. The problems had not only persisted but also worsened, even though measures had been implemented for a series of years, but without the results that were hoped for.

An integrated plan

The 1990 Task Force Report was primarily focused on the physical renewal of Bijlmermeer. New insights were stated, recognizing that the Bijlmermeer's physical layout was a fundamental mistake in urban design: it was too massive, contained too much high-rise and had too little differentiation. The goal of the new operation was to give the Bijlmermeer a better position in the housing market. Improvements in the residential environment were to encourage the inhabitants to stay there while also attracting newcomers. More differentiation was needed. This would be possible only if the layout of the area underwent a drastic transformation.

The new ideas were elaborated into an official plan, passed in 1992, called the *Eerste Saneringsaanvraag* ('First Restructuring Request'). The whole Bijlmermeer was originally built according to one blueprint drawn up in 1965, but it was realized that the renewal plan should not be such a blueprint, and moreover, should start at once. Consequently, a start was made based on a plan with a limited scope.

The 1992 First Restructuring Plan consists of three integrated programmes or 'pillars': physical transformation, socioeconomic measures and the improvement of liveability. The physical differentiation was the most obvious, but the plans paid more attention to the accompanying socioeconomic measures: the second programme. These measures were aimed at the creation of more employment and at the improvement of the low educational level. The emphasis on this second pillar was according to developments on the national scale. The social pillar in the Bijlmermeer could anticipate and intensify the job and education programmes that had started during the 1980s.

The third programme was the improvement of liveability. In the original renewal plans (those of 1990), the improvement of liveability had not received much emphasis. However, the surveys had shown that these issues were the most problematic according to the residents. A better management should do something about safety, vandalism and pollution. In the same period, the police service was reorganized on a national and a regional level, resulting in a greater police presence in problematic areas such as the Bijlmermeer.

Decisions were reached on these major interventions by the middle of 1994. In total, the proposed measures would cost €350 million, which comes to about €25,000 per dwelling. This sum was financed by the city of Amsterdam and the public Central Housing Fund (Centraal Fonds Volkshuisvesting; CFV). This CFV can support housing associations that are in trouble and can finance this support by using the obligatory contributions from all Dutch housing associations. Thus, neither Nieuw Amsterdam (which was in debt) nor the state paid the bill. Later on, the costs would increase to €450 m, on a total investment of €1.6 billion, non-housing costs not included (Kwekkeboom, 2002).

Strikingly, the dwellings themselves were often considered strong points by the residents and managers alike, as they are among the city's largest social-rented dwellings. Because of the housing allowance system, these dwellings remained accessible to many low-income households.

A quick start

The ideas for the drastic renewal date from 1990, they were elaborated in the report *Kiezen en Beginnen* ('Choose and Start') and the official First Restructuring Plan was passed in July 1992 (Nieuw Amsterdam, 1992). The plan was launched right away, without losing time by first making a time-wasting master plan. Moreover, the Bijlmermeer was considered the result of one big master plan, and a similar operating procedure was not wanted. The whole renewal was expected to take about 10 years.

Six months later, the country was shocked by an airplane crash in the centre of the Bijlmermeer (see Chapter 5); this disaster speeded up the process. In 1995, the Second Restructuring Plan was started (Nieuw Amsterdam, 1995), building on the first phase and elaborating some more background. At the start in 1992, three main goals were set:

- To improve the housing market position of the Bijlmermeer (physical renewal);
- To improve the labour market participation (socioeconomic renewal, labour, education);
- To improve daily life (a combination of better management, liveability, 'safe, whole and clean', business and cultural facilities).

In addition:

- The housing association Nieuw Amsterdam should be financially sound.

Table 18.1 Key components in the integrated approach in the Bijlmermeer, 1990-2012

1990	Task Force report
1992, July	First Restructuring Plan
1992, October	Airplane crash
1995	Second Restructuring Plan
1995	First block is demolished First block is renovated First 300 low-rise family houses: start building
1999	Evaluation so far; focusing on failing market perspectives
2000	State of the art at the turn of the millennium: -Four blocks are demolished (1,500 dwellings) -1,300 new dwellings are built -1,400 dwellings are refurbished -Six economic and social facilities are built
2001	Final Restructuring Plan, on base of residents consultation; results in doubling of demolition
2009	In April the 3,600th new dwelling is finished; half way the set task
2010	Last demolition. One block is not yet decided on
2010	City of Amsterdam reconsiders all renewal projects. Bijlmermeer can continue, but slows down

Source: Ouwehand (1999); PVB (2011)

18.3 Implementation of the Restructuring Plans, 1992-2012

Once the restructuring plans were approved in 1992, implementation could begin. Table 18.1 shows the key developments in the Bijlmermeer renewal process, while Table 18.2 shows the results of the physical renewal of housing and services. It was decided to start simultaneously with some major and obvious activities: one block was being demolished, another refurbished, and new single-family houses were built on a vacant plot. A police station and a church-cum-meeting centre were built at central locations in the Bijlmermeer, so that they would not be overlooked by the residents.

Thus, in the mid-1990s the first actual changes became visible. The first blocks slated for demolition led a few people to protest, but there was less resistance to later demolitions. There is a social plan in place for residents in blocks that are to be demolished or refurbished, including a relocation subsidy and a first choice preference for other housing in or outside the area. In the first four blocks that were demolished, 24% of the residents choose another high-rise dwelling, 15% a newly built dwelling, 25% elsewhere in the Amsterdam-Southeast district, and 36% somewhere else in the city of Amsterdam (Ouwehand, 1999, p. 15). When more new or refurbished alternatives were offered in later years, the share of residents who stayed in Amsterdam-Southeast increased to three quarters (PVB, 2008).

In 1999, the process of renewal was half completed; both realized efforts and planned tasks included. An evaluation showed that despite the results, there would not be enough market demand for all 8000 refurbished high-rise dwellings: the final result after completion of the original programme (Ouwehand, 1999). In 2001, the Final Restructuring Plan was made for the other half of the Bijlmermeer (the part that was not included in the halfway evaluation), after consulting all residents in the remaining half of the Bijlmermeer, the part for which no plans had been made, let alone implemented. As a result, the amount of demolition was more than doubled (see Chapter 14).

Box 18.1 The Bijlmer museum

The Bijlmer museum is an ensemble of six high-rise blocks in the south-east of the area. Here, the principles behind the idealistic design have been maintained, and so far five blocks have been refurbished. Part of one of these blocks (Grubbehoeve) has been sold to its tenants: *Koop je eigen Bijlmer* ('Buy your own Bijlmer'), as it is called. The Bijlmer museum is a response to the efforts of active residents who support the original ideas of the Bijlmermeer (the 'Bijlmer believers'), and preserves a part of the area as a cultural heritage. It is a real museum that can be visited (www.bijlmermuseum.nl).

Anna Dasovic recently photographed the idealistic design principles (Dasovic, 2011). She shows the vertical city, the blocks amidst the green spaces, the metro line flying high above; it's an almost futuristic view. These photos show what the designer Siegfried Nassuth and his team had in mind in the 1960s. The tiny human beings and the large blocks of flats, people playing football or tennis, a Tiger Woods-to-be practising, people strolling around. Within this part of the Bijlmer museum is the monument commemorating the El Al crash in 1992, including the 'tree that witnessed the disaster'. The Bijlmer museum shows the utopic plan as a living museum.

In the following years, the focus in the Bijlmermeer was on implementing the plans. A part of the Bijlmermeer has not been demolished, but improved according to the original ideas; this part is now known as the 'Bijlmer museum'. It contains the two blocks where the airplane crashed in 1992 (Kruitberg and Groeneveen; see Chapter 5); the remaining parts have been refurbished.

In addition to flats and houses, many other physical improvements have been made. Public spaces have been improved, the largest project being the renovation of the Bijlmer Park. This was accompanied by protests, as fully grown trees had to be felled; however, the park is now more open, which improves feelings of security. Twenty-four art projects have been realized in the public space, including wall paintings, monuments, sculptures and statues. A total of 42 economic and social facilities of a wide variety have been built in newly realized or renovated flats and parking garages. Nine social service facilities have been completed, such as two assisted-living centres, and housing projects for Chinese and Surinamese elderly persons.

Economic crisis causes delay

In 2009, the effects of the economic crisis became evident in the Bijlmermeer and in the rest of Amsterdam. The municipality of Amsterdam ordered a 'building stop' in 2010 and reconsidered all renewal projects. About half of all projects were postponed, but the renewal of the Bijlmermeer was continued, as a 'necessary and inevitable project', as it was called. The housing associations made a similar calculation. The market demand is leading, and this has

Table 18.2 Results of physical renewal Bijlmermeer, 1990-2012

At the start of the renewal (1990)	13,000 dwellings*	- in 31 blocks - 100% social rented - 100% high-rise
Situation in 2012		
Housing	5,800 refurbished	-11 blocks fully -5 blocks partial**
	7,000 demolished	-14 blocks fully -8 blocks partial
	750 repositioned	-250 sold; 480 for student housing; for supervised housing; ateliers
	5,000 newly built	-2,500 new family housing -2,500 new low-rise and high-rise flats
		-1,500 in social sector -3,450 in market sector
Economic and social facilities	42 projects in a wide variety: church, police station, kindergarten, offices, ateliers, schools, mosque, theatre, etc.	
Social services	9 projects, such as assisted living centers for elderly or handicapped	
Art	24 projects in public spaces	
Roads	3 kilometre of elevated dike roads are lowered to street level	
Parking garages	10 (of 31) demolished; 8 in the planning	

*12.500 dwellings in 30 blocks originally owned by housing association Nieuw Amsterdam, plus 500 in the remaining (31st) block of another housing association.
The future of the last block, Kleiburg, is uncertain; it is calculated here among 'refurbished'.
All figures are rounded up.
** 16 (of 31) blocks with originally 6,430 dwellings are or have been refurbished (Kleiburg included).11 of these have ended with the same amount, or some with more dwellings, after refurbishment. Of 5 blocks, a part has been refurbished.

Source: PVB (2011)

fallen dramatically. The process of renewal should be finished, but at a much slower speed.

The consequences are that fewer projects have been developed, the duration of the renewal process has been prolonged, there are a couple of areas of wasteland, temporary functions are being stimulated, and the decision on what to do with the last remaining block has been postponed. A dilapidated shopping centre (Kraaiennest) is being rebuilt. The process will not be completed before 2016, when a start will be made on building the last dwellings while at the start of the process in 1992 it was calculated that 10 years would be enough time to complete the renewal process. However, the present economic conditions make the year 2016 seem overly optimistic, but further delay is projected yet.

The last efforts: Kleiburg

All but one of the original 31 high-rise blocks have been demolished or refurbished (see Table 18.2). The one remaining is Kleiburg. This was originally one of the better blocks in the Bijlmermeer, so interventions were never very urgent. At first, in the year 2000, it was decided to refurbish Kleiburg to a high level, to make it a showcase of new possibilities and new optimism. A brand-new plan and scale model were made, but there were no commercial investors to support it and the plans were cancelled. Having been one of the best blocks in the Bijlmermeer, it is now the last one to be dealt with. Both demolition and refurbishment are still options. It is empty at present; all tenants

Box 18.2 'Do-it-yourself houses'

In 2004, the city of Rotterdam offered a block of old houses for €1, with the only restriction being that the new householders would refurbish them. The houses were characteristic old style, early 20th century, and located in a deprived area in Rotterdam-West. It turned out to be an unexpected success. Thirty households together refurbished their housing units, with contractors doing the major works. Since then, Rotterdam has repeated this model a couple of times. In late 2011, some 200 houses were sold this way, during the later years at about a third of the market value. The municipality, or sometimes a local housing association, buys the premises, which are often a deplorable state, from private owners. They do not refurbish the purchases themselves, which would be very costly and not profitable to sell in the market, but turn them into 'klushuizen'. Buyers of these do-it-yourself houses are obliged to refurbish their new house within a certain time period, must prove that they have sufficient money for the renovation, receive free support from architects and process managers, and have to live there for at least three years (to prevent speculation) and collaborate with their do-it-yourself neighbours.

In 2011, the project received the Eurocities Innovation Award. The chair of the jury: "The winner demonstrates the capacity of local authorities to design and implement urban regeneration initiatives responding directly to the needs of the citizens. By planning for people we are creating more liveable cities."

The mayor of Rotterdam, Aboutaleb: "The klushuizen show that citizens are willing to contribute actively to the development of their neighbourhood. Local governments should trust them."

The new residents invest their energy, time, effort and money in their new property, and they involve themselves with their new neighbourhood. Most are well-educated, middle-class people, mostly 26-40 years old, and one third of them did not previously live in the city. Other cities were rather reluctant to copy the scheme, but now initiatives have been started in other cities, including Arnhem, Amsterdam and The Hague.

More at: www.klushuizen.nl; www.rotterdam.nl/klushuizen; www.eurocities2011.eu.

have been evicted. The housing association, which does not want to invest in the block, has sold the block for the symbolic sum of €1 to a consortium called 'The Flat', on the condition that it gets enough people to adopt the 350 dwellings according to the concept of *klushuizen* ('do-it-yourself refurbishment'), an initiative that has been very successful in Rotterdam. If it is a success, the block will remain part of the Bijlmer museum. Do-it-yourself refurbishment is not only a financial alternative, but also a response to an increasing demand from at least some groups of people to provide their own housing.

Box 18.3 Neighbouring estate: Heesterveld

Heesterveld is a low-rise apartment block with 330 dwellings next to the Bijlmermeer high-rises and Hoptille. Like Hoptille, it was built in the 1980s as a reaction to the nearby high-rises. From the start it has been a problematic estate, but it has not been part of the renewal operation. Problems, images and operations have all been rather weak over the years. In 2008, a residents' survey was carried out, and new plans were proposed. As a matter of fact, this was my last research project in the Bijlmermeer; I started in nearby Hoptille, have been active in most high-rise blocks in between, and finished in Heesterveld.

The response to the survey was very high (86%). The residents were most positive about the location in Amsterdam-Southeast, the closeness of the many amenities and the atmosphere of the wider (Bijlmermeer) area. Grievances were about all kinds of liveability issues and the poor housing quality. The support for complete demolition and rehousing was great: 80% supported demolition, and 66% even supported the demolition of their own homes. Rehousing of the residents started soon after. Most residents have been rehoused, but the plans have now been changed. Because of the economic circumstances, demolition has been postponed and the dwellings are temporarily rented to students and artists.

18.4 Monitoring progress

The 'Bijlmermonitor' was established to monitor developments and progress. It has reported every two years since 1997. The most recent report was issued in 2010 (Terpstra *et al.*, 2010). The Bijlmermonitor focuses not on the progress of physical renewal (like demolitions and new constructions), but on the social and economic effects. According to the researchers, the long succession of years is unique in urban renewal practice, and the longitudinal results provide useful information that other areas do not have (De Kleuver & Van Soomeren, 2009). Two goals for this monitor were set:

- To ensure that life in the Bijlmermeer is just as good as it is in the rest of Amsterdam in 2016.
- To ensure that the Nieuw Amsterdam housing association is debt-free in 2016.

Table 18.3 Progress in the renewal of the Bijlmermeer, according to the 2010 Bijlmermonitor

Goals	On scheme	Progress, but not on schedule	No progress or decline
Goal 1: Quality of living			
Theme: Turnover and image			
Duration of housing		X	
People moving out	X		
Plans to move	X		
People on waiting list	X		
Image in the press			X
Theme: Housing and environment			
Opinion about neighbourhood	X		
Satisfaction with the dwelling		X	
Satisfaction with the physical environment	X		
Satisfaction with the social environment		X	
Commitment to public spaces		X	
Change to road infrastructure	X		
Theme: Safety			
Crime	X		
Youth crime	X		
Feelings of security		X	
Pollution and vandalism	X		
Drugs-related nuisance			
Theme: Work and income			
Unemployment	X		
Distance to labour market			X
Income		X	
Theme: Education			
School dropout	X		
Primary-school test scores			X
Completion of secondary school	X		
Goal 2: Stable financial exploitation			
Theme: Tenant satisfaction			
Housing satisfaction	X		
Theme: Financial exploitation			
Turnover rate	X		
Vacant dwellings, not yet renovated	X		
Vacant dwellings, new or renovated			X

Source: Terpstra *et al.* (2010)

The goals are subdivided into 26 subthemes and particular issues. Progress will be measured every two years, and the difference from Amsterdam's average will be calculated. The renewal will be considered successful when the situation improves and the difference between it and the city diminishes.

Table 18.3 shows the progress of the 26 issues towards the goals set in 2010. Fifteen of the 26 issues are 'on scheme', as it is called. This is encouraging. Among these are figures on housing satisfaction and turnover rates, as well as on crime and pollution; these were always at the top of the list of problems according to residents in the 1980s and 1990s (see Part III).

Seven other issues have improved, but less than the city's average. More worrying are the last four issues, which are not improving. The first is the image as projected by newspapers. A content analysis shows that, despite a minor improvement, the emphasis still is on articles that have a negative connotation. Chapter 16 showed how hard it is to change a stigma, once set.

A second worry is the unemployed people who are difficult to place in work. There are relatively more hard-to-employ people in the Bijlmermeer than in other areas. Another worry is education. Although more children now attend school, and finish it, test scores remain significantly lower than elsewhere. These two issues are very difficult to resolve, and the question can be raised whether a fine-tuned sector approach would not be better for it, along with and as part of the integrated approach. The last negative issue are vacancies in the new or refurbished housing. However, the figures are low (only 2%), and can be explained, according to the housing association, by the fact that a number of units have been reserved for residents in a rehousing scheme.

The overall conclusion, according to the Bijlmermonitor, is that there is clear progress, but that by far not all goals have yet been achieved. Most attention is needed for the socioeconomic goals, while it is remarkable that the perception and the image lag behind.

18.5 A comparable approach in Ballymun, Dublin, Ireland

The Ballymun estate in Dublin is in many respects comparable with the Bijlmermeer. Both are (or were) the most well-known high-rise districts in their respective countries, both were designed in the 1960s, both are situated outside town, both were fully social-rented housing and both were ultra-modern when constructed, having lifts, central heating and large green spaces between the blocks. The information in this section originates from Power (1997), Ballymun Regeneration Ltd and site visit interviews (2006).

The history of the two neighbourhoods is also remarkably comparable. Ballymun comprised 2,800 flats in seven 15-storey towers, nineteen 8-storey blocks, ten 4-storey walk-ups and 400 single-family houses. In the 1970s, 1,400 single-family houses were added; these rental houses were later sold. From the beginning, the management was problematic. The turnover rate reached crisis proportions of over 40% in 1985. People who moved there were poor, unemployed and non-married households.

The Dublin Corporation changed its management approach in 1984 and stimulated tenant involvement. A local office was opened to work directly with the tenants, who had an active role in screening new tenants. A major refurbishment programme was announced in 1988 at a time when 175 flats on the estate were empty (6%). The measures were aimed at restoring technical failures (concrete, waterproofing), security (entrances, fencing, surroundings) and the visible appearance of the blocks. This first phase involved about 10% of the estate; after some delay, it took place in 1991-93. Social measures accompanied the physical refurbishment. The unemployment rate at Ballymun was 60% in the late 1980s, and most people had been unemployed for

Photo left: In Ballymun (Dublin), almost all of the 36 high-rise blocks were demolished. Photo right: They have been replaced by single-family houses.

over two years. A Job Centre was opened in 1987 to help people find a job. A credit union was opened by the residents; this is a member-based cooperative development that works on a voluntary basis as a common bank, and also trains people in budgeting (Power, 1997).

In 1993, an overall evaluation showed that the operation had so far been a success in terms of enhancing security, but had had only a limited impact on structural and design deficiencies. Further refurbishment would cost up to €43,000 per dwelling. In 1994, the Dublin Corporation responded to the report by proposing the demolition of 560 units in six tower blocks. This again started the debate about demolition. The government intervened as a partner in 1997 and set aside €230 million for the regeneration of Ballymun. The plan now included the demolition of all 15- and 8-storey blocks (26 blocks in total). The Dublin Corporation formed a company, Ballymun Regeneration Ltd, to work with the community on a master plan, which was presented in 1998. The aims and objectives were welcomed by the local community, by central government and by the Dublin Corporation. Implementation began, starting with the building of new houses; the first were delivered in October 2001. The residents worked closely with the architects designing them.

The aim is to demolish all 36 blocks (2,800 high-rise flats). By 2012, about 30 had been demolished. All houses have been replaced by the same number of new social-rented dwellings, mainly single-family houses. Mixed tenure within Ballymun is stated to be fundamental to achieving the economic and social goals of the regeneration project. The aim was to have 60% private housing and 40% rented housing at the end of the programme, but the economic crisis has made progress on this very hard. Private house building has stopped, vacant plots remain unused, and many units remain unsold and unoccupied. The 'buy-backs' equal more or less the new sales. Since 2007, the level of owner occupancy has been stable at about 26%, while in the whole of Ireland about three quarters own their house. The project was scheduled to finish in 2012, but a new finishing date has not been set. Conditions for sale have been improved; single-family houses can be bought on attractive terms, with discounts on the market price of up to 45%, depending on how long they have lived in the area. A new rent-to-buy scheme has been introduced as an alternative pathway to home ownership. Tenants can rent for a period of up to three years, and then transfer to a mortgage. In the first year, 90 tenants joined the scheme. These developments will be further explored.

In addition to new housing, many other measures have been realized. The area is being made economically sustainable through the construction of a traditional high street, with retail and commercial services. In the last decade, a new civic centre has been opened, as have arts, sports and leisure centres, and a new park with recreation facilities. People are helped with jobs, education, debt, alcohol problems and bringing up their children. A newsletter appears regularly.

Many individuals and voluntary and community organizations are involved in the regeneration process. Although there are still anti-social problems, and despite the distorted tenure mix, many people want to continue living in Ballymun, which will ensure that the new town will continue to contain all the facilities and programmes that are needed (more info on: Ballymun Regeneration Ltd, www.brl.ie).

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19 Demolition in the Bijlmermeer: lessons from transforming a large housing estate

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19.1 Introduction

Since the Second World War, urban policy in the Netherlands, as well as in many other countries, has been dominated by housing policy, and housing policy has been dominated by the need to address chronic housing shortages. Creating homes was a top priority for any post-war government until the 1980s. Demolition was only considered for reasons of urban reconstruction or to eradicate old derelict slums, and to replace those by modern housing.

The Bijlmermeer high-rise district is the largest demolition and urban renewal area in the country, where 7,000 dwellings are being demolished. This paper focuses on this large-scale demolition process and elaborates on the several periods, processes and motives behind such a drastic decision. The changing reactions of decision-makers, the media, owners and residents are portrayed as these evolved over time. In some other areas large protests arose against the demolition of rented social housing, but in the Bijlmermeer the majority of the population supports these interventions.

The objective of this paper is to analyse the process of demolition in the Bijlmermeer area in depth, and to explain why and how such drastic policies could be decided. Insight is provided into the specific context preceding the demolition of a huge part of the estate, making this case emblematic of the possible destiny of many other large housing estates.

Demolition is controversial for dwellings that are not deteriorating hovels or structurally unsound. A range of motives for demolition exists, and is elaborated by many authors according to several points of view. These could be reasons (in random order) of oversupply, economic profitability, segregation, affordable housing, image, re-differentiation, social mix, safety, decay, energy reduction, deprivation or displacement. Or it can be a mix of these. The specific and most dominant motives in the Bijlmermeer area will be explored.

Before discussing the Bijlmermeer process, first some background and reasons for demolition are provided. This is followed by data showing that the Bijlmermeer housing stock fits into high demolition rates, which are the highest among Dutch rented multifamily social housing built in the post-war decades.

19.2 Motives for demolition

Several reasons exist to demolish housing as evidenced in the literature and in practice. Demolition for other than purely physical reasons has been taboo in many countries, and often still is. Only recently, and not in all countries, demolition is an option in policy debates (Belmessous *et al.,* 2005). Six groups of motives can be distinguished and are discussed below.

Demolition for physical reasons, due to wind and water ingress, is an obvious motive. Many houses built in the late 1800s and early 1900s had deteriorated into hovels after the Second World War, were technically deficient, of poor quality, and without any amenities and comfort. Refurbishment of those deteriorated houses was not an issue in the 1950s and 1960s. Demolition in these areas was part of an overall urban redevelopment strategy, in which old shanties were replaced by new road systems, large-scale office developments, modern shopping malls and high-rise blocks. New areas were built in what were then the city outskirts. These modernistic suburbs have become the renewal areas of today. Physical decay still is a primary motive, and as the overall average age of the housing stock gradually is rising, it is expected to continue in the future. One particular aspect, which has gained attention in more recent years, is the energy inefficiency of dwellings. The fabric of the post-war built housing stock has been identified as particularly poor (Power, 2008; Thomsen & Van der Flier, 2009).

The second motive is the supply and demand situation in the regional housing market. Demolition can be an option in low- as well as in high-demand housing markets. In low-demand areas the surplus of housing will appear in the least attractive dwellings and neighbourhoods. Most striking is the situation in shrinking post-industrial cities, e.g. Detroit (Michigan) as well as in eastern Germany where the mass migration to the West created 1 million voids in the east (Oswalt & Rienits, 2006; Knorr-Siedow, 2008). In regions with oversupply people tend to cluster in the more popular areas. Cameron (2006) shows this for northern England, Accordino and Johnson (2000) and Mallach (in this issue) for the US.

The opposite situation exists in high-demand areas (e.g. the London region in the UK, the Île-de-France surrounding Paris, and the Amsterdam region). Even here small pockets of low demand exist. These areas are characterized by quality-of-life (liveability) problems, deprivation, and lettings to people who do not qualify somewhere else, and therefore these places may possess a very negative stigma. When demolition is considered as a measure to remove unpopular housing, the context of the regional housing market must be considered.

Consumer preferences and changing expectations are the next group of motives. Due to economic prosperity, the average individual income has improved substantially and demands have risen (Van Kempen *et al.,* 2005). Flats that made a four-children family euphoric in 1960 are now refused by potential occupants as being too small for a one- or a two-person household. Moreover, those dwellings are not equipped for ‘modern’ amenities (e.g. fridges, freezers, microwaves, washing machines, showers, etc.). The high-rise dwellings, optimistically built in the 1960s, have been shown to be a problematic housing type. Originally intended for middle-class families, high-rise dwellings were shunned by this group, which still prefer single-family houses with a garden. Owners of high-rise buildings have problems with letting dwellings, vacancies, refusals and high turnover costs. These easily result in financial problems for owners of the estate, often a housing association.

Demolition because of severe quality-of-life (liveability) problems associated with crime, safety and pollution is a fourth serious reason. A contested debate exists surrounding to what extent problems are due to the physical layout of the estate. Newman (1972) argues that a strong relationship exists between criminal behaviour, decay and the built environment. Although such clear relations might exist, opponents of demolition warn against the physical determinism that is at the heart of demolition strategy (Page, 2001). They suggest that poor maintenance, failing management and the social problems of inhabitants are contributing factors. Present strategies acknowledge this fact and focus on the combination and integration of social and physical measures.

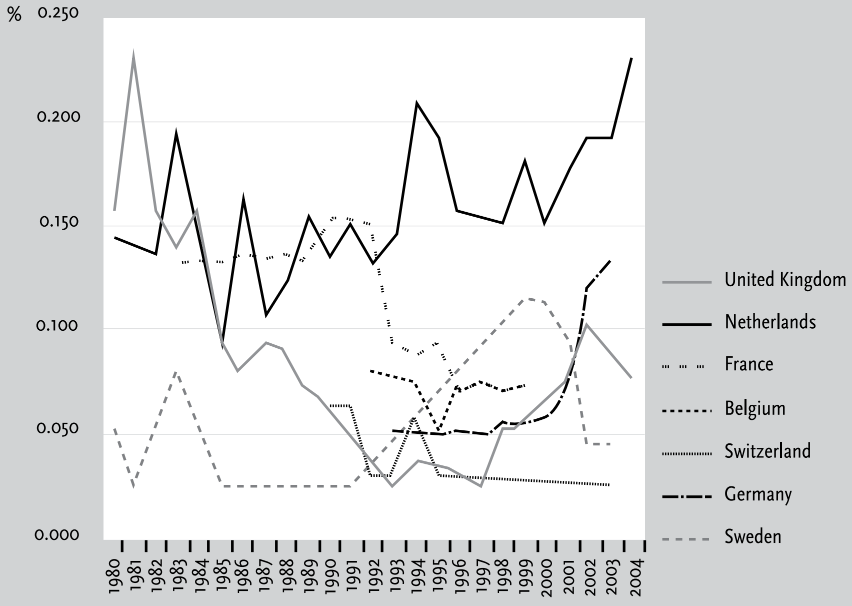
A fifth motive is to consider demolition as a social engineering process. Specifically, it can be used to create more mixed neighbourhoods, according to type and tenure. Musterd (2009) provides an overview on social mix. Type often means the replacement of old flats by houses and apartments. Mixing of mono-tenure can be done by adding inexpensive dwellings into expensive neighbourhoods, or expensive dwellings into inexpensive areas. In practice, typically this results in the demolition of rented social housing and its replacement by middle-class housing. Policies aim to create a better mix in order to prevent large concentrations of socially deprived populations. Some estates had been used, either intentionally or unintentionally, as ‘dumping grounds’ according to local housing allocation systems. Often these areas are concentrations of poverty. Poverty concentration is more obvious and contrasts with other areas that are more extreme in the US than in most European countries. Goetz (2000) shows that poverty deconcentration is one of the main aims of local politics in the US. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses this as a management strategy option for public housing in deteriorated areas. European policy credos are differentiation, social mix, tenure mix and diversification (Droste *et al.*, 2008). Gilbert (2007, p. 3) states: “The objective of French policy is to create social mix, which has become an indisputable slogan in the French political field.”

Mixed neighbourhoods can be created by the construction of more owner-occupied housing (or rented private-sector housing), privatization (which occurred in several former Communist countries) or the demolition of old (rented) stock and replacement by something else. All three strategies result in less affordable housing and more market housing. This argument concerns many authors, among them Crump (2002), Uitermark (2003), Goetz (2000) and Belmessous et al. (2005). They argue that the demolition of inexpensive public housing merely or only leads to the relocation of low-income households, with reduced opportunities for these households due to displacement (and loss of social networks), and that simple spatial measures are not answers to complex social and economic problems.

Van der Flier and Thomsen (2006) presume the existence of underlying motives and hidden agendas as well, which is a sixth motive. Municipalities and housing associations would prefer new building construction for financial reasons and new urban possibilities. Architects and building companies think new designs are more honourable (and profitable). Often they find it easier to assign blame to the bad quality of the existing buildings, rather than to the occupants (which is avoided for political and practical reasons). Some authors have reflected on the developments and consequences of political motives at the national level and the consequences of political changes (Verhage, 2005; Uitermark, 2003; Droste *et al.,* 2008). This seems to be more the case in countries where politics are strongly divided, such as in France or the US. After elections new politicians come into power, introducing new urban development schemes.

Demolition often is caused by a range of variables, resulting from a spiral of neighbourhood decline. Several scholars have tried to incorporate such spirals into comprehensive models of neighbourhood decline (also Van Beckhoven, 2009; Power, 1993). Grigsby et al. (1987) focus on social and economic developments as triggers for filtering and succession. When incomes rise, people want to move out. Problems occur when the vacant dwellings are not attractive enough to new residents. Prak and Priemus (1986) mention a series of many interrelated variables that were related according to three spirals of decay: a social cycle, resulting in more people of lower socioeconomic classes; physical decay, including more removals, vacancies and vandalism; and lower qualities and an economic cycle, with higher expenses and lower receipts (income) for the building owner and a bad image. Temkin and Rohe (1996) focus their model on external structural changes, especially the post-industrial changes resulting in a concentration of unemployment. All these models focus on the relations between all variables, and illustrate that often there is no single cause for severe decline, but that decline is the result of a range of interrelated variables. The Bijlmermeer is a strong example of such a spiral of neighbourhood decay.

Figure 19.1 Demolition rates in several European countries



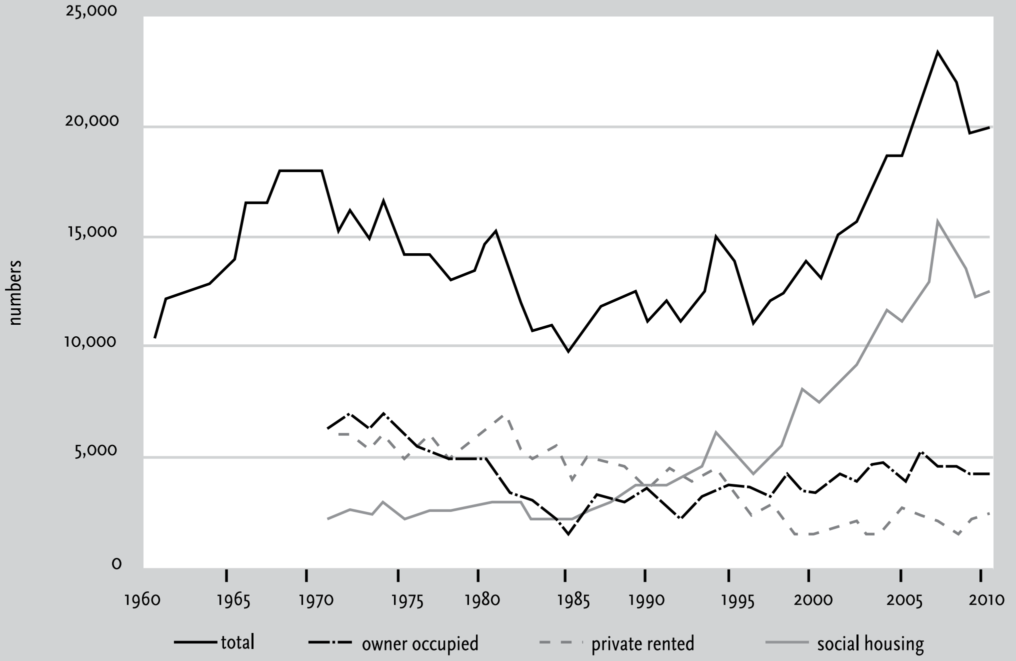
Source: Van der Flier & Thomsen (2006)

19.3 Demolition in practice

The demolition of houses is infrequent in most European countries. Van der Flier and Thomsen (2006) provide data for seven European countries in the period 1980-2004 (Figure 19.1). Figures are highest in the Netherlands, where about 0.20% of the housing stock is being demolished each year. Only the UK could compete in the 1980s, but this might be the aftermath of the major slum clearance activities of the late 1960s and 1970s. It was probably 'the largest clearance programme in the Western world', as Power (1993, 2008, p. 4489) refers to this period. More recent data would show that demolition will have been increased since then in Germany (as a result of the *Stadtumbau* programme), in France (for recent policies) as well as in the Netherlands.

Dutch demolition rates are comparatively high compared with other European countries, but even a rate of 0.20% implies that an average dwelling will last for 500 years! Low demolition rates from Sweden and Switzerland, at 0.05%, suggest that any dwelling would last for 2000 years! It is obvious these terms of longevity are extremely unlikely to be reached, but some important observations can be made. The first is that demolition rates may need to rise in the future. Almost any old building has the potential to be maintained indefinitely by technical means, but only a few receive monument/cultural heritage status which means they will be restored time after time. A second observation is that even with major increases in demolition, the large majority of all buildings in the Netherlands and many other developed countries will survive for several generations, which has implications for maintenance, energy reduction and other measures.

Figure 19.2 Housing demolition and reduction in the Netherlands, 1960-2010, according to tenure*



* Numbers refer to overall housing reductions; about three-quarters concern demolition. The distinction between different forms of tenure is provided from 1971 onwards.

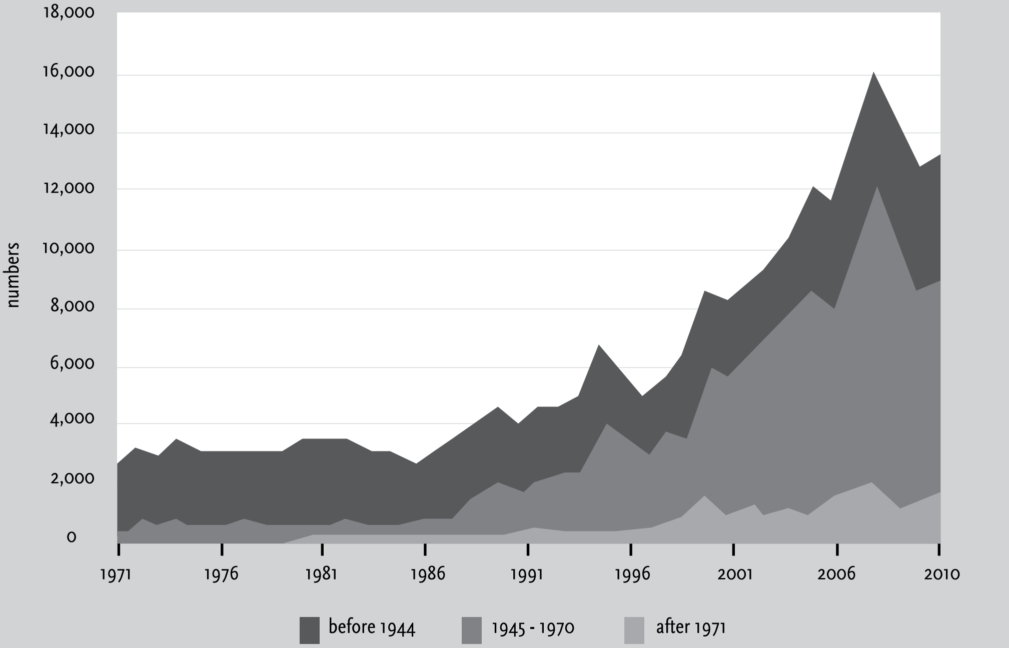
Source: Syswov (2011)

Demolition can be defined as the intentional physical elimination and removal of one or more dwellings at their end of life. It is one of many possible ways to decrease the housing stock: the change of the housing function (into an office, shop, etc.), the combination of two smaller dwellings into a larger one, fires or regulatory condemnation. A range of historical data from Statistics Netherlands (CBS) shows that demolition accounts for about 75% of all decreases of the housing stock (in the Netherlands), the remainder part being formed by other reasons.

The high demolition rates in the Netherlands are elaborated in Figures 19.2 and 19.3. The increase in absolute numbers peaked in 2007, but the recent economic recession has slowed the rate of demolition. Figure 19.2 clearly shows how demolition has changed according to ownership and tenure. In the 1970s and 1980s most demolished homes were privately rented or owner occupied, but demolition gradually changed towards the rented social sector housing. In the early 1980s not more than 25% of all demolitions involved social housing, but this increased to approximately 65% in the 2000s.

About 60% of all demolitions concern multifamily housing (flats), and the remaining 40% single-family housing. This needs to be understood within the context of the Dutch housing stock, where 71% are single-family housing and 29% are flats. The annual demolition rates for different building types are about 0.6% of all flats, only 0.16% for single-family houses and 0.9% for mul-

Figure 19.3 Demolition of social sector housing in the Netherlands according to the year of construction, 1971-2010



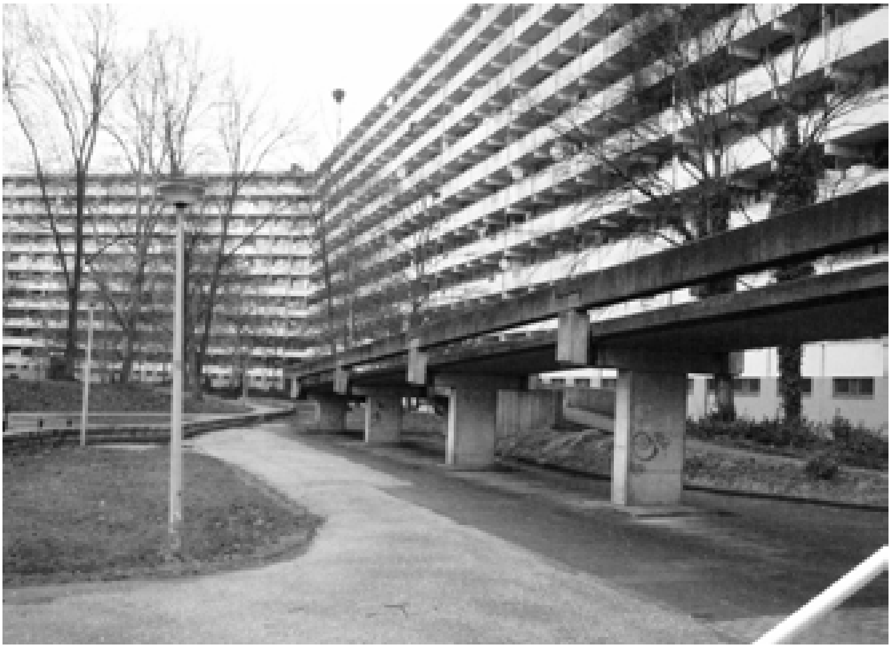
Source: Syswov (2011)

tifamily rented social housing. This means that almost one out of 100 rented social flats is being demolished each year, and this group has the most demolitions. Figure 19.3 shows that most demolished social housing is built in the early post-war decades, mostly flats built in the 1950s and 1960s.

19.4 Bijlmermeer: the Netherland's largest demolition area

The Bijlmermeer high-rise area in Amsterdam fits the profile for high demolition rates. It is in the rented social housing sector, contains flats and is an estate built in the post-war decades. The Bijlmermeer is the largest urban renewal area in the Netherlands, and the largest demolition area.

Much literature already exists about the Bijlmermeer, partly in English, but it is not summarized here. Instead, the focus is on the issue of demolition in the Bijlmermeer. The discussion surrounding this project involves very interesting issues, but these are not the focus of this paper: the original design and architecture, the causes for decay, integrated social and economic interventions, the organization and financing of the renewal, and the construction of new housing. For these issues key sources are Luijten (2002), Kwekkeboom (2002), Van Kempen and Wassenberg (1996), Mentzel (1990), Helleman and Wassenberg (2004), Aalbers (2011), and Kloos (1997). This literature is combined with a selection of other Dutch sources, and with the author's own experience of performing all kinds of research projects within the area for



Typical view of an original Bijlmermeer housing block, including ground level and elevated transport routes.

about 20 years. Some of these reports are used in the text. The Bijlmermeer has been one of the 29 European large housing estates in the Restate research programme (Van Kempen *et al.*, 2005; Musterd and Van Kempen, 2005). In all these studied European housing estates a similar survey has been carried out, making comparisons possible.

19.5 Bijlmermeer: background

Without a doubt the Netherlands' most well-known high-rise housing estate is the Bijlmermeer, located in the south-east extension of Amsterdam. Between 1968 and 1975, 13 000 high-rise dwellings were built in 31 very large blocks. Since its conception the Bijlmermeer has continuously attracted attention. During the early years interest stemmed from its daring and innovative design, in which the original ideas and ideals from the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) were realized: vertical towers amidst green parks, the separation of functions and traffic flows. It was perceived as a summit of modern living and design. Soon after its realization the area became well known for its many problems. The dwellings did not correspond to the housing preferences of families, who were, and still are, more attracted to single-family houses with gardens. Vacancies arose, turnover rates were high, there were enormous quality-of-life (liveability) problems and the financial situation was deplorable. For decades the Bijlmermeer was the most stigmatized area in the country.

The high turnover rates resulted in a different population than that intended. The middle-class and higher working-class families with children from the old inner city did not arrive, as they had the alternative choice of low-rise housing in the suburbs. Their place was taken by two rather different groups: Dutch homosexuals and Surinamese immigrants. The first group received more housing rights in the early 1970s; the latter moved to the Netherlands before the independence of the former colony in 1975. It is estimated that approximately one-third of Surinam's population migrated to the Netherlands, and many ended up in the Bijlmermeer. Statistics from 1971 (before the completion of the whole project) stated: "there are [currently] 15,000 inhabitants, of which 3,000 (Dutch) gay, and a similar number are from Surinam or nearby Antilles. Incomes are low, and half of the children are non-Dutch." (Bijlmermuseum, 2009)

In subsequent years the native Dutch would move out quickly, being replaced by Surinamese and other nonnatives. On average during 1985-2000 one-sixth of the population left every year, according to Kwekkeboom (2002, p. 76): "New residents generally did not come because they deliberately had chosen a flat in the Bijlmer, but what was available most quickly. . . . This reality was diametrically opposed to the ideal image that the developers of the Bijlmermeer had, of middle-class families with an income from wages, a strong sense of community and a feeling of collective responsibility."

Surveys held among residents uncovered the same grievances time after time: degradation, vandalism, crime and a lack of safety (Wassenberg, 1990, 1991; Boumeester & Wassenberg, 1996; Van Veghel & Wassenberg, 1999; Helleman & Wassenberg, 2001). The combination of high unemployment rates, high crime rates, a poor image, high drug abuse among youth, numerous ethnic minorities, and the large number of single-parent families did not make Bijlmermeer a popular area and provided a very negative stigma, certainly among outsiders.

During the 1980s physical improvements were made, management was improved, public facilities were opened and high rents were reduced. Moreover, large facilities were opened near to the high-rise area: a metro line to the city, a large shopping centre, a new stadium for Ajax (Amsterdam's football team), and large cinemas and theatres. Just opposite the railway station an expensive office area arose. The location of the Bijlmermeer changed from an isolated satellite town to a destination offering urban amenities.

However, the dwellings remained unpopular and the quality-of-life problems remained. In 1992 new and radical plans were introduced, including demolition and the provision of new, replacement housing. The introduction of demolition of thousands of recently constructed dwellings was spectacular. The Bijlmermeer became the largest urban renewal estate in the country. Its renewal programme contained three so-called pillars, or tracks:

- a physical pillar to create more differentiation, including demolition and new construction;
- a social economic pillar, including work, education and training;
- improvement of the quality-of-life problems (crime, safety, drugs, vandalism, pollution), and better management.

The approach in the Bijlmermeer, still being implemented, would serve as a base for the later national policy schemes on urban renewal and neighbourhood approaches. This article focuses on the demolition within the first pillar, leaving out of the discussion the numerous interventions part of the other two pillars.

To understand the drastic demolitions, it is important to understand the politics and strategic thinking just after the Bijlmermeer was inhabited.

19.6 Early 1980s: recognizing the failures

From the first ideas onwards the Bijlmermeer was repeatedly in the news. Initial reporting in the media was positive, curious and exciting, but gradually this turned negative (Verhagen, 1987). Increasingly, the Bijlmermeer received a very bad press that accelerated during the 1980s, which worsened its image. Media coverage highlighted degradation, vandalism, a lack of safety, crime, drugs and unemployment. As early as 1979 the first opinions arose in the media about partial demolition in the Bijlmermeer, only five years after completion of the last couple of blocks. These ideas were dismissed by public opinion as unreasonable and unacceptable.

The famous American Professor Oscar Newman was invited to provide solutions to reduce crime. However, the advice he provided to create more ‘defensible space’ in the area was condemned as ‘too much American style’, with gates, suppression, and strong demographic selection procedures for race and income (Verhagen, 1987, p. 86), so they were not implemented. As a reaction, the just-established residents’ committee Stichting Wijkopbouworgaan Bijlmermeer (SWOB) published a *Deltaplan for the Bijlmermeer*. It opened as follows: “The Bijlmermeer is in many respects a blunder of policy makers, architects, planners and other professionals. However, the Bijlmer definitely is not a hopeless case, as often is suggested” (SWOB, 1980).

The residents’ committee pleaded for more urgency to be assigned to the area: intensifying the management, completing the originally planned, but subsequently reduced, facilities, lowering rents, creating better public transport, and having more facilities in general.

Demolition was not on the political agenda. The national context definitely was against demolition as well. Since the Second World War housing shortages had been a priority for any successive national administration. In the 1970s a new phenomenon occurred: young singles (initially students) claimed a right to housing, with squatting of empty properties becoming common practice in Amsterdam. This culminated at the time of the new Queen’s coronation festivities in 1980, which were overshadowed by squatters’ protests against housing shortages. The then economic crisis induced austerity. In this context, the demolition of recently built houses of appropriate physical quality, however problematic, was out of the question.

19.7 Mid-1980s: repairing the failures

More and more problems arose, which all spiralled together into decay. Problems increased when single-family dwellings were built on a large scale in the suburbs of Amsterdam, a type of housing that had not been built in 'urban' Amsterdam since the Second World War. Families with children choose these attractive houses en masse, many of whom just recently had entered the then newly built Bijlmermeer. When they moved away, Bijlmermeer was faced with yet another problem: vacancy. Vacancy rates grew dramatically during the early 1980s. In 1984 there were 3200 vacant dwellings, one-quarter of all units. Moreover, the residential mobility (churn) rate was 40-50% per year. The Bijlmermeer became synonymous for problems. The image of the area was probably by far the worst in the whole country.

In 1983, to counteract the rising problems, the first Rehabilitation Programme was conceived, presented in a prospectus entitled *De Bijlmer in de lift* ('Lifting the Bijlmermeer') of 1984. This programme can be considered an official elaboration of the residents' Delta plan of 1980. It consisted of a range of technical measures in the blocks (secure entrances, extra lifts), the dwellings (thermal insulation) and the surrounding open spaces, a reduction of rents and parking fees, and the concentration of management by forming one large housing association called 'Nieuw [New] Amsterdam'. (The previous arrangement was 15 Amsterdam-based housing associations which owned one or two blocks each.) The preliminary ideas about demolition were abandoned by large protests in the media and local politics. Instead, solutions were seen in the improvement of technical and managerial measures in the Rehabilitation Programme.

However, over the course of the 1980s it was clear that the newly implemented measures were inadequate, since the same problems persisted. The Rehabilitation Programme was evaluated in 1987 (Melger, 1987), but despite all rehabilitation measures and improvements in the vicinity (the new cinema, theatre, offices, football stadium, metro) it was found that the dwellings still remained unpopular and the quality-of-life problems (e.g. crime, drugs, pollution and violence) continued to persist. A range of smaller measures proved positive in themselves, but were not enough to counteract the problems.

The financial situation became increasingly negative. This was caused by the many vacancies, continuous removals and high maintenance operations, resulting in increasing debts for the new consolidated housing association Nieuw Amsterdam which brought it close to bankruptcy. Some relief came in the form of lower vacancy rates, but the 1987 *Evaluation Report* remarked this was not due to the Rehabilitation Programme but instead to the dearth of new construction in the area, resulting in a tightening housing market. The increased occupancy of the Bijlmermeer high-rises only occurred due to the lack of alternatives for inhabitants.

The policy reaction to the 1987 *Evaluation Report* came immediately (Gemeente Amsterdam, 1987). The official reaction of the Amsterdam municipality was that demolition was not an option. Instead, it stressed the need for more differentiation, but without physical changes. The main problem was considered not to be the architecture, but poverty, which would not be solved by demolition. Instead, the focus was of continuation of the rehabilitation measures, and a new approach to housing allocation and management. The 1987 plan suggested accepting the fact that the market for 13,000 similar high-rise dwellings was limited. The suggestion was to make one-third (4,000 dwellings) attractive for the people who preferred to live in the Bijlmermeer high-rise and help them live there as comfortably as possible.

19.8 Bijlmer believers

Despite all the severe problems, negative news coverage and competing housing alternatives, an enthusiastic core group of Bijlmer inhabitants was present; often these were people who had been ‘pioneers’ (first residents) from the beginning. They had witnessed the early ideas and the later deterioration of the Bijlmermeer (and stayed rooted despite the high churn rates). They blamed a major cause of all problems on the budgets being cut at the construction stage, resulting in a more sober realization of the buildings and the surroundings, and advocated improvements to the Bijlmermeer according to the original ideas. In addition, they blamed the housing associations for their very loose allocation and management policy, resulting in antisocial behaviour on a wide scale. Later on these ‘pioneers’ would be named ‘the Bijlmer positives’ or ‘Bijlmer believers’, referring to their optimistic view of living in the Bijlmermeer high-rises. In several surveys they were calculated at about one-quarter of the population (Wassenberg, 1991; Helleman & Wassenberg, 2001).

In the 1990s this group of Bijlmer believers started a movement to maintain at least a part of the original Bijlmermeer. The Bijlmer believers argued against any demolitions, and instead wanted the provision of better facilities and maintenance, strong management, law and order for antisocial behaviour, etc., in all 31 blocks.

The city council recognized this small group of Bijlmer believers, but stated that they only comprised a small percentage of the total inhabitants and were not representative of the other residents. Therefore, the city council wanted to concentrate those believers in a few blocks, and implement an intensive management regime for the remaining part of the high-rise (two thirds), for people who considered the Bijlmermeer high-rise as temporary and a second (or lesser) choice. Evidence showed those people would not care for their housing, therefore it was argued that the housing association had to do this for them. The plan calculated for intensive management at high costs over a long period of time, with the expectation that these expenses would be paid for by the national government. However, the then Minister of Housing (Mr Heerma) refused this, and requested systematic solutions. (Later on, in the early 2000s, this group was officially recognized with the result that six of the original 31 blocks have been designated as the 'Bijlmer museum'. In this south-east corner of the Bijlmermeer the original CIAM-based ideas can be seen at their best.)

The financial situation quickly deteriorated. The losses of the housing association were already about 130 million Dutch guilders (€60 million), a deficit that only grew. The municipality, as the guarantor of the newly formed housing association, had to pay this debt, which eventually could lead to the deficit of the whole city. A more systematic solution was needed.

19.9 1990: a radical change of plans

As the proposed plan to accept long-lasting financial losses for intensive management had been dismissed by central government, a broadly constituted Task Force Group was created to propose structural solutions. This resulted in the publication of a trailblazing report in 1990: De Bijlmer blijft, veranderen (The Bijlmermeer Will Stay, but [has] to Change) (Werkgroep Toekomst Bijlmermeer, 1990). The Task Force in fact made a similar analysis to the previous one in 1987, but came to totally different conclusions. Most important was to create more differentiation, beginning with the built environment. The poor position on the housing market should not be accepted (as the 1987 plan did), but the physical structure of the Bijlmermeer had to change radically:

- 25% of the high-rise dwellings had to be sold and upgraded for new tenants with higher incomes (called repositioning);
- 25% had to be demolished and replaced by more popular housing types;
- the remaining 50% had to be refurbished for people with modest incomes.

The costs for these plans were financially calculated at 645 million Dutch guilders over 15 years. However, doing nothing would cost even more, but would result in a situation that would not be improved.

Once again demolition is under consideration. In 1980, 1983 and 1986 demolition was rejected by public opinion. In 1987 local politicians selected intensive management and accepted the short-stay perspectives of the inhabitants who considered the Bijlmermeer as second-choice living. By 1990 the proposal was to demolish one-quarter of the high-rise housing.

Just after the trail-blazing plans were presented to the public, a residents' survey was being conducted in combination with an ongoing evaluation of an intervention to improve management by appointing caretakers. The problems most mentioned were about safety, crime and pollution, just as these were

Table 19.1 Inhabitants' opinions on the future prospects of the Bijlmermeer high-rise in 1990

Main problems?*	Safety and crime (77% mentioned) Vandalism and pollution (77%)
Main assets?*	No cars (59%) Dwellings themselves (46%) Mixed society (38%)
Need to change the urban structure?	Yes (21%) No (42%) Don't know (37%)
Is (partial) demolition a good idea?	Yes (46%) No (31%) Don't know (22%)
Personal preference?	Move out of Bijlmermeer (40%) Stay (32%) Move to new built housing on the estate (29%)

Notes: The first survey polled inhabitants from three blocks of Bijlmermeer's high-rise flats after the drastic plans were presented.
Only basic figures are presented.
* Residents could chose more than one problem and asset.
n = 600 responses (55%).

Source: Wassenberg (1990)

mentioned for at least the last decade and the next decade to come. Most respondents by that time were reserved in their opinion ('First see the outcome of the interventions being done . . .'), but many of them supported demolition (Table 19.1).

The reactions to the far-reaching plans were rather lukewarm. There were fewer protests against demolition among inhabitants, the media and politics than in earlier years when demolition was initially proposed, probably because the other rehabilitation measures did not prove to be successful.

The most robust debates about the proposed demolition were within the local south-east Amsterdam government department, which eventually did not support the demolitions. However, the failures of the ongoing measures, the persistence of the numerous problems, combined with the financial losses, urged the municipal government to cooperate. They did successfully ask, however, for more accompanying social measures next to the physically oriented differentiation plans.

These social measures aimed at the creation of more employment and a reduction of insecurity. The quality-of-life problems, always mentioned as the top three problems in the area by the inhabitants in all successive surveys (Wassenberg, 1990, 1991; Boumeester & Wassenberg 1996; Van Veghel & Wassenberg, 1999; Helleman & Wassenberg, 2001), received more attention as well. It helped that in the same period the police service was reorganized at the national level, resulting in more policemen in problematic areas such as the Bijlmermeer.

The 1990 plans did not come as a surprise. The intensive management option, which was the municipal preference, was dismissed. Moreover, some reports at that time generated publicity with a plea for partial demolition due to housing market reasons. It was argued a structural oversupply of high-rise dwellings existed along with a lack of consumer preferences. However, famous architects like the Office of Metropolitan Architecture's (OMA) Rem Koolhaas presented plans not to demolish, but instead to intensify the Bijlmermeer, with more facilities, more housing, more shops and more life (Koolhaas, 1986). He posited that the Bijlmermeer should be the centre for all modern developments.

The change of public, professional and political opinion around 1990 probably had been fed with academic interest and foreign experiences as well. The problems in post-war housing estates became part of major academic research. A key conference entitled 'Post-War Public Housing in Trouble' achieved broad national attention (Prak & Priemus, 1985), where the Bijlmermeer was considered as the top example the country had to offer. Catastrophic developments of some foreign estates received attention as well (e.g. public housing estates in the US and the grands ensembles in France). Demolition was no longer a taboo.

19.10 Midterm evaluation points to more demolition

The whole urban restructuring approach in the Bijlmermeer officially can be divided into three phases. The first is the *Eerste Saneringsaanvraag* (First Request for Reorganization), the elaboration of the 1990 Task Force report into an official Plan in 1992.

An external and sad event accelerated the urban restructuring process. After the approval of the official plans in the spring of 1992, on 4 October 1992 an international cargo jet crashed into a block of flats, a disaster that caused 43 casualties, while 221 dwellings were immediately destroyed or had to be demolished afterwards. This tragedy had the unintended consequence of accelerating the renewal process, and gained substantial public support from all over the country as well. On the spot of the crash a monument was created, and the surrounding blocks of flats are incorporated in the Bijlmer museum.

The whole Bijlmermeer originally was built according to one blueprint plan of 1965, but it was obvious that the renewal plan should not be such an overall top-down plan. The new urgency obliged short-term actions. The start was to demolish two of the 31 blocks of flats (Geinwijk and Gerenstein) and one of the smaller shopping centres, Ganzenhoef, that with the worst image, to build new housing (Vogeltjeswei) and to refurbish one other block (Hoogoord). All locations are chosen in the middle of the Bijlmermeer to make this strategy as visible as possible to inhabitants. It would take until 1995 before results became visible: the new construction (on a former empty spot), the first refurbishment and the first demolition. At that time the second phase continued (the *Tweede Saneringsaanvraag*, the official Second Request for Reorganization), increasing the action area with ten more blocks. Next to the blocks of flats parking garages would be demolished or get a new function. These garages had proven to be a total failure, as there were fewer cars than forecasted, and residents with cars often did not dare park in the gloomy and dangerous three-storey car parks.

Demolition in the Bijlmermeer progressed smoothly. The blocks were not dynamited, as happened in the notorious Pruitt-Igoe estate in St. Louis, Missouri, US, or Les Minguettes in Lyon, France, or elsewhere in the Netherlands (Middelburg, Venlo). In the Bijlmermeer a dragline slowly tore apart the block, from the top down, storey by storey. Not only could some elements be reused easily (toilets were shipped to Suriname), but also there was an aversion to sending an image that 'the Bijlmermeer disaster was blown up'.

In the 1995 official contract an interim evaluation was agreed, which was carried out in 1999 (Ouwehand, 1999), followed by a future proposal *De vernieuwing voltooien* (Finishing the Renewal). In the summary it states: The motor of change is the physical renewal. One of the main reasons behind the deterioration and the stigma is the uniformity of the housing stock. There is too little demand for all the similar high-rise dwellings. More differentiation is needed, with more low-rise dwellings and also houses for sale. Next to differentiation in the housing stock, the area has to be more attractive, including the parking garages, the shopping centres, the high-dike-roads, the greens and the wider environment of the Bijlmermeer. (Woningstichting Patrimonium, 2001, p. 6; author's own translation)

The overall conclusion about the physical renewal was that the first results were promising, that inhabitants seemed to like the new or refurbished dwellings, and that there still were too many high-rise flats. The conclusion was to provide more opportunity for demolition in a range with a minimum of 1,934 extra and a maximum of 4,134 dwellings extra to tear down, on top of the 3,000 in the 1995 original plan.

Another conclusion was that some of the problems seemed to migrate. At first, the expectation (or was it hope?) was that the renewal in some spots would have a positive impact on the adjacent blocks, but the converse occurred. Some problems (like crime, drug dealing), and some problem households (dealers, drug users, antisocial behaviours) ended up in nearby flats, leading to an increasing amount of complaints from the formerly 'better' flats that started to deteriorate rapidly. This created an urgency to make one final decision for the rest of the Bijlmermeer. There was a growing understanding that a too incremental approach – deciding every few years about the next blocks to change – would aggravate the quality-of-life problems in the remaining blocks.

Table 19.2 Inhabitants' opinions on demolition and other physical measures in 1990,1995,1999 and 2001 (in %)

	Survey 1990 (1,100 dwellings; 55% response rate)		Survey 1995 (1,500 dwellings, 55% response rate)		Survey 1999 (800 dwellings; 63% response rate)		Survey 2001 (4,900 dwellings, 77% response rate)	
	Good idea	Bad idea	Good idea	Bad idea	Good idea	Bad idea	Good idea	Bad idea
Renovation of dwellings			62	21	73	21	37	45
Sale/upgrade of dwellings	18 46	61 31	38	25	53	24	42	23
Demolition of high-rise blocks in general			65	20	*63-74	19	68	18
Demolition of part of high-rise blocks			43	39	37	49	30	46

Notes: The category 'No opinion/don't know' is omitted. It adds up to 100%. For example Renovation in 1995: 62% good idea, 21% bad idea, so 17% are no opinion/don't know.
* A total of 63% wanted to demolish both buildings,11% one of the two buildings.

Sources: Wassenberg (1990) and Helleman & Wassenberg (2004)

19.11 Consulting residents on demolition or refurbishment

A decision was taken in early 2001 to make one master plan for all remaining flats where no plans had been made so far: 14 blocks, with almost 6,000 dwellings. In 1999 in two blocks (800 dwellings), followed by the remaining 12 blocks (with 4,850 dwellings), all residents were surveyed. The response rate was 77%, an astonishing response for such a neighbourhood, and much more than professionals had expected. The survey was very carefully conceived with months for preparation, consultation and finding agreement on the formulation of questions. It was a huge research project with face-to-face contact with all inhabitants. However, the results were absolutely clear, and in line with earlier surveys (Table 19.2). In contrast to the long preparation time for the research, the time to incorporate the results into the policy process was very short. Within a couple of weeks the conclusions were drawn and transformed into policy. In ten blocks the large majority was in favour of demolition, even of their own estate, while in two blocks the majority instead wanted to stay and refurbish the estate. As a response to residents' expressed wishes, this was done and another 3500 dwellings would be demolished and replaced, and the other two blocks refurbished, and almost at the maximum range of demolition that was set as a conclusion of the midterm evaluation before.

The result of the midterm evaluation was the Final Plan of Approach, created in 2001, which embraced the entirety of the Bijlmermeer. The amount of demolition more than doubled (Table 19.3). Most of the local debates did not concern the drastic increase of demolition, but a further removal of the elevated roads. The design intent of the elevated roads was for reasons of traffic safety, but had resulted in dusty and dangerous paths for cyclists and pedes-

Table 19.3 Key figures in the planning process in the Bijlmermeer

	Start	1990-1992 First plan	1995 Approval of the second plan	2001-2002, Final plan of approach	2005-2006	2008-2010
Numbers of high-rise flats	13,000*	10,000	10,200	6,550	6,550	6,000
Numbers to be demolished	-	3,000	2,800	6,550	6,550	7,000
Numbers to be newly constructed	-	-	4,000	7,450	7,200	7,800
Numbers to be renovated and for social rent	-	7,000	8,700	4,950	5,200	4,750
Numbers to be renovated and for sale or upgrading	-	3,000	1,500	1,500	1,250	1,250
Expected renewal period (years), from 1 January 1993	-	10	13	18	20	24
End of renewal (year)	-	2003**	2007	2011	2012	2016

* There were about 13,000 social rented dwellings in 31 high-rise blocks, all ten storeys high on a ground floor, most in the well-known honeycomb shape. Thirty blocks were owned by Nieuw Amsterdam housing association, the remaining one by another housing association, which was to be renovated. Numbers refer to the plans as these were in the years mentioned.

** The year 2003 refers to the planned completion date for the project starting in January 1993.

Sources: Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer (PVB) (2002, 2008, 2009, 2010); Nieuw Amsterdam (1995); Werkgroep Toekomst Bijlmermeer (1990) and Kwekkeboom (2002)

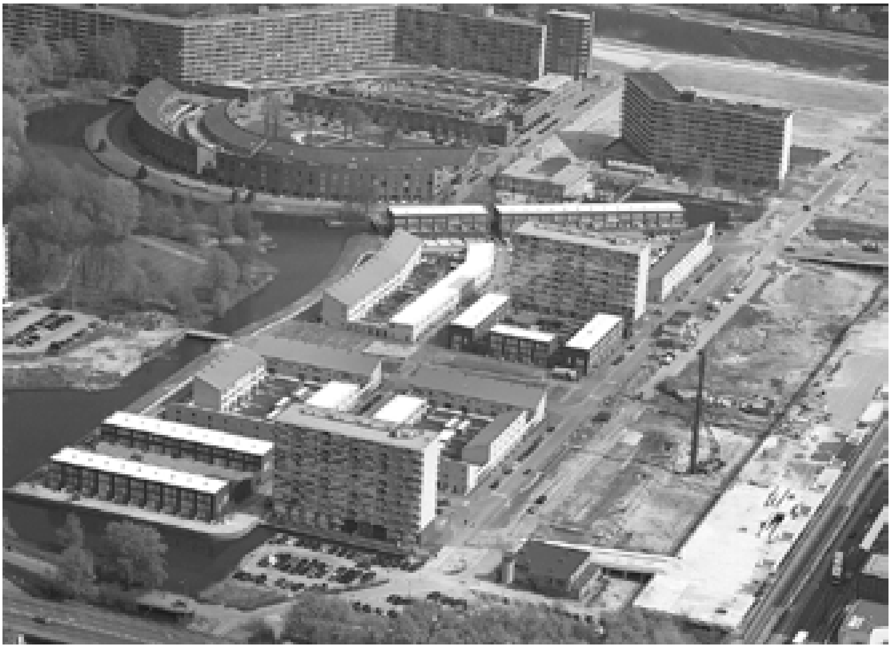
trians underneath. In fact, people preferred to walk on the elevated streets, especially at night. The debate concentrated at the north-east corner, where the high dike-roads formed a barrier between the stigmatized Bijlmermeer high-rise and an adjacent low-rise area. Lowering the road would create ordinary streets and simultaneously intensify contacts between both areas, a positive outcome from the perspective of the Bijlmermeer renewers, but a negative or worrying aspect for the low-rise inhabitants who lived opposite. Finally, the elevated road was lowered to street level.

Table 19.3 shows that demolition increased during successive decisions in the process of renewal. Figure 14.3 in Chapter 14 show the situation before and after the renewal.

19.12 Demolition of high-rise to create an 'ordinary' neighbourhood

In the last few years public interest for the Bijlmermeer has decreased somewhat. It used to be the most discussed area in the country, but all renewal interventions now just seem to happen. The 2001 *Final Plan* has been settled, a master plan followed later (Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer (PVB), 2002), the large parking garages have been transformed or demolished, two shopping centres have been rebuilt, and other facilities have been built, like a theatre, a new swimming pool and sports centre, and churches, amidst new housing.

The new housing was criticized by architects for being too much 'middle-of-the-road' architecture. The 'old' Bijlmermeer high-rise was intended to be one of the most talked about districts in the world (as an adventurous, large architectural ensemble embodying CIAM concepts), contrary to the present new housing, which intends to offer 'value for money'. Many new residents



In the north-west corner of the Bijlmermeer some blocks have been partially demolished and replaced with an intriguing mix of low-rise housing, while other parts have been refurbished. The housing association and a private developer are involved.

are connected to the area: they live, or did live, there, have relatives, or work nearby. Houses are being offered that can compete with new housing in the suburbs: ordinary housing for an affordable price. The target groups are people who prefer to live in the Bijlmermeer and who want to stay when decent housing and a decent environment are offered. Many of them are socially mobile and many of them have Surinamese roots. Surinamese, Caribbeans and Africans form the majority of the population, set the atmosphere, and are the new, ethnic, middle class. Aalbers (2011) calls this process 'the black gentrification'. The developments are followed with an instrument called 'Bijlmermonitor', that is carried out every two years to measure progress on the set goals of renewal (Terpstra *et al.,* 2010).

The developments continue. One block after another has been demolished or refurbished. In both cases tenants have to move out. Between 2001 and 2004, 2,363 households were affected: 27% returned into another high-rise flat, 29% went to existing nearby low-rise housing, 8% moved into newly constructed housing. The remaining 36% moved to another part of Amsterdam or outside Amsterdam altogether. All could choose within the estate, but families were located more in the ground-floor houses, singles in the refurbished flats or in the new apartments. One third is living on a minimum income, with another 40% needing housing allowances as well, figures similar to the old situation before demolition. Rents for new dwellings are comparable with those for the old flats, which never have been inexpensive. For those who cannot afford the rent, housing allowances are available. All tenants have a 'renewal urgency status', which means that they can choose, with some conditions (household size), among other houses in the Amsterdam area (36% of households opt for this option). They receive a grant for removal costs (€5396 in 2011, and is adjusted annually for inflation).

Whereas rehousing sometimes is a bottleneck in other Dutch demolition projects, there still were some vacancies in the Bijlmermeer in the early

2000s, which made the rehousing process easier. Moreover, new housing was being constructed in places of earlier demolitions. Later on, rehousing started to be more problematic, resulting in a somewhat slower speed of urban renewal.

The current economic crisis has slowed the renewal activities, which conform to wider experiences elsewhere. All across the country urban renewal projects are frozen, delayed, reconsidered, postponed or cancelled, similar to the situations in other countries. The sale of housing has stagnated, waiting lists for rented housing have grown and housing associations in general are increasingly taxed by the national government (which makes them reluctant to invest). The process is now slowing, and the final completions in the Bijlmermeer are scheduled for 2016. The final completion as planned gradually has moved from an original date of 2003 (in 1990), via 2011 (in 2001) to 2016 at present (Table 19.3).

In 2009 there were some striking results, considering the bare figures. A total of 7,000 dwellings have been demolished; 4000 new dwellings have been constructed, another 800 are under construction, next to another 3,000 in the planning stage; all but two blocks (of 16) have been renovated; 3 km of the elevated roads have been lowered to street level; nine car parks have been demolished; two new shopping centres have been built; and several business units have been created. Originally, more than 80% of the space was used as a public area. In the renovated areas, including the Bijlmer museum area, this amount has stayed, and has been improved, while in the newly developed areas this rate will be reduced to 40%. There are private gardens; and car parking in front of the homes. As briefly mentioned, in addition to all of these physical measures, a range of social, economic, managerial, ecological, psychological, educational, financial and other measures were also undertaken, but due to limitations of space they are not discussed here.

The costs are enormous. The total investments in only the high-rise area were calculated to be €1.6 billion (Kwekkeboom, 2002, p. 79). The part of the investment which produces no returns is calculated at about €450 million. Fifty per cent of this is paid by the Central Fund for social housing associations, the other 50% by the City of Amsterdam. The high costs are comprised of the not-yet-paid-for mortgage for the original housing, demolition and clearance costs, the construction of new social rented housing (30% of all new dwellings), removal fees, and social and economic programmes. Facilities in the wider environment are not included in these figures (concert hall, station, football stadium, etc.); it concerns only the high-rise district.

The large-scale public housing blocks may be the sites of all kinds of problems, but one advantage is that renewal strategies are much easier with only one rather than with tens or hundreds of owners. The Baltimore case, which Cohen (2001) indicates, caused problems because of the abandoning of property by tens or hundreds of private owners. Property that cannot be sold is, in

F-'buurt' area: new one-family housing between remaining high-rise flats.

fact, worthless.

The Bijlmermeer approach is one of the largest renewal schemes worldwide. It is interesting to compare it with the large HOPE VI programme in the US (Kleinhans & Curley, 2010). Hanlon (2010, p. 80) provides an actual overview. Since the programme's inception in 1993, US$6 billion in HOPE VI grants have been awarded for 249 revitalization projects in the US. The Bijlmermeer alone would have taken a major share of this, and would have been by far the largest project in the programme.

19.13 Conclusions

Demolition is the most definitive and non-reversible measure in renewing the housing stock and may precipitate strong emotions. It cannot be considered a natural process to demolish houses that were recently built, especially not when these are the result of a well-thought-out development. This exactly is what happened in the Amsterdam Bijlmermeer high-rise estate. There has never been a housing development in the country (and possibly elsewhere) built under such high expectations, but it turned out to be a disaster. Over half of the original 13,000 flats are being demolished. Why could this happen?

Six motives for demolition were reviewed: poor physical quality, oversupply, consumer preferences, social decay and quality of life, dwelling differentiation and tenure mix, and underlying political motives. Understanding the main motives and drivers is difficult and complex, as motives are always related to each other and usually act in concert. The market prospects are bad because of the bad image, which is caused by crime and quality-of-life problems, which leads to selective outward and inward migration (privileged groups leave and poor groups stay), which leads to high turnover rates and vacancies, which affects the financial position, etc.

Demolition can be considered as the ultimate answer to a continuous spiral of decline. Major motives to demolish thousands of dwellings in the Bijlmermeer were insufficient market prospects, quality-of-life problems (e.g. safety, crime, vandalism, drugs abuse and pollution), lack of differentiation and a near-bankrupt management. It is noticeable that some frequently mentioned motives did not play a role: the dwellings were large, well equipped and reasonably well constructed. Even today, the remaining flats in the Bijlmermeer belong to the largest-sized rented social dwellings in Amsterdam, and have been valued most, according to all residents' surveys. Another absent motive is oversupply in the tight Amsterdam housing market. On the contrary, the case of the Bijlmermeer clearly shows that even within a very tight housing market pockets of oversupply – or 'under-demand' – do exist.

What this paper adds to the existing knowledge is an in-depth analysis of the process of demolition. A longitudinal view was presented illustrating how and why demolition occurs. The linkages were shown between social aspiration, social expectation, demographics, operation and maintenance (in the widest sense of the provision of services and social support). Also described were the roles various stakeholders (organizational and institutional as well as individual groups) have in creating a positive or negative community. The processes were revealed of how different stakeholders first try to improve or stabilize a district, but when they recognize that their efforts are continually failing, other options were considered and used. Finally, the paper confirmed that demolition is an option when all other alternatives have been tried, but also that is an expensive solution.

The Bijlmermeer has been a shining example of high expectations, of enormous problems and deterioration on a major scale, and of a radical redesign, demolition and an integrated approach. It could serve as an example for all housing estates with multiple problems, for those with inhabitants who do not want to live there and for those where drastic measures are taken into consideration, demolition in particular.

What can be learned from the Bijlmermeer experience? Some lessons can be drawn that might be of use in other situations, despite different local contexts. The focus here is on demolition, leaving aside the rest of the integrated approach including all kinds of social, economic, environmental and cultural measures. The first important lesson is that large problems need large solutions. It took a while to recognize the failure of the Bijlmermeer. The problems where so enormous, and were so connected, that minor incremental repairing approaches did not work. All of these measures and projects proved only to have limited success. The consequence was the need for a major renewal scheme. Once the failure of the original concept was recognized, the intended approach was very powerful. In the circumstance it had to be. There have been major debates, but the urgency of the situation and the failure of all previous approaches did not leave another future prospect. Something had to be done. As a practitioner in the area stated: "The Bijlmermeer solution is what you do after trying all other options. After passing all other measures, you end up with those demolition solutions."

A second lesson is that a major urban renewal scheme takes a long time. This may sound obvious, but nevertheless the point has to be made because urban practice shows that obvious lessons can be forgotten. The Bijlmermeer experience shows that the whole renewal process will take double the time that had been calculated at the start. The renewal of a multiple problem estate such as the Bijlmermeer takes at least 15-20 years (and probably more). Time schedules are prone to delays and elongation due to external circumstances: economic cycles, changing housing markets, political change and other developments that cannot be influenced at the local level. It is important that such a major operation rests on a broad support and long-term commitment, instead of being an issue of local political debate. The renewal operation has to be continued and supported when the opposition comes into political power.

Despite the long-term prospects, severe day-to-day problems require some basic and urgent actions, based on the most grievous problems, as perceived by residents: safety, crime, vandalism, drug abuse and pollution. Safety, cleanliness, nuisances need to be of a decent quality at all times. Owners and other policymakers need to recognize that many residents judge their daily life based on these issues.

The renewal of the Bijlmermeer has cost a tremendous amount of money (€1.6 billion), and still does. Has it been worth it? A simple calculation indicates this means more than €100,000 per dwelling, or €40,000 per inhabitant. Some might argue it would be expedient to distribute the money in this way, but this logic is flawed, short-termist and fails to resolve the problem. The alternative not to demolish would have been to continue with the partial approaches, as had been the case during the first 20 years, which all resulted in limited partial successes. Problems persisted, inhabitants were marginalized, housing remained unpopular, and people would flee whenever possible and other lives on the estate were blighted. The area would continue to be a sink estate (generating or attracting problems), an image that probably would radiate to the stigmatization of other large housing estates as well. The (direct and indirect) costs of not intervening simply were not option, as costs only would have risen and revenues would be lacking.

An alternative would have been not to take the costly physical measures and to focus on social and economic measures, and to increase job opportunities, the emancipation of deprived groups, language courses, empowerment, etc. It is emphasized again that a wide range of these kinds of social and economic measures are part of the integral approach. Without an integration of the social and the large physical measures, however, socially mobile people still would move when they had the means to do so, and the area would remain undesirable. One of the successes of the Bijlmermeer approach is because residents were shown that their future prospects were positive within the area; they then understand there was no need to relocate.

Demolitions on a large scale only can be justified when a series of serious and wicked problems occur. The less convincing are the bare arguments, the less support there will be for major demolition schemes. There needs to be an urgent situation to obtain residents' consent and support to demolish their own homes. Residents have to be involved, and this needs to be done systematically, professionally and transparently. Involvement costs money and time in the short-term, but gains are evident in the long-term, with much more support for plans. Residents do not have to be afraid of demolition when they recognize the urgency and when they can see that they will benefit, one way or another, from the demolition with a better place to live.

What are the key factors for success in the Bijlmermeer? The first is that strategies have to be taken in combination. This involves an integrated approach (this article only highlighted the demolition part), combining physical, structural, economic, social, cultural and other approaches. It also includes measures on several scale levels, including facilities in the wider area, accessibility and transport, measures in adjacent areas to prevent problems radiating, and measures to improve the image. A bad image will not change within a few years, but there is no hurry as the whole approach will take many more years.

The second key factor is a long-term commitment of all relevant actors. This necessitates an approach to be free from political influence, and one that does not have to stop after each change of government. Broad support is necessary, including political support. Future situations definitely will change, so concrete measures will change, but there has to be a future goal with broad consensus. Part of this long-term commitment is firm financial agreements.

A third key factor is the support of residents. There have been numerous debates, there has been scepticism among politicians, the press and academics (which still exists), but the renewal approach of the Bijlmermeer has broad support from its inhabitants. This support does not occur quickly; it entails a long process of serious interest and involvement of inhabitants to obtain their support. Residents support the renewal because of their future prospects, for their own choice within or outside the area.

Demolition in the Bijlmermeer was inevitable, as all other solutions were tried without success. However, this does not imply the same conclusion for other large housing estates. Any approach, any decision is dependent on the local context, history, housing market situation, political context, and, not least, the financial situation. There has to be long-term commitment between all actors, a shared long-term vision and solid financing. But there is no reason to suppose that demolition is never the best solution.

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20 The Bijlmermeer as a national forerunner

20.1 National policies and local renewal

The renewal of the Bijlmermeer is not an isolated operation. In Chapter 10, we mentioned the relation between local renewal and national policies. There is an interaction between both. Most often this relation goes from the top (national) to the bottom (local). However, in this chapter we will show that the developments, strategies and policies in the Bijlmermeer were intensively related to national renewal policies. Some national developments influenced what happened in the Bijlmermeer, but it was also the other way round. The Bijlmermeer used to be a shining example of the glorious realization, the decline and fall, several experimental measures, and recovery schemes in other areas, and for national policies in the country as a whole. Moreover, the Bijlmermeer has been and still is a source of inspiration for experiences abroad.

Developments in the Bijlmermeer often took place before national developments. In other words, the Bijlmermeer renewal has been a forerunner of the national context, and a forerunner of renewal policies in other housing estates both in the Netherlands and abroad.

In Part III we showed that the problems in the Bijlmermeer were more severe, more concentrated and on a larger scale than in most other neighbourhoods. We also demonstrated that at the same time the area was not only the largest problem estate in the country, but also the largest experimental garden. Not only is the Bijlmermeer the largest urban renewal area in the country, but also many ideas started here at an early stage and influenced or even led to national policies.

We identify the following issues where the Bijlmermeer was a forerunner of national developments and ideas, or at least an early adapter of the first ideas. These are summarized in Table 20.1.

Urban renewal as a reaction to Bijlmermeer-style planning – Urban renewal in the Netherlands started as a reaction to top-down large-scale planning in the early 1970s. The Bijlmermeer high-rises can be considered the high point of such planning. Urban renewal started by improving the old neglected neighbourhoods, thus preventing the further construction of mass housing areas to replace the old houses. Both regeneration projects and new developments were planned bottom-up, with the intense participation of residents, and resulted in low-rise constructions. The disastrous case of Hoptille (described in Chapter 9) is also a product of this, illustrating that not everything was successful. The local housing departments took the lead in urban planning issues, instead of the planning departments as before. Urban renewal both as urban and as regional planning were housing oriented. When suburbanization grew in the 1970s, attractive new housing was provided outside the existing cities.

Table 20.1 Urban developments and policies in the Bijlmermeer and in the Netherlands

	Bijlmermeer	Netherlands
Early 1970s	Construction of the high-rises, result of top down planning	Increasing aversion to large housing estates, focus on *Stadsvernieuwing* (urban renewal); Refurbishment or replacement of old dwellings by inexpensive housing for the benefit of local tenants, supported by bottom up planning ('building for the neighbourhood')
Late 1970s, 1980s	Bijlmermeer-South is built as low-rise family housing, and renamed	*Groeikernenbeleid*, (new towns and suburbs around the major cities built in low rise family housing)
1980s	Increasing problems are out of control	Urban renewal continues. Consciousness arose that major problems concern the local environment and liveability issues.
Around 1990	Increasing individual and social problems	Social renewal policy. Social oriented policy for deprived areas, an addition to *Stadsvernieuwing*.
1980s 1990s	Home of many experimental measures	Sector based subsidy schemes for sector oriented problems
1990s	Personal involvement	2000s: *Achter de voordeur-aanpak* ('looking behind the front door' approach)
1990s	1992: 1st Restructuring Plan 1995: 2nd Restructuring Plan Integrated renewal, including major physical transformation 2001: Final Restructuring Plan	1994: *Grote Steden Beleid* (GSB, Big City Policy), integrated policy in major cities, based on physical, social and economic renewal. 1997: *Nota Stedelijke Vernieuwing* (White paper on urban restructuring). In 2000 a budget was created: ISV (investment budget for urban renewal)
2000s	2000-2005: peak in demolitions	2004-2008: Peak in demolitions
2000s	Continued operation in one area	2003: 56 districts approach; designated within the 30 GSB cities for more focus. 2007: *Wijkenaanpak* (Neighbourhood policy) for 40 deprived areas emphasizing social mobility
2012	Dealing with changed circumstances	Dealing with changed circumstances

Housing needs encompass environmental problems – During the 1980s, it became clear that the most urgent problems in deprived estates concerned not so much the housing, as the living environment of increasingly recently built post-war housing estates (see Chapter 12). Safety, pollution and vandalism topped the list of problems. Although these problems were most manifest in the Bijlmermeer, they were present on a minor scale in other urban quarters as well. During the 1980s, national policies started to include issues related to the quality of life, as evidenced by national subsidies and programmes to prevent crime on large housing estates.

Social renewal – During the 1980s, the awareness arose that physical measures alone were not enough, as many resulted in nice new or improved dwellings, but people who lived there were still poor, deprived, jobless and badly educated. On the national scale, this understanding resulted in a programme called 'Social Renewal' in 1989-91, a programme that could easily be included in the Bijlmermeer approach, where job and education programmes had already started during the 1980s. The poor economic situation in the early 1990s increased the need for such socially oriented measures.

The Bijlmermeer as an experimental garden – In Part III, we demonstrated that many experiments were first applied in the Bijlmermeer. Among these are flat guards (later the security guards) who started working when surveillance for reasons of security was unusual. Another was the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV), the first in a housing estate in the country (see Chapter 12). Social and economic measures were also taken first in the Bijlmermeer, such as a women's empowerment centre, music and art projects for children, and the organization of the daily management within the blocks of flats.

Identifying households in trouble – The 1998 experiment in the Grubbehoeve and Grunder blocks was called 'intensive personal involvement to approach individual residents' (Chapter 12). Debts were an increasing problem for many households, as was bringing up children (especially for the many single-parent families). It had been recognized that personal problems complicated the lives of many residents; individual attention was now being paid to families. It would not be until the new millennium that an individual approach became more common in the Netherlands, particularly in the field of education, work, leisure and housing. Area-based approaches are now used to identify families in trouble: 'looking behind the front door' (*Achter de voordeur aanpak*). Most households appreciate this individual attention.

Working within an area – The integrated renewal in the Bijlmermeer was launched in 1990 and officially started in 1992. The plans stated that an approach for the whole Bijlmermeer area would be necessary, and that not only partial measures should be used, as was case previously. However, it was not until 2003 that on the national scale more focus was introduced in local urban renewal schemes, thus advocating area-based approaches. The renewal of the Bijlmermeer was over half way by that time. The area was part of both a national urban renewal policy focussing on 56 areas in 2003, and a policy focusing on 40 areas in 2007. In the 40 selected neighbourhoods, a policy known as *Wijkenaanpak* ('neighbourhood approach') is being implemented and will be continued until 2018.

Interrelations between physical interventions – In the territorial approach to the Bijlmermeer, it was recognized that a range of physical interventions had to be implemented simultaneously. This resulted in demolitions, refurbishments and new construction at the same time. These three major physical measures became visible in the Bijlmermeer in 1995. Blocks were demolished already in the Bijlmermeer in the 1990s, when debates started in other places. Moreover, the Bijlmermeer clearly demonstrated that a mix of long-term prospects and urgent actions is needed to tackle day-to-day problems.

Integrated measures instead of partial solutions – During the 1990s, gradually physical measures would be combined with social and economic efforts. This has already been implemented in the Bijlmermeer, where it was recognized that wicked large-scale problems needed integrated measures on different scales, varying from large improvements, safety measures, socioeconomic empowerment to large-scale demolitions. Nationally, the physical oriented ISV measures and the socially oriented GSB measures would be only gradually integrated.

Urban renewal in Delft, the Netherlands

20.2 Urban renewal policies in the Netherlands

Several authors have described and analysed urban renewal policies in the Netherlands and in Europe. I am one of them; see the Appendix for some recent and forthcoming publications on urban renewal policies. In Chapter 22, elements of a sustainable urban renewal will be explained.

In the Netherlands, *Grotestedenbeleid* (GSB; 'Big City Policy') was developed from 1994 onwards, in an attempt to combine three pillars. Physical renewal (*Stedelijke vernieuwing*) was the successor to *Stadsvernieuwing*. Both can be translated as urban renewal, although at the start the term 'new urban renewal' was also used to emphasize the difference (see Priemus & Van Kempen, 1999). Social renewal aimed at improving education, safety, liveability and social care. Economic renewal increased the focus on work and the economy in cities. The programme is targeted at the (at first 25, later 30, then 37) largest cities, which spend the money on the basis of overall city programmes. The physical pillar (ISV, *Investeringsbudget Stedelijke Vernieuwing*) has gradually been integrated into the GSB. The GSB has been updated and adapted four times; the present and final version runs until the end of 2014; by then, all governmental urban renewal subsidies will have been stopped.

The transformation of unpopular housing areas into more popular areas was the core of Dutch restructuring policy around the turn of the century. Areas had to be restructured, called *Herstructurering*, to create attractive neighbourhoods in vital cities. During the first years of the new millennium, most plans opted to attract middle-class residents to deprived neighbourhoods by changing poor housing areas into better housing areas. However, most of the interest in the new homes came from social climbers in the area. Many people fled from the deprived areas as soon as they climbed up the social ladder. Instead, contemporary strategies aim to offer attractive regenerated neighbourhoods that those successful climbers appreciate and which tempt them to stay.

Vaulx-en-Velin (near Lyon), one of the many French grands ensembles.

20.3 French policies for the grands ensembles

The French large housing estates are among the largest in Europe, and probably among the most stigmatized. We therefore cannot neglect these grands ensembles when talking about large housing estates in Europe. The French and Dutch situations have surprising similarities, which makes experiences transferable. The Bijl-mermeer approach has been one of the inspirations for French renewal policies, and Dutch (and other) experts visit France to learn from their (grands) practices.

The following text was formulated after a comparison between the French and Dutch deprived areas following the 2005 riots. I have debated about this several times in Lyon, Paris and the Netherlands. Moreover, I have used the forthcoming joint article of Droste and colleagues (2013).

In November 2005, large-scale riots broke out in the French suburbs, les banlieues. Television and newspapers showed dramatic scenes of burning cars, buses and neighbourhood centres. Journalists reported on the hopeless situation of the youth in the banlieues, and of the monotonous, enormous, massive, grey high-rise blocks. The riots were by no means the first; there had been rioting in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1983 riots started in Les Minguettes, a suburb of Lyon. Afterwards, the powerful French central state ordered a range of measures, mostly socially oriented. Social workers, street work, community development, youth work projects, projects to combine work with housing, women's projects. Some of these projects, like Foyers de Jeunesse (youth work projects) and Regies de Quartiers (whereby inhabitants improve their own neighbourhood) were imitated internationally. French urban renewal policy is focused on the grands ensembles in the banlieues, the large housing estates in the suburbs, mostly the social-rented high-rise blocks of the 1950s and 1960s.

Since 2000, the French policy has changed, in the context of increasing segregation in 'Sensitive urban zones' (ZUS, deprived areas). Social mixing became a major aim in urban policies, to be realized by physical transformation. Demolition and reconstruction are now more central, unlike in the previous policy. Such cases as the Amsterdam Bijlmermeer and the Dublin Ballymun are seen as examples; at a major conference in Paris in early 2006 (by Foncière Logement), both cases were debated and analysed. In both areas, thousands of high-rise dwellings have been demolished and replaced with traditional single-family houses, changes that are considered successful.

The new policy is laid down in two laws that have the same objective: to achieve a better social mix by spreading social housing and creating a more diversified and attractive housing stock. The SRU (Solidarity and Urban Renewal) law of 2000 enforces solidarity between municipalities, and thus makes renewal a regional approach. Regional differentiation and social mix are the keywords. What is interesting is the obligation to have at least 20% social-sector housing in each urban municipality, on the basis of fines for every dwelling that is failing. The 2003 Urban Renovation Law is the basis for a large urban renewal programme: 250,000 dwellings are to be demolished, 250,000 new dwellings are to be built and 400,000 dwellings are to be renovated. The focus is on the nationally appointed deprived areas, mostly in the grands ensembles in the banlieues: the infamous large housing estates. The programme runs until 2013, but there are delays, aggravated by the economic crisis. The French state is directly involved (via the agency ANRU) with the implementation of the renewal policy. ANRU provides large amounts of money to municipalities that contribute to the goals, making it attractive to apply for it.

The riots have focussed on the social economic situation. As a reaction, 'Urban and social cohesion contracts' (CUCS) have been signed; 500 contracts in Sensitive urban zones (ZUS) for socioeconomic improvements. However, the core of the drastic renewal and demolition remains intact.

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21 Ingredients for an integrated approach

21.1 From one size fits all to more flavours

Large housing estates: one size fits all

At the beginning of this book, it was stated that for many people large housing estates are 'wrong': they are large, while most people prefer an environment they can take stock of; they are mainly housing, while most people prefer a mix of functions; and they are planned for people, not by them.

Large housing estates look just that: large. They were produced in big series and at high speed. Their contribution to alleviating housing shortages was substantial. They were well-planned by experts who followed general top-down planning ideas. They were uniform, corresponding to ideals of an egalitarian society. It was well studied how the ideal dwelling should look like. The results of these studies were copied thousands of time. Large housing estates could be built when increasing technology and standardized labour saving methods were implemented. People would easily feel at home. The location of work, leisure, recreation, school, housing or traffic was clear: every function was located on its own specific piece of land. Large housing estates anticipated the future; for everyone. One size fits all.

One size is vulnerable

However, society developed in another direction. People became educated and emancipated, many household types other than standard families developed, prosperity grew, and more room was needed for individual demands and styles of living. Uniformity, repetition and equality were the basic characteristics of early post-war society, the reconstruction period in which many large housing estates were built. Diversity, individualism and choice would be the features of the following decades.

Large is as such vulnerable. This becomes clear when global trends manifest themselves, when society is dynamic, when the housing market supply widens or when fashions change: size matters. The larger and the more one-size-fits-all, the more vulnerable it is. This is exactly what happened with large housing estates: limited inconveniences became major problems, exacerbated by the large size and uniformity.

One-size-fits-all housing is more vulnerable when the housing stock cannot easily be adapted to changed circumstances. Earlier types of housing areas have proved to be quite adaptive, like canal houses and the private developments of the 1930s. Other types of housing proved to have a more limited life expectancy. Many post-war large housing estates are not very adaptable.

From one size to more flavours

In this chapter, we explore the integrated approach to the recovery of large housing estates. All across Europe, the specific measures that prevailed in the 1980s and 1990s gradually made way for a more integrated approach, in which several sectors are incorporated, major and minor measures are combined, long-term prospects for the area are mingled with the day-to-day worries of residents, and a range of participants are involved.

21.2 Ingredients for an integrated approach

The ingredients for an integrated approach are based on creating more flavours than provided by the one size. Ingredients can be distinguished into three categories:
a) more differentiation in the area;
b) more bonds between residents and their living environment;
c) more coherence and synergy in measures.

Re a) more differentiation
The Bijlmermeer was a prototype of a 'one-size-fits-all housing area', resulting in a high degree of vulnerability in changing circumstances. More variation, diversity and differentiation are necessary elements for a structural improvement. This includes more differentiation:

- In functions. The Bijlmermeer was designed as a mono-functional housing area. More services, social and economic activities were gradually provided. However, the area is still mainly a housing area.
- In size. 13,000 uniform dwellings at one remote location are not in accordance with a differentiated demand. Market demand and market supply did not match.
- In appearance. All estates and all dwellings looked the same, as they were built according to the ideal size and features of a standard dwelling.
- In tenure. Almost all high-rise dwellings were social-rented sector housing, although they were not cheap; there was no owner-occupied housing.
- In residents. All were dependent on social housing. The population soon changed into a weak population.
- In partners. There was one housing association, one city and one urban district, and there were tenants. There were hardly any other actors to initiate activities, like shopkeepers, schoolteachers, developers, owner-occupiers, policemen, etc.

Re b) more bonds
Already when the Bijlmermeer was only half completed, demand shrank. The high-rise flats could not compete with the available alternative housing. More and more, new tenants arrived only as a second (or less, or even no) choice, out of necessity. The concentration of poor and jobless tenants increased. The share of residents who supported the ideology of the Bijlmermeer (the 'Bijlmer believers') decreased. Ingredients for an integrated approach should

Table 21.1 Ingredients for an integrated approach

	(a) More differentiation	(b) More bonds	(c) More coherence
Introduce more variety in housing and public space	x		
Strengthen the current qualities	x	x	
Utilise cultural values	x	x	
Involve residents		x	
Give more room for private initiatives	x	x	
Mobilise other financing	x		x
Combine			x
Operate on several scale levels			x
Keep the social climbers		x	
Create a wide social base		x	x

strengthen the bonds:

- With the area. Residents gave the lowest grades to the use of the public spaces. They were not involved in the management of public areas.
- With each other. Residents complained about the anti-social behaviour of their co-tenants and other (!) strangers.
- With their direct environment. The numerous semi-public spaces were not considered collective grounds with common responsibilities, but as nobody's land.

Re c) more coherence

In the opening chapter of this part of the book, we observed that a range of measures had been implemented to combat the depriving circumstances, but all with partial and limited outcomes. The experiences gained from the many measures taken in the Bijlmermeer supported the need for a more coherent approach.

Such ingredients do not reflect general do's and don'ts, as all situations will be different. Moreover, as integrated approaches are rather common in many deprived areas all across the Western world, many experiences do exist. There have been other studies that focus on policy recommendations, including reports that I wrote (see Appendix 2 and 3, and see the articles included in this PhD study).

In the rest of this chapter, we transfer what we learnt from the large Bijlmermeer experience to such an integrated approach. We do this by exploring a number of issues, strategies and measures, each of which is part of a wider debate. We do not explore these debates in this chapter (some of them have been going on for decades, resulting in hundreds of publications), nor do we provide reviews of literature, as others have already done that. Instead, we consider what the Bijlmermeer experience can add to conclusions and insights. These are summarized in Table 21.1. The ingredients all improve differentiation, bonding and/or coherence. The table specifies the focus of each ingredient.

Introduce more variety in housing and public space (for (a): more differentiation) – One of the most important points is to create a more diversified area. The one-size-fits-all housing is probably the most negative feature of a large housing estate. The Bijlmermeer is a clear example of providing more variety, be it the different housing schemes, the re-differentiation in tenure (from only social housing to a variety of social-rented, commercial-rented and owner-occupied housing) and the addition of a range of functions (social services, labour opportunities, art projects, recreation, shops). Any mono-functional estate would be improved by more differentiation.

Strengthen the current qualities (for (a) more differentiation and (b) more bonds) – The Bijlmermeer long had, and still has the image of a concrete jungle of monotonous high-rises. The internal image is different, however. People who know the area appreciate the positive values, the current qualities. Elaborating on those qualities (the large dwelling size, the quality of the green space, the ambiance, the mixed population) has proved to be successful in the Bijlmermeer. An example is the focus on the Caribbean atmosphere. Not everyone appreciates it, but it is something distinguishing. Another value is the habit of applying unusual strategies or policies, like the experiments to improve the quality of life in the 1990s. A positive characteristic is that the Bijlmermeer is open to innovative ideas, as experiments have been part of the history of the area. It should be continued to allow room for ideas, for initiatives that do not get a place elsewhere in Amsterdam.

Utilize cultural values (for (a) more differentiation and (b) more bonds) – The Toronto case shows that the city's many towers are considered one of the greatest assets in the city. The Park Hill estate in Sheffield – one of the sources of inspiration for the design of the Bijlmermeer – has changed from a problem estate into a cultural heritage, listed on England's heritage list. The Bijlmer museum, as the name states, conserves a part of the Bijlmermeer where the original ideas are best maintained. The size of this museum is about a fifth of the original Bijlmermeer; time will tell whether there are sufficient 'Bijlmer believers', people who actually chose to live in the area. In our earlier research, the proportion of these believers was estimated at about a quarter. Preserving such a museum contributes to the differentiation in the area, and should be stimulated.

Involve residents (for (b): more bonds) – This sounds obvious, but it is not. The design and realization of the Bijlmermeer took place without any involvement of residents. When problems increased in the early years, the involvement of residents resulted in more partial measures, with partial solutions. The first renewal plans in the 1990s were decided top-down, to make a statement and to show how the different proposed measured would work out in practice. Once the results became noticeable, residents were involved on a large scale, with the major residents' consultation as a fine example. After consulting all residents, the plans were made more and more according to their preferences.

Allow more room for private initiatives (for (a) more differentiation and (b) more bonds) – Large housing estates were planned top-down, without the involvement of residents or other actors with day-to-day experiences. Looking at the governance structures that are emerging in many countries, the role of actors in urban regeneration has considerably changed over the last decades, and will continue to do so. Property owners, like housing associations in the Netherlands, still have an important role to play, but increasingly other private actors and residents get a role. Participation is not only about informing people (as in the 1980s), empowering people (1990s) or involving people (2000s), but also about self-help and autonomous action. Civilians and other actors have to play a larger role in taking care of the urban living areas.

Urban planning and urban renewal will be more open to private initiatives from occupants and market actors. Traditional actors such as municipalities and housing associations not only have to give room to other partners, but also have to invite them, and to initiate and facilitate their proposals.

More room for private initiatives on large housing estates can take place in new housing and recovery activities. In the Bijlmermeer, there is now a lot of wasteland as a result of the demolitions. Developers are reluctant to redevelop these areas because of the market conditions. This could provide room for civilians to build their own houses, following recent experiences in the nearby new town of Almere.

Private involvement can also be used to improve existing buildings. A current option is to refurbish one old high-rise block (Kleiburg) this way (see the klushuizen in Chapter 18). The sale of dwellings is another way to differentiate, but under the present economic conditions, the demand for owner-occupied housing is limited.

Mobilize other financing (for (a:) more differentiation and (c) more coherence) – The investments in the recovery programme were calculated to be €1.6 billion – of which €450 million were costs (losses) – only for the physical improvements within the selected area (Chapter 18). Such enormous amounts of money will not be available in the future. The implication is that other ways must be found to get financing, or other ways must be developed (revolving funds instead of subsidies), or that programmes should be set up differently. The financial participation of private actors and residents is another promising way.

Combine measures (for (c): more coherence) – The Bijlmermeer experiences show that the partial measures were not sufficient, so a more integrated approach for the area was welcomed. Long-term strategy plans have to deal with the daily problems as well. 'Safe, whole and clean' were unattended item and therefor at the top of the residents' frustration lists for years, and these will not be solved by a major intervention in the distant future. The combination of major and minor interventions proved to be successful. Residents were consulted about their future housing needs, and were also helped with problems raising their children or getting incorporated in a debt help scheme.

Operate on several scale levels (for (c): more coherence) – In addition to a combination of types of measures, it is useful to operate simultaneously at several levels of scale. Any area-based approach, the Bijlmermeer included, always will generate spill-over effects. However, this should never be an argument not to intervene. The Bijlmermeer also experienced spill-over effects: when some of the high-rise blocks were dealt with, some of the problems simply moved away to nearby estates. An integrated approach can limit spill-over effects, just as it should also focus on nearby areas.

The limits of an area-based approach should also be recognized. Some problems may better be tackled by a sector approach, additional to the area approach. An example is the hard-to-house people, often people with antisocial behaviour, criminals, psychiatric patients, and others who have difficulty living in a way that respects other residents. Perhaps it would be better to get specific measures for them (like accompanied housing), or to house them in a quiet part of town, instead in a dense neighbourhood. It has clear advantages for a deprived neighbourhood, as the Bijlmermeer was, to spread out hard-to-house people over other areas as well.

Keep the social climbers (for (b): more bonds) – From the beginning, the Bijlmermeer recovery focused on those who liked living there. Since the very start of the regeneration process in the early 1990s, the policy in the Bijlmermeer has been not so much to attract newcomers, as to keep social climbers instead of seeing them move to better-off areas. The restructuring in the Bijlmermeer has created a more diversified housing stock, thus creating a range of alternatives instead of only the standard social-rented flat. This offers opportunities to people who succeed in life, the social climbers. Later on, this policy became common in other parts of the country, where the regeneration of deprived areas previously focused on attracting newcomers.

A promising result of the recovery operation is that the black middle classes now prefer to stay in the Bijlmermeer. Many of them are the descendants of poor immigrants, mostly from Surinam, which was a Dutch colony until its independence in 1975. They can increasingly be considered social climbers who have improved themselves and evolved from being a deprived section of the population into forming a black middle class. They have their relatives and friends around, they like the new housing opportunities, and they like the Caribbean atmosphere that is created by the largest groups in the Bijlmermeer: the Surinamese, Antilleans and Africans. Ethnic social mix is not an aim, but it may be a result.

Creating a broad social base (for (b): more bonds and (c): more coherence)) – Many different actors are involved in the recovery of the Bijlmermeer. The municipality and the housing association form the daily Project Office (PVB). The costs of the expensive renewal operation are financed by the city of Amsterdam and the Central Housing Fund (CFV). Residents are involved by socially and economically oriented empowerment programmes consisting of over a hundred concrete activities.

Moreover, it was recognized that any major renewal approach should be pursued over a long period of time, and had to be supported by a strong consensus. The renewal of the Bijlmermeer is taking far longer than expected. Such a major policy needs the support of all relevant partners. It cannot stop after the next elections, as a major approach to a seriously deprived large estate will take at least 15-20 years. In the Bijlmermeer it will be at least 25 years.

Towards sustainable areas

In Chapter 22, it will be elaborated what can be considered a ‘sustainable approach’ and a ‘sustainable area’. One important characteristic is that a sustainable area does not need drastic renewal activities, but must have enough internal vitality and flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances, use and preferences. Major recovery operations should not be necessary in such neighbourhoods. The sketched ingredients can attribute to a more sustainable area in the future.

22 Towards sustainable urban renewal in the Netherlands

Frank Wassenberg, in: Open House International (OHI)
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www.openhouse-int.com/

22.1 Introduction

Neighbourhoods are no static entities. They change when being used by residents, visitors and local entrepreneurs. They 'age', wear out and need maintenance and renewal. Some neighbourhoods are continuously doing well, while others face decline. In the latter case they get branded as 'problem', 'disadvantaged', 'deprived' or 'concentrated' area', low-income neighbourhood and poverty district. This refers to a downward process in which people who can afford it are moving out and make place for people at the lower social strata, where dwellings and streets are deteriorating, crime and non-social behaviour rise, facilities leave or go out of business and the image is worsening.

Governments develop policies to renew existing neighbourhoods when these do not match with future ideas for the area. Considering a range of countries across Europe during a long time period, we can distinguish comparable goals and strategies on urban renewal processes. We will elaborate on these, but providing such a wide overview, this raises the question why some areas do need the help of an active urban renewal support, while other areas are more or less able to adjust to the – often same – changing circumstances. While urban renewal activities differ enormously between areas, their results differ as much. Some urban renewal efforts result in the intended vital neighbourhoods, while in other areas urban renewal activities take place year after year, placing doubts at the effectiveness of earlier efforts. In the latter areas, urban renewal obviously is not very sustainable, as results don't sustain for a long time. Why are some approaches successful and others not? Or why do results differ from apparent similar approaches? It is intriguing which renewal approaches are more effective than others.

These considerations result in the following overall question: What characterizes a sustainable urban renewal approach?

22.2 Sustainable urban renewal

The word 'sustainable' has been subject of numerous debates. It can be used in a more ecological sense, referring to the exhaustibility of our natural resources and following the original meaning provided by the Brundtland Commission in 1987. Sustainable urban renewal focuses on improving the housing stock in an area to decrease energy consumption (see Van der Waals, 2001; Sunikka, 2006; Beerepoot, 2007). Measures on ecological sustainability aim to improve insulation, save energy consumption, generate local electricity, smart grid technology, etc.

Sustainability also can be used in a wider sense including physical attractiveness, safe and clean streets, involvement and collaboration and a mix of functions. In the widest sense a sustainable urban area is functioning according to needs and expectations, and urban renewal is meant to make such a good area. An important characteristic is that a sustainable area doesn't need drastic renewal activities, but has an internal vitality and quality to gradually adjust to changing circumstances over time. A sustainable urban area functions well on physical, social, economic and ecological terms and has enough internal vitality and flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances, use and preferences. Sustainable urban renewal refers to an approach that leads to a sustainable area, an area that functions well.

However, many urban areas do not follow the track of gradually adjustments. These areas have been subject to urban renewal processes, defined as policies and strategies that are formulated to alter the area. Motives can be found in perceived deterioration, or in plans for other uses or functions.

All European countries have policies to renew cities and neighbourhoods. We will share all policies to renew an area under the umbrella term of 'urban renewal': this includes urban regeneration, urban revival, area development and any similar term. Moreover, in all different languages specific terms are used, often with their own political connotations. Not seldom, when a new national administration arrives, new policies are implemented, using a different terminology, and only changing the final activities in a minor way. We don't make difference between any of those related terms and use all these terms equal, as referring to activities that change existing parts of the city.

Three periods of urban renewal policy in Europe

The renewal of urban areas has been a process almost as long as cities do exist. Obviously, by far not all urban areas are able to gradually adjust to changing circumstances. Moreover, many earlier renewal efforts don't result in sustainable areas. What went wrong? What can we learn in current debates and future policies from processes in the past? Therefore we return to earlier urban renewal policies. We focus on urban renewal processes in Europe since World War II, which can be divided into three major periods, distinguished by rather clear changes of policy (Droste *et al.*, 2008).

The first period of urban renewal policy in Europe starts some years after the Second World War. After having overcome war damages, the central parts of the existing cities were completely rebuilt and remodelled for future use during the following decades. Old areas were cleared to provide opportunities for future urban developments. Dwellings were built in new neighbourhoods (the then suburbs) in order to provide housing for displaced inhabitants of the old derelict slums near the city centres. National governments played a predominant role, providing the political framework and major subsidies for implementation at the local level. National governments took the lead in ordering the country and developing welfare states, where housing was considered as a major element of these new welfare states (Levy-Vroelant *et al.,* 2008). This could be social housing for the working classes in countries in North and Western Europe, state housing in Eastern Europe, or individual support to facilitate ownership in Southern countries.

The turning point was the worldwide reaction against the establishment in the late 1960s, with slogans like 'flower power' and 'power to the people', student revolts and demonstrations against the Vietnam War. Urban renewal of those days came under pressure in the early 1970s. Prestigious large-scale road development, ambitious city-centre plans and high-rise housing construction stopped rather suddenly (Turkington *et al.,* 2004). Large-scale top-down plans were replaced by small-scale neighbourhood renewal, based on bottom-up processes. The wave of anti-establishment thinking led to a new focus on popular demand and social needs: urban renewal became more demand-oriented and focused on provision of social infrastructure, including affordable housing.

This change in priorities and ideas marked the transition to the second period of urban renewal, which started early 1970s and lasted until mid-1990s. Urban renewal before had been led by urban planning, but now it was led by housing issues. The strategy changed from area clearance to housing renewal in favour of existing local residents and the strategy was to build for the neighbourhood and its people. The participation of inhabitants in planning and renovation was considered essential.

During the 1980s, the theme of urban renewal broadened from housing alone to the overall residential environment, in order to address problems of pollution, vandalism and safety. As the environment proved to be worst in recently built high-rise estates, the schemes also targeted these areas. Both the dwelling and the environmental strategies were mainly physically oriented, but included also social and physical policies developed in association with residents.

Urban regeneration was mainly a top-down issue in all countries during this second period, with the national governments formulating the goals, the policies and providing the money. Increasingly, local responsibilities grew and larger municipalities got responsible for planning and implementation of urban renewal strategies, mainly physical oriented. The focus of urban renewal policy evolved from the improvement of housing in the 1970s to the improvement of the residential environment in the 1980s. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, social and socio-economic programmes were introduced. These policies had a new aim: to integrate deprived people and to increase social relations between different groups in society. These blazed the trail for subsequent policies and can be seen as the turning point to the third period.

The third period of European urban renewal starts in the 1990s and is characterised by integrated policy. It was recognised that urban problems could not be solved by physical improvement alone, nor was the addition of social measures enough. All across Europe there was an increasing mismatch between the labour market and the urban structure: the working (middle) class commuted each day from the suburbs to the cities, while the people who lived in the city had no jobs, as low wage jobs had moved towards the outskirts (and abroad). Neither hostile housing design, nor bad housing quality, nor management deficits were sufficient to explain social problems in deprived areas. The city as a whole would end up segregated: lower-class people would live in social housing in sober and inexpensive neighbourhoods, while the middle classes, including families with children, would have moved to suburbs with detached family houses or to neighbouring towns. The least popular areas proved to be not the old pre-war neighbourhoods (with their central location and improved housing stock), but the post-war areas dominated by standardised mass housing. Residents consider both buildings and environment as unattractive, making them areas of 'minimal choice'. Unemployment, social exclusion, crime and tensions between groups are common. Urban sociologists labelled this process the doughnut city (Schoon, 2001): an expensive core in the city centre surrounded by poor neighbourhoods, with wealthy areas surrounding the city.

In most European countries urban regeneration gradually became an integrated policy during the 1990s: City Policy (*Politique de la Ville*) in France, the national Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal in England, Big City Policy (*Grotestedenbeleid*) in the Netherlands, the Metropolitan Development Initiative in Sweden and the Socially Integrative City (*Soziale Stadt*) in Germany. These territorial and integrative programmes combined physical, economic and social goals and strategies. In these programmes increasingly the strategy was to keep the residents in the urban regeneration areas. Policies developed in a new way: towards a social mix of the population, to be achieved by a differentiated housing stock. There were two main approaches: either to build social housing in areas where it was scarce, or to replace social housing in areas where it was dominant by middle class housing. Richard Florida's ideas (2002) were welcomed everywhere, and cities tried to stimulate the 'creative class' to live within their city limits.

Moreover, years of urban centre upgrading paid out: in most European cities there are more shops, terraces and restaurants, car free zones, and lots of festivals and attractions than twenty years ago. City life has just grown nicer. The urban popularity coincides with major international trends like a growing number of small households, divorced people, retiring elderly, people having a job of their own, groups that often prefer city life.

The national governments gradually lost their leading role during this third period of urban renewal, although they still keep the responsibility for urban renewal programmes (in terms of budget and policy development). The municipalities grew in importance, but even more the non-governmental actors. Policies are made and implemented in collaboration with a range of actors, in what is generally referred to as a shift from government to governance (Healey, 1997; Van Kempen *et al.*, 2005). These other actors include housing associations, private developers, local service organisations, and not in the last place inhabitants.

The historic overview shows that the areas where urban policy focuses on have been renewed, dependent on changing interests, policies and historic circumstances. The object of urban renewal differs per country. When global forces changed the worldwide industrial landscape, former heavily industrialised countries such as Britain, Germany and Belgium had to cope more with vacant industrial plots, which obviously needed transformation and restructuring. In France, Sweden and the Netherlands relatively many inexpensive and sober social housing was produced in the three decades following World War II. When prosperity rose and people could afford other types of housing, these mass housing neighbourhoods increasingly proved to be unpopular resulting in a renewal focus on these post war areas. In Southern European countries owner occupancy rules and urban renewal activities focus on the upgrading of central districts. In Eastern European countries, all changes started only from the 1990 onwards after the political turnover. Despite general trends across Europe, local and national circumstances, histories and interests influence outcomes of the process of urban renewal (see Levy-Vroelant *et al.*, 2008).

22.3 General trends and debates in urban renewal policies

Urban renewal has over time changed from a technical discipline to a complex process, integrating more aspects and involving more actors. More activities are carried out on different scales and on different moments in time, and more strategies and methods are used. Several authors identify different features of the resulting changes in governance, contents and organisation of urban policies (Couch *et al.*, 2003; Van Kempen *et al.*, 2005; Czischke & Pattini, 2007; Droste *et al.*, 2008; Van Gent, 2009). Before analysing any urban policy, it is useful to point at the limits of it. Urban policy is just one kind of policy, dependent on both external developments and policy processes in general. Worldwide megatrends such as globalization, economic industrialization shifts, increasing competition between urban regions, ageing of the population, climate changes, developments in ict, and other trends all have implications for any local or national urban policy, implications we don't discuss here, but one should be aware of. Another set of overall factors are national or European policies. EU-climate regulations limit the construction of (new) housing close to motorways and within dense conurbations, EU enlargements lead to higher immigration levels and national policies on allowances, tax regulations or incomes influence local urban renewal schemes. Urban policy and urban renewal policy in particular, has a limited influence.

Nevertheless, there are many commonalities in the diagnosis of urban problems, in policy goals and often in methodology. We distinguish four dimensions that are particularly relevant: (1) the area based approach, (2) the integrated approach, (3) the ecological inevitability and (4) the shift from government to governance. We elaborate on these four dimensions, and mention some of the debates that play around these dimensions across Europe. Next to that, we focus on the Netherlands, and describe how these four dimensions work out in this particular country.

(1) The territorial (area-based) approach: problems don't stop at the border, so why should the approach do so?

The area approach is a way to focus activities and to connect policy-making more directly with implementation. The neighbourhood often seems a natural, logical scale to assemble the actors in the urban renewal process, both those within the area (residents and other users) and those with wider responsibilities (municipality, police, social care, housing associations, etc.). Area-based approaches have gained prominence across Europe, largely because they create a good framework for concerted action to counteract multiple deprivation. Are abased approaches can be successful: many problems are solved, the environment looks better, property prices increase and residents are happier in their improved houses and environment – at least immediately after the interventions (see Wassenberg *et al.,* 2007).

But there are critical accounts of area-based approaches as well. It may produce negative side effects: some problems are displaced to other, often adjacent areas. Dealers and burglars just move. These areas may originally have enjoyed somewhat more favourable conditions than the target neighbourhood but then get pushed into a downwards spiral of socio-structural development. Any area based approach thus should take account of side effects on nearby areas and incorporate plans for adjacent areas.

Another point of discussion is that some problems indeed concentrate in an area, but hardly can be solved on the neighbourhood level. Clean streets, derelict housing and social cohesion can be improved locally, but it is more efficient for issues such as unemployment, inadequate schooling, organised crime or energy use to work on a higher scale level. It is counted that just a mere 1% of all jobs is provided within the own neighbourhood (Marlet, 2009). So, the chance that any jobless finds a job is much larger somewhere else in the city, or in the region.

Typical urban renewal project from 1980s, with 100% social sector rented housing, developed in consultation with inhabitants.

(2) The integrated approach: the paradoxal balance between place and people

In most Western European countries there has been a shift from sectoral to more integrative policies that require cross-departmental work. The historic overview shows that urban renewal has broadened from physical to social and economical issues in most countries. There has been one or more swings in the focus of urban regeneration among three objectives: socio-economic, socio-cultural or physical-economic. These occur at different times depending on local political priorities.

The integrated approach understands that problems are often 'wicked' problems with no easy solution or one universal remedy. Completely eradicate unemployment, crime or marginality from problematic areas is impossible as these are part of urban life, but they can be made less persistent. It is an open question what the aim of any renewal approach should be: should it lead to an average functioning urban neighbourhood, according to a number of features (safety, jobless, pollution), or could districts at the bottom of the housing market play a vital role in the function of the whole city? The first strategy aims at a social mixed neighbourhood and provides opportunities to keep successful social climbers within the area. The latter strategy aims at solid basic circumstances and to concentrate both control and help opportunities within the area. These are two strategies with totally different management consequences.

A related debate among scientists is whether urban renewal policies should be area-based, focussing on a better place to live, or people based, focusing on better lives for residents. Physical renewal upgrades the area, but offers no guarantee that residents' daily lives will improve, a situation that was found during the 1980s in Western European countries. Socio-economic measures may improve residents' personal situations, but if successful people continuously move out of the area it will stay deprived. This we can call the paradoxical relationship between territorial action and residential mobility. The challenge is to find the right balance between the two approaches, given the particular context of each area.

This balance is dependent on the geographical context and may change during the years. German policies in the eastern part of the country differ from those in the west. Due to the different urban and social contexts and different tensions on the housing market, the eastern Länder do face more physical measures than the western Länder. In France a more physical approach is becoming increasingly popular, while in the Netherlands the movement is away from the physical and towards more social and economic measures (Droste *et al.,* 2008).

(3) The ecological inevitability: from scepticism to action?

It is clear for most people that the climate is changing, despite some few sceptics. Natural resources are limited, energy prices are rising due to scarcity, the planet is warming and biodiversity is shrinking. Al Gore's movie accelerated the global opinion on the theme. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of the UN presented its fourth report in 2007, in which all leading scientists state that global warming most probably is caused by human activities.

Concerning urban renewal, the main issue is not whether ecological measures are inevitable, but how these should be implemented. Who should take the lead, should invest and implement necessary measures? Should these be national governments? But all across Europe governments are stepping back, leaving more responsibilities, and investments, to the market. Moreover, the financial position of most governments is weak, making them shortcutting on budgets instead of investing. Should the market invest? These will only act when they have to, to avoid competition disadvantages. So, should it be people themselves? Despite some enthusiastic forerunners, the large majority of the population seems not interested to invest much in ecological measures, only when measures will pay back by decreasing energy bills. So, who will act?

(4) Governance: who acts when the government steps back?

The last major shift in European urban renewal policy is the shift from government to governance. Top down and blueprint plans from central governments are replaced by programmes and processes, and the one actor approach is replaced by a game with multiple players. There is an increasing trend towards public-private and other partnerships, cooperation of different actors, local contracts and the inclusion of citizens in decision-making processes. Policies are not to be imposed on people but developed together. This implicates another role for governments, less expectations from laws and subsidies, and more emphasis on individual (residents) and private (mar-

Photo left: Demolition of outdated housing blocks in order to create other kinds of dwellings.
Photo right: Half of the Bijlmermeer highrise are being demolished and replaced by other kinds of dwellings; the remaining half are being refurbished.

ket) involvement. For governments this leads to delegation, mandating, service orientation and process orientation.

Countries differ in the compositions of partnerships, in the relations between central and local governments, in the form of citizen participation and in the aims of urban renewal. In Germany and the UK the focus is on integration of the individual, in France on improving social mix as a condition for social cohesion, and in the Netherlands and Sweden the goal falls somewhere between these two. While it is clear that the almighty role of governments had shrunk, it leaves open the debate which other actors should do what. This can be residents, and raises questions about participation, representation and empowerment. It also could be commercial actors, but in times of economic recession few activities are taken, while in economic prosperous times the market is overstressed. Countries that gained from economic prosperity only a couple of years ago (Spain, Ireland, UK, Greece), are hit most by the contemporary economic crisis. Economic downfall has consequences for incomes and jobs, property prices, market demands, economic confidence and on urban renewal in general. Urban renewal that involves major refurbishment or demolitions is slowed down, despite intensive social plans for, and with, inhabitants. Rehousing schemes are delayed by the lack of available housing. These delays bring urban renewal itself into disrepute and raise questions about whether it is better to continue with less intensive upgrading schemes or leave the neighbourhoods as they are.

22.4 Dutch urban renewal policies

How do the four selected dimensions work out in Dutch urban renewal policies? The distinction in three periods of European urban renewal since World War II coincides with 60 years of Dutch renewal experiences. Is this also true for the four distinguished major shifts in European urban renewal approaches? How do these shifts work out in the Netherlands?

The first dimension was the shift towards area based approaches. During the first distinguished period, the post war decades, any area based approach hardly existed. Urban renewal was initiated by sectors like transport, traffic, city enlargement and industrialisation. During the second period, from the

Housing mix as a base for social mix, which implicates creating more diverse housing types in monotonous areas.

1970s onwards, urban renewal can be characterized as area based, with small scale processes to regenerate neighbourhoods, in consultation with inhabitants. During the 1990s the vitality of the whole city came into the foreground. However, in the beginning of the current millennium the need for a spatial focus was stressed to approach more efficiently concentrated urban problems. In 2003 56 deprived areas in 30 cities were pointed out for urban renewal approaches. These 56 were chosen by the cities themselves, on two arguments: backward areas where progress was expected. Later, in 2007, a new selection of deprived areas was made, based on objective criteria to select the countries' most deprived areas, similar to the way in England 88 problem areas were selected. As a result, 40 deprived areas were selected in 18 cities throughout the country, about half of these the same as those 56, and the other half new areas. Contemporary Dutch urban renewal policy (*wijkenbeleid*) focuses on these 40 areas, where almost 5% of all Dutch residents live.

The second dimension is the integrative urban renewal policy. On a national scale, several departments have combined strategies in two related policy programmes: the Big City Policy (*Grotestedenbeleid*, GSB) and Urban Renewal Fund (*Investeringsbudget Stedelijke Vernieuwing*, ISV). The goals of contemporary Dutch urban renewal policy are differentiation, social mix and housing mix. Integrated policy is a key term, meaning that physical, social and economic issues are considered, as well as issues of integration and safety (see Priemus, 2004).

The third dimension is the necessity of sustainable urban renewal in an ecological way. Until now, a range of smaller initiative is taken, mostly by local governments (like: Rotterdam and The Hague aiming to be a climate neutral city) or housing associations. Initiatives from residents are limited, except of some advance guards, and driven by financial considerations of decreased expenses for energy costs.

The fourth dimension is the shift from government to governance in urban renewal. This results in a decreased role for both national and local governments, and more possibilities and responsibilities for market actors, housing associations and residents. Of these, particular housing associations are worth to mention, as they have a strong position in the country and in the urban renewal areas in particular. For now, we will elaborate on these actors.

Actors

Contemporary urban renewal policy in the Netherlands involves many local players, from the municipality to police officers, from inhabitants to social workers and from shopkeepers to housing associations. Urban renewal is no longer just a government issue or even a municipality issue, but a governance issue, with actors participating and collaborating.

Local governments make agreements with the national government about their share of the state budget for urban renewal, which at present is €1.2 billion for five years (2010-2014). The government has formulated three objectives for urban renewal (ISV): (1) more quality and differentiated housing stock, (2) a better quality of life in the physical environment and (3) a more healthy and ecological sustainable environment. Local governments have to collaborate for both policy making and implementation of urban renewal. The role of local government is no longer the decision-maker; it is now the mediator between local interests.

Important urban renewal policy makers are the housing associations. These own 2.3 million dwellings, a third of all Dutch housing, and three quarters of all rented housing. There are about 500 housing associations in the country, varying from 200 to 80,000 dwellings each. The larger ones are professional and powerful organisations, often better equipped to deal with housing issues than their local government counterparts, especially outside the major cities. Housing associations position themselves as hybrid organisations, social entrepreneurs with a social or non-profit aim. Housing associations have major assets in all 40 appointed urban renewal areas. Although housing association tenants are generally below the welfare average (on many points on the scale), they are not on the whole poor, deprived or stigmatised.

Since 1995, housing associations have officially been independent of state subsidies. No government money goes to housing associations, and since 1995 the government has not paid for any new social housing. Since gaining financial independence their economic position has improved, due to the general rise in house prices, which increase the value of their stock (Ouwehand & Van Daalen, 2002). Overall, the financial position of the housing association sector is strong, although recently weakened by the economic crisis and the decreased possibilities to sell some of their housing stock and generate financing for expensive investments for renovation or social amenities in the neighbourhood.

There is a debate going on about the role of housing associations. This role

Inhabitants are involved in the design of their new homes, during the renewal of the Bijlmermeer.

goes beyond the provision of only (better) housing, but also an improved environment and a better social milieu for the residents. But how far should a housing association go? Should they take the lead in urban renewal, as they own most of the property in the area? Should they invest, take financial risks, and make financially unprofitable investments? What should their role in society be? New suggested roles include caring for the local environment, ecological investments, providing houses for groups other than their traditional clients, which might include the homeless, handicapped, elderly, students or key workers. Housing associations are probably the most important player in urban renewal for policy making and implementation (Boelhouwer, 2007; Wassenberg, 2008). However, the current debate on extended roles for housing associations in times of reduction of financial possibilities makes housing associations reserved to implement several proposed measures, including energy reduction programmes, insulation and energy production.

22.5 Conclusion: towards a sustainable urban renewal approach

A sustainable urban area gradually adjusts to changing needs, uses and preferences of inhabitants and other users. Urban policies can be limited in areas where problems are not present, or at least not dominant, where changes happen without notice. Urban renewal policy is necessary where problems dominate, or, sometimes, where changes of uses ore prominent, like in old brownfield areas. What are success factors for sustainable urban renewal? Four points that contribute to success can be distinguished.

The first factor is the integration of different policy sectors (such as physical, social, ecological and economic policies). The historic overview clearly shows that sectoral solutions for multiple problems generate no final improvements. Then, integration of different policy sectors is necessary.

The second factor is the involvement and collaboration of many local players, from the municipality to police officers, from inhabitants to social workers and from shopkeepers to housing associations. Urban renewal is an issue of 'governance' and requires the active participation of all relevant stakeholders when necessary. This makes urban renewal a complicated process.

The third point is that different problems are attached to different scales, resulting in the need to operate at different levels simultaneously, varying from the direct neighbourhood, the district or the city to the region (a recent advice supports this, VROM-raad, 2009).

The fourth and last factor is a long-term approach accompanied by short-term measures, physical as well as non-physical. Complaining residents can regain their confidence through short-term improvements. Short-term and quick measures can be taken while long-term strategies are being prepared. Drastic measures, such as demolition and new construction, have more local support when daily inconveniences, like the dirt on the streets, the drugs dealer on the corner, the burglaries in the park, or the many unemployed, are dealt with properly and at once. It is important to keep the positive people involved and to keep them within the area, instead of seeing them moving out.

Urban renewal has over time, and most recently around the turn of the century, changed from a technical discipline to a complex process, integrating more aspects and involving more actors. More activities are carried out on different scales, and more strategies and methods are used. Some factors can be recognised as making urban policies improve deprived areas more successfully into sustainable areas that are vital and able to adjust to the ever changing circumstances. The most important seems to be finding the right balance: the involvement and collaboration between all required actors, a combination of various measures and sectors, working simultaneously at several scale levels, and combining future-oriented policies with today's urban reality. For some this may be a platitude, for others it may just seem impossible. The trick is to look critically, but with open eyes, at successful projects elsewhere and to find out which successful elements can be used in the situation 'back home'.

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Summary

Introduction

Everyone has an opinion about large housing estates. This could be an opinion about their most visible shapes, which are high-rise blocks, characterized by a uniform repetition of cells. However, most opinion makers do not live on such large estates, and never visit them unless strictly necessary. At the same time, most of these large-scale estates have been carefully planned. Planners, scientists, architects and other experts spent far more time studying ideas, design and construction than was the case with most other neighbourhoods, but this did not lead to the intended satisfaction and popularity of the estates.

Research questions

The overall research question was: *Why did the developments of many large housing estates prove to be so problematic, and what is being done and what else can be done to convert these problems into successes?*

Although this research question mainly applies to the Netherlands, but this PhD project aims to position developments in the Netherlands within a wider international context. Although each situation should be considered within its own local or regional context, I attempt to formulate conclusions that could be transferable to other large housing estates as well.

The main question was divided into three sub-questions.

1) *What were the ideals and motives behind the large housing estates, and how were they realized?*
2) *Why did large housing estates turn out to be problematic so soon after their realization? What went wrong, and why? What kinds of measures were applied to tackle the problems, and what were the results?*
3) *How are large housing estates involved in today's integrated renewal policies, what are the effects, and what are the prospects for a fruitful recovery of large housing estates?*

About this PhD study

This PhD study was different from most other studies. It started not with the formulation of a research question, followed by actual research, but as a series of surveys and research projects, mostly in the problematic Bijlmermeer high-rise area. After years of work in this and many other (mostly problematic) areas in the Netherlands and abroad, and of studying issues of neighbourhood regeneration, urban renewal policies and related issues, I had the ambition to bring this expertise together in one book. This book has a reflective character, as it combines a broad range of expertise from a distance. As most of the original results have already been published in Dutch, I chose to write this book in English, in order to transfer experiences abroad as well. The book consists of articles that have been published in international academic refereed journals, interspersed with new material.

The form of this PhD study is different as well. I have chosen to adopt a hybrid form between a single-volume book and a collection of published articles. Although such a hybrid character is relatively uncommon, it is not unique. The published articles alternate with new chapters. I have chosen this approach in order to deliver a reflective study that combines previously published articles with my long history of research. The informal writing style adopted in the new chapters is intended to make them more approachable.

The book is structured according to the three research sub-questions. The book provides an overview of the great expectations, the decline, the fall and the recovery of large housing estates.

Glorious estates

Housing estates were built in every decade in the 20th century, but most were constructed as mass housing in the decades following the Second World War. Among their characteristics are a similar appearance, a planned development and a dominant role of national government. Large housing estates have been built in varieties, including high-rise housing estates. High-rise estates can be considered both a very evident form of housing construction and a peak in post-war housing. They became the expression of a new world, one that expected a lot from modern ideas about an egalitarian society, and that leaned on technological solutions, made long-term demographic and mobility forecasts, and had high ideals about the common use of facilities.

The first research sub-question concerns the ideas and motives behind the development and realization of large housing estates. The answer is provided in the historical overview in Part II.

Large housing estates have been constructed for a number of reasons. The origins of such estates can be found in the miserable living conditions that occurred on a large scale about four generations ago. Architects and urban planners knew what to do, and they designed spectacular solutions, but before the Second World War, governmental policies were involved only to a modest extent. It was not until after the great devastations and building arrears of the Second World War that governments developed a willingness to be involved in housing issues and took responsibility for the reconstruction of the housing stock and the expansion of housing programmes. The post-war baby boom and migration patterns increased the housing scarcity tremendously, and housing received top political priority in many countries, including the Netherlands. Responses differed from country to country, but under government control, large housing estates were often the result.

After the Second World War, three major conditions contributed to the construction of mass housing on large housing estates. Many estates were developed in a well-planned structure and with clear thoughts about hierarchy and size, the separation of functions (housing, work, recreation and facilities), social contacts and cohesion, and traffic. Many large-scale housing estates were well-planned neighbourhoods, meant for future-proof living. Moreover, the conditions required to build large housing estates had developed: technological improvements and labour-saving techniques made large estates possible.

In Part II, seven motives are distinguished for building large housing estates, including high-rise estates. These are, briefly:

- to reduce housing shortages;
- technological improvements and labour-saving techniques;
- the belief that architecture would contribute to a fair society;
- to save the countryside from mass sprawl;
- a higher standard of living;
- status and competition;
- governmental support and public planning.

The outcome of these motives is a heritage of mass housing, often built on large housing estates. The most visible part of it is high-rise housing, which in most Western countries was built within a limited period of time: the high-rise wave. These high-rise waves are presented in Part II for a number of countries.

After these respective waves, there was a remarkably sharp decline, caused by a radical anti-establishment shift in society, resulting in more demand-oriented planning. However, by that time, millions of dwellings on mass housing estates had been built all over the world. A commonality is the way they were planned: top-down, by planning departments and according to (sometimes scientific) research into what would be best for residents – but without consulting residents. They were supposed to be happy simply to get any dwelling in times of everlasting housing shortages.

Sink estates

Large housing estates are best known by many observers for their problematic image, high crime rates, safety issues, deprivation and decline. These are all well-known problems. Professionals hurry to state that there are plenty of large estates that work well, where residents are satisfied and the problems are limited. Nevertheless, this PhD project does not focus on these success stories. In general, large estates are characterized by more frequent problems, less popular housing, shorter waiting lists, broader quality-of-life issues and poorer images. The most unpopular large housing estates were built during the post-war decades. These can be approached as a problem, but also as a challenge.

The decline and fall of many large housing estates is the subject of the second research sub-question (which is answered in Part III): *Why did large housing estates turn out to be problematic so soon after their realization? What went wrong, and why? What kinds of measures were applied to tackle the problems, and what were the results?*

Problems do not occur on all estates, at least not all problems occur at the same time and with the same intensity. Developments are dependent on factors of supply (initial quality, character, use), demand (preferences, resources, constraints), the available alternatives, external trends in society, and policies that are possibly adopted or ignored. When all factors turn out negative, estates develop into sink estates, where increasing problems of all kinds become downward spirals of further deterioration. Although situations differ according to contextual and path-dependent factors, some general lines can be noted. The most deprived areas have:

- wicked problems, which are not easy to solve;
- multiple problems, with no single solution;
- related problems, pushing each other into further decay;
- concentrated problems, in both place and time;
- massive problems, as a result of the concentration in particular areas and among particular residents.

Measures will usually be taken to combat problems. However, measures might easily fail when problems are too massive, are taken too late, or are taken in a wrong way by the wrong actors or at the wrong time and place.

In some situations, early measures do the job and solve the problems. This usually happens only when there are favourable external circumstances, like a tightening housing market (limiting alternatives), supportive national policies (reshuffling of police forces, national subsidy schemes, employment support programmes, etc.) or general trends in society (economic growth, increasing employment, demographic shifts, etc.).? However, these forces might also work out the opposite way. They cannot be steered at the level of a single housing estate.

Recovering estates

In most Western countries, more integrated urban renewal programmes were implemented in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. These can be characterized as:

- area-based approaches;
- the integration of different sectors: physical (construction), spatial (environment), social, economic and safety;
- governance structures, public-private collaboration and the interactive participation of civic society.

Integrated renewal policies are the subject of the third research sub-question (which is answered in Part IV): *How are large housing estates involved in today's integrated renewal policies, what are the effects, and what are the prospects for a fruitful recovery of large housing estates?*

Large housing estates were made the subject of integrated renewal policies when it became clear that partial measures lead to only partial solutions, rather than to structural improvements on the whole estate. The Bijlmermeer was a national forerunner of national urban renewal policy formulation, just as national policies influenced what happened in the Bijlmermeer.

Policies are aimed at improving the quality of life for inhabitants and other users (safety, crime, pollution, vandalism and social cohesion), individual mobility (empowerment, education, jobs, language and debt control) and financial improvements, leading to the financially sound exploitation of the housing stock. Achieving a social mix of groups within society is often also targeted. Policies are also aimed at bringing about sustainable solutions, in terms of ecological sustainability (energy, waste), social sustainability and economic sustainability.

Recovering estates can be characterized by three categories of ingredients. They have to differentiate the original one-size-fits-all character of the estate, which has proven to be vulnerable to changing circumstances. The three categories are:

- more differentiation in the area;
- more bonds between residents and their living environment;
- more coherence and synergy in measures.

More differentiation can be achieved by changing physical appearances, as well as by a better exploitation of positive current qualities, namely specific features that the area can be proud of and that outsiders often do not know about. The combination of brand-new buildings and refurbished high-rises may be another quality. More differentiation also can be achieved by allowing more room for the private initiatives of market actors and residents, such as residents who improve their homes themselves.

More bonds can be forged by strengthening the relationships between residents and their housing environment, their neighbourhood and each other. Room for residents' initiatives can strengthen those relationships, just like the use of cultural values within the area. Another strategy is to keep the social climbers in the area by offering attractive housing alternatives.

More coherence in measures is necessary to produce more consistent outcomes. More coherence can be achieved through combinations of types of measures: long term and short term; major operations and day-to-day actions. It can also be achieved by using moments of communication (e.g. when rehousing) to deal with individual problems. More coherence is also necessary to limit spill-over effects, of which there will always be some. And more coherence is an ingredient for creating a broad social base to guarantee a long-term commitment. Major recovery schemes, such as in the Bijlmermeer, will easily last 20 years or more.

The successful recovery of large housing estates should lead to sustainable results. Once sustainable, an estate has enough internal vitality and flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances, uses and preferences. Then, drastic renewal activities will no longer be necessary.

The Bijlmermeer high-rise area and other large estates across the world

In this book, the Bijlmermeer high-rise housing estate in Amsterdam is taken as a leading case. The area is one of the world's most well-known large housing estates. It was designed to be a 'glorious' housing estate, to provide future housing for the people of that day, and to be another pearl in Amsterdam's famous building history. It was to be the ultimate expression of modern architecture and modern life.

However, it proved to be a disaster. It changed from being the area with the highest glorious expectations, to being the country's largest deprived area. The decline was not the fastest in the country: that record belongs to the adjacent Hoptille estate, which was developed as a reaction to the many neighbouring high-rise blocks. The factors that made glory turn into failure have been analysed both for the record-breaking sink estate of Hoptille and for the Bijlmermeer sink estate. The latter has long been the shining example of hope, accumulating problems and numerous improvement measures. It has also long been the country's largest experimental garden in which to introduce hopeful measures.

I have been involved in the area for over 20 years and have implemented 22 research projects there. I have evaluated experimental measures, consulted residents about various plans and ideas for renewal, and studied many particular issues. I have also talked to many key actors, interviewed hundreds of people, done surveys among thousands of residents, and gathered stacks of reports, books, notes, etc. on the Bijlmermeer. And I have seen the area change over the years.

I have also visited and worked on a range of both smaller and larger housing estates in deprived and in well-functioning areas in the Netherlands and abroad, which makes it possible to reflect upon experiences. Moreover, because of the long period of time, it is possible to be more contemplative and to compare developments in different places and in different periods. Some of these international experiences are elaborated in this book. This is because these experiences – such as Le Mirail near Toulouse and Vällingby near Stockholm – have been sources of inspiration for the Bijlmermeer. And because similar ideas and motives have resulted in a city where towers are a dominant legacy (Toronto) or where policies are comparable (France). And because in Ballymun in Dublin, the process of rise, fall and recovery has been strikingly similar to the Bijlmermeer developments. And because of Pruitt-Igoe in St Louis, USA, which is a terrifying example…

The fall of the Bijlmermeer was a great one, but it was not exceptional from an international perspective. The size of the Bijlmermeer area, one of the largest housing estates in Western Europe, exacerbated the problems. Both the problems and the early measures have served as examples for other estates. The same applies to the integrated approach, combined with drastic physical interventions, in more recent years. The Bijlmermeer experiences contributed to solving problems on other estates in the Netherlands and abroad, to neighbourhood regeneration initiatives, to the elaboration of particular issues and, last but not least, to shaping Dutch urban renewal policy during the 1990s and 2000s.

Ten insights regarding the transferability of Bijlmermeer experiences to other estates (particularly Rotterdam-South)

The renewal of the Bijlmermeer has generated a series of valuable conclusions and insights that may be of use for other large housing estates as well. Two comments are necessary before beginning this discussion. First, it is important to recall the remarks made earlier regarding the transferability of knowledge. In short, the insights presented here should not be copied, but should be used as a source of inspiration and adjusted to suit specific situations. Second, it is important to note that many of the Bijlmermeer experiences have already been incorporated into other practical contexts in the Netherlands and abroad, as the developments and interventions have been debated and published widely for a long time. I have personally contributed to this dissemination as well.

Some of the 'old' lessons (i.e. insights that had only recently been developed at the time they were reported, but which have since become common practice) appear throughout this study. Examples include the improvement of liveability; the empowerment of people; the integrated approach involving physical, social, economic and liveability measures; the need for monitoring and evaluation; and the scale of an approach. All of these insights have gradually been incorporated into most approaches to regeneration in the Netherlands, as well as abroad.

For decades, the Bijlmermeer district had been the country's most deprived and stigmatized area. For many, it still is and will probably remain so. The Bijlmermeer was not on the bottom of the list of deprived areas – it was far below the bottom. According to current figures, however, other areas in the Netherlands have gradually begun to challenging the area's poor position, often receiving even more negative press coverage. The national urban renewal policy focuses on 40 deprived neighbourhoods (see Chapter 20). The Bijlmermeer area is but one of the neighbourhoods on the list, although it no longer occupies the lowest position.

This PhD study offers insights that could useful in efforts to regenerate other problematic areas as well. The largest areas on the list are the Western Garden Cities in Amsterdam (a large area, mostly built in the 1950s and 1960s), the south-west quarter of The Hague (idem) and the southern part of Rotterdam. The latter area comprises about a third of the city, with approximately 200,000 inhabitants. It is the only area in the country in which the national government is currently involved in an active manner. All of the other areas are considered the responsibility of local governments. The Bijlmermeer area obviously differs from Rotterdam-South in many ways (e.g. size, location and function within the city, building history, diversity). There are also major differences with regard to the historical context (e.g. the present economic austerity) and the position of important actors (e.g. housing associations). For example, the largest property owner in Rotterdam is Vestia, a housing association with major financial problems due to financial mismanagement in recent years, coming close to bankruptcy.

Despite all differences, there is one very important similarity between Amsterdam-Bijlmermeer and Rotterdam-South: their problematic and stigmatised position, both in recent history and at present. Some of the long-term experiences developed in the Bijlmermeer area could be of at least some use to such areas. Instead of the somewhat paternalistic term 'lessons', I prefer to refer to these experiences as insights and suggestions.

1. First, we refer to Chapter 21, which presents the general ingredients of an integrated approach, as learnt from the Bijlmermeer experience. For the three areas mentioned, and particularly for Rotterdam-South, the most important elements appear to be the introduction of more variety, the involvement of residents and private actors and the retention of social climbers. These elements are elaborated first.
2. Create more differentiation in large, 'one size fits all' housing estates (as experienced by insiders and outsiders) by creating, using and marketing physical diversity, by helping residents to bond with their environment and by seeking coherent measures. Efforts should be made to preserve and enhance existing differences between areas (as valued by inhabitants).
3. Offer residents opportunities 'they cannot refuse'. Focus on the 'believers', those who are positive about the neighbourhood. Tempt them to stay, and offer attractive opportunities to social climbers in the area. Analyse their housing demands (in most cases, they are not unrealistic). Facilitate the relocation of negatively oriented people, as they only make matters worse. Offer better housing opportunities for lower prices than alternative and competing supply. In an area like Rotterdam-South, this might involve building more ordinary single-family housing (at competitive prices) and fewer apartments.
4. Facilitate private initiatives. Large intervention schemes (like in the Bijlmermeer) have been useful, because large-scale problems call for large-scale solutions. Small-scale initiatives are currently more appropriate, however, due to budget restrictions and governance changes. Organic renewal calls for governments (and other large institutions like housing associations) to adopt a different stance: less top-down and more facilitating; less steering and more initiating; less directive and more reticent; fewer fixed procedures and more flexibility. It also calls for extending the focus from problems alone to consider potential and opportunities as well. This would require allowing more room to individual and market initiatives in neighbourhoods. Although gentrification (i.e. non-governmental upgrading of neighbourhoods) has been widely discussed in the academ-

ic world, it is unfortunately absent in large housing estates, even though such initiatives would be very welcome there. Rotterdam-South could be an ideal laboratory for experimenting with a variety of private gentrification initiatives.

5. Continue efforts to enhance and preserve liveability. In the past, the largest source of grievance in the Bijlmermeer involved basic liveability conditions (e.g. safety, cleanliness, completeness). These basic conditions should be in order at all times. It is impossible to interest inhabitants in any plans for regeneration if the area is failing in these aspects. In Rotterdam-South, this has been a priority for the past ten years. It is the public government's responsibility to ensure safe and clean public spaces. It should be clear to everyone who is to be responsible for quality-of-life issues in semi-public spaces; unclear, in-between solutions should be avoided.
6. Do not aim to solve all problems. Even overall, integrated approaches cannot address all problems; do not attempt to do so. Unemployment cannot be solved within the area, criminals will not reform their lives because of an education program and people with mental disabilities will not be miraculously healed. Accept the limits of any approach that is adopted. Some problems need solutions at a higher level or scale, through sector-specific interventions or at a later time. It helps to disperse problems; an area that is already poor will not be helped by concentrating a large, difficult and problematic population there.
7. Balance flexibility with an overall view. The programme should contain an overall goal and vision for where to go, and this vision should be supported by broad consensus. Such a vision could be accompanied by flexibility in the plans during the process (e.g. by adjusting to uncertain economic conditions, like those at present). One consequence is that it is difficult to say when the programme will be finished. Subdivide work into packages of a convenient size.
8. Monitor progress. Transparency is a key to success, not only in the policy-making, but also in the implementation and when referring to the results of policies and actions. If the effects of interventions and investments are unclear, the usefulness of the policy may be questioned, thereby increasing doubts. Proper monitoring and evaluation could improve this transparency. Monitor Rotterdam (and Rotterdam-South) and show the results.
9. Outsiders construct their images of a deprived area primarily according to the problems they notice. It would be helpful to promote assets and positive news to outside audiences.
10. Attract outsiders. Improvements in the wider area improved the image of the Bijlmermeer. Facilities were created that attract outsiders to the area, as were facilities with a regional range. In Rotterdam-South this could involve creating or relocating general urban facilities to the southern part

of the city and establishing facilities with a regional scope (e.g. tourism, sports, university, culture, leisure, music). Invite outsiders for functional reasons.

Such insights originating from experiences with the Bijlmermeer recovery could be useful for many other large housing estates, in Rotterdam-South, in the Netherlands, in Europe and in the rest of the world. This knowledge would be more difficult to transfer to contexts that are less similar to the Bijlmermeer context, but this is a conservative point of view. From a different and more positive perspective, some of these insights could be useful even in other contexts.

Questions for further research

After conducting a range of research projects in the Bijlmermeer, large housing estates elsewhere and other declining neighbourhoods, and even after combining these insights with all other relevant studies and experiences, a range of questions remains. In the section that follows, I mention but a few.

1. One of the characteristics of this PhD study is the long-term involvement with the subject matter. Developments, measures, policies and evaluations extend over a long period. In many cases, however, researchers do not have so much time. Nevertheless, it would be worthwhile to carry out more longitudinal research, thus not restricting investigation to the period shortly after an intervention. Some measures require time for their results to settle. Time plays a role in many interesting issues. For example, one intriguing question involves the effects that demolition or drastic renovation could have on social cohesion. Evaluations have shown that the new and the old residents often do not interact with each other, have little contact with each other and, in many cases, do not even know each other. Such evaluations, however, are often conducted shortly after the new residents have moved in. They do not reflect situations five or ten years later. Perhaps the ‘old’ and ‘new’ inhabitants would be interacting by then. Other interesting questions concern how social cohesion is influenced by different tenures, classes, household phases and wealth, and whether relationships change over time. Other examples in which time plays a role include the use of public spaces, new management systems or residents’ initiatives for common activities.
2. Another question for further research concerns the reversal of a stigma, negative image or reputation. Although image is always mentioned in problem analyses and approaches to renewal approach, it is usually addressed only in a limited context and assigned only a modest degree of priority. The conclusion is often that image plays a role, that a negative image is easier to acquire than it is to lose, and that a stigma is difficult to change once it has been established. This is a serious issue for further research. Relevant questions include how success is to be defined and

under which conditions it can be achieved. It is also important to determine exactly what has or has not changed and why (or why not)? We could also consider which measures have contributed (and why), whether the scale of an area plays a role, and which periods of time are involved. The model presented in this study (see Chapter 16) could provide a framework for strategies aimed at internal or external actors.

3. Another research question focuses on the aim of renewal. Area-based approaches to improving disadvantaged neighbourhoods are widespread across Europe. It is not always clear, however, what the exact aim of such approaches is, or whether an aim has been formulated at all. The objective could be to 'upgrade the disadvantaged area to normal conditions' or 'to the city's average'. Additional questions concern the conditions and averages that would be considered (e.g. attractive housing; school results; cleanliness, safety and other liveability issues; turnover rates; wealth; resident satisfaction; changes in society). Another research question could involve investments in the aims of renewal policy.

   A related question concerns the ultimate goal of recovery. Such efforts could be aimed at improving the position of a disadvantaged area within the local or regional housing market or they could focus on improving the individual positions of the disadvantaged population. The former approach focuses on place-based strategies, while the latter is directed towards the implementation of people-based strategies to be implemented. The ultimate result of merely place-based strategies might be that unemployed or poorly schooled people would live in better houses, although the refurbishments alone would do nothing to improve their position of disadvantage. On the other hand, if the efforts are directed solely at improving the mobility of disadvantaged population, people are likely to leave the area as soon as they achieve sufficient success in life, thereby making room for new residents from the disadvantaged population groups. Although the best approach would probably involve a combination of these strategies, the balance need not be equal. The exact combination should depend upon the particular function of the area (past, present and future).
4. The drastic approach adopted in the Bijlmermeer area was possible because society legitimated governments at several levels of scale in order to support drastic measures. Societal legitimacy, the ineffectiveness of earlier measures and the availability of sufficient financial resources made the drastic recovery of the Bijlmermeer possible. Under less favourable conditions, however, the role that the government can and should play can be less clear. It is necessary to explore options for intervening in less drastic ways under conditions of decreased financial resources or social legitimacy. It is also important to consider whether such conditions exacerbate problems and to identify the minimum level at which situations

would be acceptable. In other words, research should focus on identifying the bottom line.

5. Another research question is financial. The drastic interventions in the Bijlmermeer could be implemented only because of a broad base of financial support and a strong financial guarantee. These drastic interventions were not unique to the Bijlmermeer, as drastic interventions had been implemented, but on a smaller scale elsewhere in the Netherlands. Also abroad similar interventions were taken, as the Dublin case illustrates (discussed in Chapter 18). One research question could thus concern which possibilities remain when finances are short. This question could be broadened to consider how changing economic situations can influence ongoing processes of urban renewal. It could also consider the ways in which urban-renewal policy is determined by economic conditions and austerity measures.
6. The last research question to be proposed concerns governance. This study demonstrates that, at least in the Netherlands, urban policy has traditionally been initiated by the state and implemented locally, whether with regard to the construction of housing after the two World Wars or to the urban regeneration activities in the late 1900s and early 2000s. Two factors suggest recent changes: economic restrictions and the increasing demand of people to determine their own future (e.g. with regard to employment, housing construction or neighbourhood renewal). The consequences of this movement towards civil society for neighbourhood renewal remain to be seen. Although these developments could become a major trend, they could also yield benefits for only a fortunate few. We should also question whether governments should support, facilitate and initiate such changes, or whether such involvement would only increase the gap between affluent and disadvantaged areas. From another perspective, we could ask whether governments should be involved in supporting gentrification initiatives or defending the less affluent from hostile interventions.

Samenvatting

De aanpak van grote probleemwijken

Over grote woonwijken en grote probleemwijken

Dit proefschrift gaat over grootschalige woonwijken, ‘large housing estates. Dergelijke woonwijken zijn van alle tijden, en worden ook nu nog op grote schaal ontwikkeld, hoewel de economische crisis roet in het eten gooit. De Vinex-wijken – nu in de afbouwfase – zijn hiervan een illustratie.

Veel mensen associëren grootschalige wijken vooral met de grootschalig ontworpen wijken uit de naoorlogse jaren. Toen woningbouw van bovenaf, top down, werd geprogrammeerd, en bewoners enkel in beeld kwamen als ze – na vele jaren wachten – de sleutels kregen overhandigd. Sommigen hebben vooral een associatie met hoogbouwflats uit de jaren zestig en zeventig, voor anderen zijn grote woonwijken synoniem met grote probleemwijken, terwijl er ook mensen zijn voor wie dat eigenlijk hetzelfde is. Grote woonwijken als grote probleemwijken.

Veel grote woonwijken functioneren vrij probleemloos. Daarom horen we er ook weinig over. Dit neemt niet weg dat veel probleemwijken indertijd grootschalig ontworpen zijn en al vrij snel na de bouw in de problemen terecht kwamen. Dit proefschrift concentreert zich vooral op die grote probleemwijken.

Zo goed doordacht, en toch.....

Grootschalige woonwijken hebben een stempel van anonimiteit, massaliteit, repetitie, monofunctionaliteit en gelijkvormigheid. Dit is opmerkelijk, want tijdens het ontwerpproces werden dezelfde wijken aangeprezen als goed doordacht, met veel licht, lucht en ruimte, met uitgekiende en wetenschappelijk onderzochte woningplattegronden, efficiënt en met voor elke functie een eigen plekje. De woning van de toekomst voor de bewoner van toen.

Stedenbouwkundigen, ruimtelijke ordenaars, wetenschappers, architecten en andere experts hebben veel meer tijd en aandacht besteed aan deze grote woonwijken dan aan bijna alle eerder gebouwde wijken. Dit heeft dikwijls echter niet geleid tot populaire wijken en tevreden bewoners. Hoe kan dat nou? Het mag op zijn minst opmerkelijk worden genoemd dat de best doordachte stedenbouw heeft geleid tot misschien wel de grootste probleemwijken ooit. Dit constateren is één, maar er iets aan doen is twee. Wat moet je dan doen?

Professionals haasten zich om te stellen dat er tal van grootschalige wijken zijn zonder noemenswaardige problemen, waar het wel goed wonen en leven is en waar bewoners wel tevreden zijn. De meeste aandacht in beleid, wetenschap en media gaat echter niet naar deze ‘gewone’ wijken, en dat is evenmin in dit proefschrift het geval.

Onderzoeksvragen

De algemene onderzoeksvraag in dit proefschrift is: Waarom hebben zo vele grootschalige woonwijken zich zo problematisch ontwikkeld, welke maatregelen zijn getroffen en wat kan er nog meer worden gedaan om deze problemen om te zetten in successen?

De onderzoeksvraag is verdeeld in drie deelvragen.

1) *Wat waren de idealen en motieven achter de grootschalige woonwijken, en hoe werden ze gerealiseerd?*
2) *Waarom ontstonden al kort na de oplevering van veel grootschalige woonwijken grote problemen? Wat ging er mis, en waardoor? Welke maatregelen werden toegepast om de problemen aan te pakken, en wat waren de resultaten?*
3) *In welke mate zijn grootschalige woonwijken momenteel onderdeel van een integrale vernieuwingsaanpak, wat zijn de gevolgen daarvan en wat zijn de perspectieven voor de toekomst?*

De drie onderzoeksvragen komen, na het openingsdeel, terug in de drie delen in dit proefschrift. Deel II gaat over de glorieuze verwachtingen van de ideale wijk. Deel III handelt over de al snel optredende en elkaar versterkende problemen, en ook over de talloze maatregelen, die elk afzonderlijk doorgaans echter niet leidden tot verbetering. Deel IV gaat over een meer omvattende aanpak, die later werd ingezet en die in veel probleemwijken binnen en buiten Nederland wordt gezien als oplossing.

Over dit promotieonderzoek

Dit promotieonderzoek wijkt in een aantal opzichten af van andere studies. Het startte niet met het formuleren van een onderzoeksvraag, gevolgd door het eigenlijke onderzoek, maar is de resultante van een reeks van praktijkonderzoeken. Na jaren van werk in vele (meestal problematische) gebieden in Nederland en soms in het buitenland, en van het bestuderen van wijkvernieuwing, buurtverval, stedelijk vernieuwingsbeleid en aanverwante zaken, had ik de ambitie om deze expertise samen te brengen in een boek. Dit boek heeft een reflecterend karakter en is in het Engels geschreven om resultaten ook in het buitenland meer bekendheid te geven. Het boek bestaat uit artikelen die zijn gepubliceerd in internationale gerefereerde tijdschriften, afgewisseld met nieuw materiaal.

De vorm van dit proefschrift wijkt ook af. Ik heb gekozen voor een hybride vorm, tussen een boek en een verzameling van artikelen in. Een dergelijk hybride karakter komt niet zo vaak voor. De eerder gepubliceerde wetenschappelijke artikelen worden afgewisseld met nieuwe hoofdstukken, waarin ik terugkijk op een lange periode van praktijkonderzoek. Deze nieuwe hoofdstukken kennen bewust een wat informelere schrijfstijl om de toegankelijkheid ervan te vergroten.

Nog een vormkwestie: de eerder gepubliceerde artikelen zijn voorzien van een grijze streep langs de zijkant om ze te onderscheiden van de nieuwe teksten. Deze samenvatting in het Nederlands vormt slechts een beknopte weergave van het hele boek.

De Bijlmer hoogbouw als rode draad in dit proefschrift

Een deel van mijn praktijkonderzoek heeft plaatsgevonden in de Bijlmermeer, de bekende hoogbouwwijk in Amsterdam. Deze wijk vormt de rode draad in dit proefschrift.

Toen ik bij het Onderzoeksinstituut OTB, TU Delft, aan het werk ging, was mijn eerste project de analyse van, wat achteraf zou blijken, Nederlands snelste vervalproces: de buurt Hoptille, grenzend aan de hoogbouwflats van de Bijlmermeer. Ruim twintig jaar later ging mijn laatste project bij het OTB over de toekomst van Heesterveld, een buurt grenzend aan zowel Hoptille als de Bijlmerhoogbouw. In de tussenliggende jaren ben ik betrokken geweest bij twintig onderzoeksprojecten in de Bijlmermeer, dat is gemiddeld een per jaar. De meeste projecten waren contractonderzoeken om het succes te bepalen van tal van experimenten, om de mening van bewoners te peilen over herstructurering van hun flats, en over specifieke thema's variërend van buurtbeheer, gated communities, herinrichting van de openbare ruimte tot herhuisvesting van bewoners. Over al deze projecten is een serie rapporten en artikelen in vakbladen verschenen (zie de bijlagen).

Ik heb experimenten geëvalueerd, bewoners geraadpleegd over de verschillende ideeën voor vernieuwing, en diverse specifieke problemen bestudeerd. Ik heb gesproken met een groot aantal sleutelactoren, honderden mensen geïnterviewd, enquêtes gehouden onder duizenden inwoners, en stapels rapporten, boeken, notities, enz. verzameld over de Bijlmermeer. En ik heb het gebied zien veranderen door de jaren heen.

Er zijn maar weinig wijken in de wereld waar bloei, verval en wederopstanding zo duidelijk te onderscheiden zijn als in de Bijlmermeer. Dit proefschrift beperkt zich echter niet tot deze ene wijk; ervaringen hier opgedaan kunnen tot voorbeeld dienen voor veel andere grote probleemwijken over de hele wereld. In dit proefschrift vergelijk ik de Bijlmer met wijken in binnen- en buitenland. Speciaal noem ik Toulouse-Le-Mirail en Vällingby bij Stockholm als inspiratiebronnen voor de Bijlmermeer. Toronto, waar een grote erfenis rest van hoogbouw uit de jaren '60-'80. Ballymun in Dublin, waar de lokale 'Bijlmer' op een vergelijkbare manier wordt aangepakt. En het afschrikwekkende voorbeeld Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis (VS), dat demonstratief werd opgeblazen, nota bene in een tijd dat in Nederland de Bijlmer nog werd gebouwd.

Wat is de meerwaarde van deze studie?

- Gedurende een zeer lange periode is een van de meest interessante woonwijken in het land, en misschien ook wel in het buitenland, op de voet gevolgd.
- Over dezelfde lange periode is een reeks van onderzoeken uitgevoerd. De meeste onderzoekers zijn niet in de gelegenheid om zoiets te doen.
- De studie toetst niet een bepaalde theorie, maar neemt verschillende theorieën en invalshoeken mee vanuit een meer eclectisch perspectief.

- De studie bekijkt bovendien het proces vanuit verschillende actoren, maar bovenal die van de bewoners van de wijk.

Wijken van glorie (in deel II)

Grootschalige woonwijken zijn gedurende de hele afgelopen eeuw gebouwd, maar het hoogtepunt lag in de naoorlogse massabouw, met inbegrip van hoogbouwwijken. Hoogbouw was de uitdrukking van een nieuwe wereld, van moderne ideeën, een egalitaire samenleving, leunend op technologische oplossingen, en een bouwkundig antwoord op verontrustend hoge prognoses voor bevolking en mobiliteit.

Vanuit een planningsperspectief kunnen drie stromingen worden onderscheiden achter het ontstaan van grootschalige woonwijken. De eerste is de tuinstadgedachte, oorspronkelijk van de Britse stedenbouwkundige Ebenezer Howard, die vooral na de Tweede Wereldoorlog aan de basis stond van veel stadsuitbreidingen. Buitenwijken, groeikernen, Vinexwijken; als nieuwe uitbreidingswijken los van de donorstad en in één beweging neergezet.

De tweede stroming is die van de moderne architecten, verenigd in de CIAM-beweging. Moderne stedenbouw kenmerkt zich door scheiding van functies, strakke vormgeving, platte daken, flats te midden van veel ruimte en groen en een groot vertrouwen in een collectief gebruik van voorzieningen.

De derde planningsstroming is die van de buurteenheid, afkomstig van de stadssociologen van de Chicago-school. Zij benadrukten beslotenheid en geborgenheid binnen de eigen buurt en wijk, met een zorgvuldig ingemeten voorzieningenpatroon. Mooi voorbeeld is het boek *De stad der toekomst, de toekomst der stad* van een studiegroep onder leiding van ir. A. Bos uit 1946, dat aan de basis stond van de wederopbouw van het naoorlogse Rotterdam.

Alle drie deze planningsstromingen kwamen samen in de massabouw van na de oorlog, dus in de geplande grootschalige woonwijken.

Achter de bouw van grootschalige wijken na de Tweede Wereldoorlog, waaronder hoogbouw, scholen zeven motieven:

- de niet-aflatende woningnood;
- de opkomst van technologische verbeteringen en arbeidsbesparende technieken;
- de overtuiging dat architectuur zou bijdragen aan een rechtvaardige samenleving;
- de wens om het platteland te redden van ongebreidelde wildgroei;
- een toenemende levensstandaard;
- status en concurrentie tussen steden;
- overheidssteun en ruimtelijke ordening.

Het resultaat van deze motieven is een erfenis van massabouw in grootschalige woningwijken en vooral hoogbouw. Opvallend is de hoogbouwgolf. In de meeste westerse landen werd hoogbouw in de loop van de jaren zestig gedurende korte tijd erg populair. In Nederland duurde deze hoogbouwgolf zo’n tien jaar (1965-1974). Overal in het land verschenen grote of kleine 'Bijlmermeertjes', die in het lokale spraakgebruik ook al snel zo werden genoemd.

Even opvallend is dat de hoogbouwgolf abrupt weer stopte, veroorzaakt door een radicale anti-establishment verschuiving in de maatschappij, en meer ruimte voor vraaggerichte planning van onderop, vanuit bewoners. Echter, toen stond die massabouw er al.

Van ideaalwijk naar afvoerputje (in deel III)

Sommige grote woonwijken verwerden tot grote probleemwijken met criminaliteit, onveiligheid, armoede, veel kansarmen, segregatie, werkloosheid, slechte schoolprestaties en een problematisch imago. Problemen uiten zich op verschillende manieren, op verschillende momenten en in verschillende intensiteiten.

De grootste probleemwijken kennen:

- ingewikkelde problemen, ('wicked problems'), die niet eenvoudig zijn op te lossen;
- meer problemen tegelijk, waarvoor geen eenduidige oplossing bestaat;
- aan elkaar gerelateerde problemen, die elkaar versterken;
- geconcentreerde problemen, zowel in tijd en plaats;
- een optelsom van problemen, doordat problemen zich voordoen bij bepaalde (groepen) bewoners en in bepaalde gebieden (straten, buurten, flatgebouwen).

Achterliggende factoren spelen op micro- en macroniveau, zie het model in hoofdstuk 10. Factoren op macroniveau (demografisch, economisch, cultureel, etc.) kunnen niet worden beïnvloed op wijkniveau: ze gebeuren gewoon, maar je kunt er wel op anticiperen. Hetzelfde geldt voor nationaal beleid: algemene loonwetgeving, milieunormeringen en onderwijskeuzes zijn van invloed op het microniveau van de wijk. Op dat laatste niveau spelen factoren als: woning(ver-)bouw, toewijzing, kwaliteit openbare ruimte, benadering van bewoners, werktoeleiding, vuilnisophaal; allemaal factoren die je tot op zekere hoogte wel kunt beïnvloeden op wijkniveau.

Al deze (macro- en micro-) factoren hebben met elkaar te maken en bepalen samen of een wijk geliefd is of niet, of mensen er prettig wonen, of zouden willen wonen.

Verschillende theorieën gaan in op de onderlinge relaties tussen problemen, die elkaar kunnen versterken in wat wel genoemd wordt een spiraal van verval. De ontwikkelingen in de Bijlmermeer, de rode draad in dit verhaal, bevestigen eigenlijk al deze vervaltheorieën: hoe verval de bron vormt voor verder verval, hoe (groepen van) factoren op elkaar ingrijpen (bijv. het vervalmodel van Prak en Priemus, of van Grigsby), de gebroken ramen theorie (van Wilson en Kelling) en de wijze waarop de omgeving is vormgegeven. Het ontwerp doet ertoe – het maakt nogal wat uit of je in een betonnen achterstandswijk woont, of in een keurige middenstandsbuurt – maar het is tegelijkertijd niet bepalend. Tal van andere factoren spelen een (grotere) rol. Bepaalde woonmilieus spreken echter de klanten – woonconsumenten, aspirant bewoners – meer aan dan andere. Als een wijk alleen maar een tweede keus wordt, of nog minder, voor mensen zonder veel alternatieven, liggen problemen op de loer.

Problemen versterken elkaar, wat uiteindelijk resulteert in een slecht imago, of stigma. En hiervoor geldt het gezegde: een goed imago komt te voet, maar vertrekt te paard. Het imago van de Bijlmermeer was al vrij snel na de oplevering rampzalig. Vanaf de jaren tachtig tot begin deze eeuw was de Bijlmer de meest problematische woonwijk, het afvoerputje van Nederland. Als je alle woonwijken van Nederland op een denkbeeldige ladder zet, met Blaricum en Wassenaar bovenaan en de probleemwijken onderaan bevond de Bijlmermeer zich op het dieptepunt niet eens meer onderaan de ladder, maar in een put eronder; al zijn er door de jaren heen altijd mensen geweest die in de Bijlmer bleven geloven. Deze problematische situatie is gelukkig verbeterd.

Om problemen in wijken te lijf te gaan, werden en worden er aanvankelijk allerlei specifieke (deel-)maatregelen getroffen. Soms meteen al, soms duurde het even voordat het besef doordrong dat er wat aan de hand was. Hierbij moeten we niet vergeten dat veel grote probleemwijken, zoals de Bijlmermeer, dikwijls letterlijk ver uit het zicht lagen (en liggen) van de bureaus van de beleidsmakers. In sommige landen (zoals Frankrijk, Italië) speelt deze isolatie in sterkere mate dan in Nederland. Soms hielpen vroegtijdige maatregelen, maar dikwijls ook niet, zeker bij grote en ingewikkelde problemen, of doordat de verkeerde partijen de verkeerde maatregelen troffen op het verkeerde moment. Of, anders geformuleerd, omdat sommige partijen te weinig werden betrokken, maatregelen onvoldoende uitstraling hadden en vaak maar een kortstondig leven kenden, of zich simpelweg verplaatsten, bleken de maatregelen niet bijster effectief.

Een integrale aanpak (in deel IV)

In de meeste westerse landen drong ergens in de late jaren '90 en begin 21e eeuw het besef door dat een integrale aanpak nodig was. Overal in Europa kwamen geïntegreerde stedelijke vernieuwing programma's op die worden gekenmerkt door:

- een gebiedsgerichte aanpak (per wijk);
- de integratie van verschillende sectoren: woningbouw, welzijn, ruimtelijke ordening, sociale zaken, economische ontwikkeling, onderwijs, verkeer en veiligheid;
- samenwerking tussen partijen, participatie van burgers en marktpartijen.

Beleidsonderzoekers hanteren drie argumenten voor beleidsinterventies. Ik bekijk deze drie argumenten voor de drastische ingrepen in de Bijlmermeer.

- Is ingrijpen legitiem? Naarmate problemen groter zijn, neemt het maatschappelijk draagvlak voor ingrijpen toe. De Bijlmermeer kende jarenlang enorme leefbaarheidsproblemen (schoon, heel en veilig stonden jarenlang bovenaan de probleemlijst), leegstand (op de top: 25%), talloze deelmaatregelen (goedbedoeld, maar ontoereikend) en een belabberd imago (dat keer op keer werd bevestigd). De beleidsmakers hadden eigenlijk weinig anders kunnen doen dan ingrijpen.

- Is ingrijpen effectief? Hiervoor is het nodig om doelen te formuleren en te meten in hoeverre deze worden gehaald. De Bijlmermonitor geeft (ongeveer) tweejaarlijks inzicht in vorderingen en laat zien dat er op fysiek, sociaal en economisch vlak veel verbeteringen tot stand zijn gekomen.
- Is ingrijpen efficiënt? Bij deze afweging gaat het over het rendement van bestedingen. De ingreep in de Bijlmermeer heeft enorm veel geld gekost, afkomstig van de stad Amsterdam en de verzamelde woningcorporaties (via het Centraal Fonds Volkshuisvesting). Nu zou dat vermoedelijk niet meer kunnen gebeuren, maar in de jaren '90 wel; en het was toen ook hard nodig. Of hetzelfde resultaat met minder middelen bereikt had kunnen worden, is moeilijk te staven.

Alle drie argumenten voor beleidsingrijpen waren valide in de Bijlmermeer; er moest iets gebeuren, partiële maatregelen hielpen niet, en niets doen was geen optie meer.

Een integrale aanpak van probleemwijken werd ook de kern van het landelijke grotestedenbeleid, en de Bijlmermeeraanpak vormde hiervoor de basis. Stedelijke vernieuwing vormde een combinatie van verschillende sectoren (fysiek, economisch, sociaal, cultureel, veiligheid, etc.), samen met verschillende betrokkenen (gemeente, corporatie, bewoners, politie, welzijnswerk, anderen), met maatregelen op korte termijn voor de problemen van alledag en verre toekomstbeelden, in een combinatie van verschillende schaalniveaus (straat, wijk, regio).

Grote woonwijken zijn kwetsbaar vanwege hun schaal en hun 'one-size-fits-all' karakter. Als de woningen er uit de gratie raken, is het probleem meteen ook groot. Oplossingen voor problemen in grote probleemwijken liggen op drie vlakken:

- Meer differentiatie door meer verschillende bouw- en eigendomsvormen, variatie in het openbaar gebied, ruimte voor verschillende actoren (bijv. zelf(ver-)bouw), ruimte voor functiemenging, toevoegen van kwaliteit en beperken van kwantiteit.
- Versterken van relaties tussen bewoners en hun woonomgeving, hun buurt en met elkaar. Ruimte voor bewonersinitiatieven, benutten van specifieke eigenschappen van een gebied of bevolking, gebruik van culturele waarden, vasthouden van sociale stijgers, vergroten van eigenwaarde van bewoners voor hun gebied.
- Meer samenhang en synergie in maatregelen om meer consistente resultaten te bereiken. Combinatie van alledaagse verbeteringen en lange termijn oplossingen. Verplaatsingseffecten zien te beperken. Gerichte communicatie naar insiders en outsiders. Creëren van een breed maatschappelijk en politiek draagvlak voor een lange termijn. Omgaan met onzekerheid (zoals

door de crisis nu), waardoor projecten niet of anders uitpakken.

Lessen voor andere grote probleemwijken, Rotterdam-Zuid in het bijzonder
Jarenlang was de Bijlmermeer de grootste probleemwijk van het land. Inmiddels hebben andere gebieden de Bijlmer ingehaald. Het landelijke stedenbeleid richt zich op de 40 slechtste wijken (krachtwijken, prachtwijken, Vogelaarwijken, probleemwijken, achterstandswijken, of hoe ze ook mogen heten). De Bijlmermeer is maar een van de wijken op de lijst, en bezet door het succes van de integrale aanpak niet langer de onderste positie.

Deze studie biedt inzichten die nuttig kunnen zijn bij de vernieuwing van andere grote achterstandswijken. De grootste zijn de Westelijke Tuinsteden in Amsterdam (een groot gebied, grotendeels gebouwd in de jaren 1950 en 1960), Den Haag Zuidwest (idem) en het zuidelijk deel van Rotterdam. Het laatste omvat ongeveer eenderde van de stad, telt ongeveer 200.000 inwoners en is het enige gebied waarbij het Rijk actief is betrokken. Alle andere wijken worden beschouwd als de verantwoordelijkheid van lokale overheden.

De Bijlmermeer verschilt uiteraard van Rotterdam-Zuid, qua grootte, ligging en functie binnen de stad, bouwgeschiedenis en diversiteit. Ook verschillen het tijdsgewricht (de huidige economische soberheid) en de positie van belangrijke actoren. Zo is de grootste woningeigenaar in Rotterdam corporatie Vestia, die in grote financiële problemen verkeert en uitgaven tot een noodzakelijk minimum moet beperken. Ondanks alle verschillen is er een belangrijke overeenkomst tussen Amsterdam-Bijlmermeer en Rotterdam-Zuid: het slechte imago.

Wat kunnen andere grote probleemwijken zoals Rotterdam-Zuid leren van jarenlange Bijlmerervaring? De conclusies kunnen we samenvatten in vijf belangrijke inzichten of lessen zonder dat ik daarmee de intentie heb dat dit allesomvattend is.

1. Maak zoveel mogelijk variatie, vergroot fysieke verschillen (woningen, openbaar gebied), benut passerende initiatieven die variatie bevorderen. Benut het eigene van het gebied. Investeer in kwaliteit, zeker op gezichtsbepalende plekken.
2. Richt je op bewoners die positief zijn ingesteld, de ‘believers’. Verleid hen om te blijven of (terug) te komen. Bied aantrekkelijke mogelijkheden om sociale klimmers in het gebied te houden. Doe aan hen een ‘offer they can’t refuse’. Bied betere woningen voor minder geld dan concurrerende alternatieven. En faciliteer mensen die liever weg willen; negatief georiënteerden zullen een wijk niet beter maken.
3. Continueer succesvolle maatregelen. De meeste klachten ontstaan wanneer basiswaarden tekortschieten: ‘schoon, heel en veilig’. Laat de omgeving uitstralen wat normaal is. Maak (samen) duidelijk wat regels zijn, en handhaaf die. Wees zichtbaar aanwezig. Ga door met sociale en economische stimuleringsmaatregelen, zorg dat mensen meedoen. En combineer dit met het vorige: koester de positief ingestelde bewoners.

4. De tijden van grootschalige ingrepen zijn voorlopig voorbij. Faciliteer en stimuleer private initiatieven van burgers en marktpartijen. Ga niet uit van belemmeringen (gewoontes; bestemmingsplannen, regelgeving), maar ga uit van kansen en mogelijkheden. Experimenteer, en zoek de grenzen van vernieuwing op: juist probleemwijken bieden hiertoe mogelijkheden. Koester lokale initiatieven.
5. Bied buitenstaanders een reden om naar het gebied te komen. Creëer regionale voorzieningen. Nodig buitenstaanders (en media) uit om functionele redenen; zorg dat er wat te halen is. Breng positief nieuws actief naar buiten.

Vragen voor verder onderzoek

Zelfs na zoveel onderzoek blijven er altijd vragen onbeantwoord. Ik noem er een paar:

1. Veel onderzoek evalueert beleid, bepaalde maatregelen of specifieke interventies. Evaluaties moeten echter meestal snel af zijn, terwijl sommige maatregelen meer tijd nodig hebben. Tijd speelt een soms onderschatte rol. Ebt schijnbaar succes weer langzaam weg? Maken oude en nieuwe bewoners na een aantal jaren wel contact? Bestendigt sociale stijging? Is de aanpak duurzaam?
2. Een andere vraag voor verder onderzoek betreft het verbeteren van een stigma, reputatie of imago. Vaak eindigt een betoog met de terechte conclusie dat imago weliswaar belangrijk, maar moeilijk te veranderen is. Relevante vragen zijn: hoe wordt verbetering beter zichtbaar? Wat is veranderd, wat niet, en waarom? Welke maatregelen hebben bijgedragen? Speelt de maat van een gebied een rol? Over hoeveel tijd (jaren) hebben we het? Het model in hoofdstuk 16 zou een kader kunnen bieden voor strategieën gericht op interne of externe actoren.
3. Een andere onderzoeksvraag richt zich op het doel van de vernieuwing. Is dat om de probleemwijk te verbeteren tot het stedelijke of landelijke gemiddelde? En voor welke indicatoren dan? Moet de wijk een betere positie krijgen op de lokale woningmarktladder? Of is het doel om de positie van de mensen die er wonen te verbeteren?

   Het resultaat van gebiedsgerichte strategieën kan zijn dat werklozen of slecht geschoolden wel een beter huis in een betere buurt krijgen, maar kansarm blijven. Aan de andere kant, als de inspanningen louter zijn gericht op scholing, werk en andere sociale inspanningen, is het eerste dat ‘succesvollen’ doen het gebied verlaten om plaats te maken voor nieuwe kansarmen.

   Dat kan een strategie zijn: de achterstandswijk als startplaats waar kansarme bewoners zich kunnen opwerken naar een beter leven elders. De vraag is echter of je dat wilt. Hoewel de beste benadering waarschijnlijk een combinatie van beide zal zijn, zal het evenwicht tussen een gebieds- en mensgerichte aanpak per wijk verschillen. De exacte combinatie moet afhangen van de specifieke functie van een wijk in de stad.

4. De drastische aanpak in de Bijlmermeer was mogelijk omdat de samenleving ingrijpen legitimeerde, eerdere partiële maatregelen onvoldoende effectief bleken en er voldoende financiële middelen beschikbaar waren. In veel probleemwijken wordt echter niet aan deze drie voorwaarden voldaan en is een dergelijke drastische ingreep nu niet mogelijk. Wat zijn dan mogelijkheden? Wat moet dan de rol van de overheid zijn? Welke basisvoorwaarden garandeert een overheid? Wat is dat minimumniveau?
5. Een andere onderzoeksvraag is financieel. De ingrepen in de Bijlmermeer hebben enorm veel geld gekost. Ook in het buitenland zijn een aantal van dergelijke kostbare operaties geweest, bijvoorbeeld in Duitsland en Ierland. Onder de huidige economische omstandigheden kan dat echter niet meer. Hoe kunnen probleemwijken worden verbeterd met minder geld?
6. De laatste onderzoeksvraag betreft de veranderende rolverdeling tussen actoren. Traditionele ‘wijkaanpakkers’ zoals overheden en woningcorporaties kampen met bezuinigingen en een afnemende investeringscapaciteit, en tegelijkertijd is er een toenemende behoefte vanuit mensen om hun eigen leven te bepalen. Hoe kan de eigen kracht van bewoners het beste worden versterkt? Wat zijn mogelijkheden, wat zijn beperkingen? Dat vraagt enerzijds meer ruimte voor private initiatieven en anderzijds een terughoudender opstelling van overheid en corporaties. Beide partijen zullen ook in de toekomst echter een belangrijke rol hebben in wijkvernieuwing. Hoe moeten partijen omgaan met hun nieuwe rollen? Hoe moet de overheid initiatieven ondersteunen, faciliteren en initiëren? Vergroot een dergelijke opstelling de kloof tussen rijk en arm? De rolverdeling tussen de belangrijkste partijen zal veranderen, en is al veranderd, maar hoe zal deze in de nabije toekomst zijn?

Tot slot

Dit proefschrift laat zien dat problemen in verguisde wijken succesvol kunnen worden aangepakt, maar dat dit niet eenvoudig is. Een aanpak moet leiden tot duurzame oplossingen, in termen van ecologische, sociale en economische duurzaamheid. Een succesvolle wijk heeft genoeg interne vitaliteit en flexibiliteit om zich te kunnen aanpassen aan veranderende omstandigheden, gebruiken en voorkeuren. Daarna zal ingrijpende vernieuwing idealiter niet meer nodig zijn.

Een duurzame oplossing vergt een breed maatschappelijk draagvlak, inzet van vele betrokken partijen, forse investeringen en bovenal een langdurige inzet. De ervaringen in de Bijlmermeer bieden aanknopingspunten voor probleemwijken in Nederland en elders in de wereld. Het is de kunst om deze ervaringen te transformeren tot lokaal maatwerk.

Appendix 1 Surveys and studies in the Bijlmermeer area

Table A1 Overview of surveys and studies in the Bijlmermeer area

Block of flats	Dwellings*	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004-07	2008
Daalwijk	488														19				
Dennenrode	398														19				
Develstein	295														19				
Echtenstein	542														19				
Eeftink	548		2	3,4											19				
Egeldonk	476											11	12		19				
Fleerde	427								7										
Florijn	531		2	3,4		5		6	7										
Frissenstein	537								7						19				
Geinwijk	405																		
Gerenstein	407																		
Gooioord	376																		
Gravestein	380																		
Groeneveen	484		2	3,4															
Grubbehoeve	319												13						
Grunder	485								8	9		11∧	12∧, 13						
Haag en Veld	325		2	3,4															
Hakfort	519														19		20		
Hofgeest	325																		
Hogevecht	266																		
Hoogoord	266																		
Huigenbos	399														19		20		
Kempering	497														19				
Kikkenstein	495								8∧	9∧		11	12		19				
Kleiburg	499					5		6							19				
Klieverink	356			3∧					8	9		11	12						
Koningshoef	529																		
Kouwenoord	296																		
Kralenbeek	398																		
Kruitberg	477					5		6											
Total high-rise flats	**12,745**																		
Surrounding																			
Hoptille	323	1																	
Heesterveld	329																		22
Geerdinkhof	525												14						
Gouden Leeuw	400													18					
Groenhoven	431													18					
Overall Bijlmermeer	**14,753**									10			15,16 17				21		

See legend on following page ▶

Table A1 Overview of surveys and studies in the Bijlmermeer area (continuing)

1 Study deterioration process in Hoptille
2 Experiment: Caretakers ('concierges') in four flats: ex-ante evaluation
3 Experiment: Caretakers ('concierges') in five flats: ex-post evaluation and street interviews(∧)
4 Survey after residents opinions about the future of their flats
5 Experiment: Daily management: ex-ante evaluation in three flats
6 Experiment: Daily management: ex-post evaluation in three flats
7 Survey after residents opinions in F-neighbourhood about the future of their flats
8 Experiment: CCTV (camera control) in one flat(∧), and control flats: ex-ante evaluation
9 Experiment: CCTV (camera control) in one flat(∧), and control flats: ex-post evaluation
10 Study societal and liveability aspects in the Bijlmermeer
11 Experiment: Improving liveability and neighbourhood management in one flat(∧): ex-ante evaluation
12 Experiment: Improving liveability and neighbourhood management in one flat(∧): ex-post evaluation
13 Survey after residents opinions about the future of their flats
14 Survey after residents opinions in nearby low-rise area about future plans
15 Study about effects of four years improving liveability in the Bijlmermeer
16 Study about the management and privatization of public greens in the Bijlmermeer
17 Study and process about 'island concept' in Kraaienest part of the Bijlmermeer
18 Survey after residents opinions in nearby own property high-rise flats about future plans
19 Survey after residents opinions about the future of their flats
20 Survey after residents opinions in to be refurbished flats
21 Study about rehousing aspects of movers due to the restructuring process
22 Survey after residents opinions about the future of their flat

* Amount of dwellings originally, before any renewal activities. Figures date from 1990. Figures change during the 1980s and early 1990s, due to incidental change of functions (both to and from housing, splitting up dwellings, etc).
** Total of high-rise flats owned by housing association Nieuw Amsterdam (later Patrimonium, later Rochdale).

Appendix 2 Publications by the author about the Bijlmermeer high-rise district

Reports and books in Dutch

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- Wassenberg, F. (1990), De bewoners over de toekomst van de Bijlmermeer, Delft (Delftse Universitaire Pers). Just after the trail blazing plans were introduced to demolish housing on a large scale, this survey was conducted among residents.
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of designs to give shape to the ‘island concept’, or gated community in this part in the Bijlmermeer.
- Veghel, M. van & F. Wassenberg (1999), Stedelijke vernieuwing in de Bijlmermeer, Bewoners over de toekomst van Grubbehoeve en Grunder, Delft, (Delftse Universitaire Pers). A survey among inhabitants of two blocks about their opinion about the future of their premises.
- Hoekstra, J. & F. Wassenberg (2000), Bewonerspeiling in Geerdinkhof, Delft, Onderzoeksinstituut OTB. A survey among the inhabitants of the low rise family housing area adjacent to the Bijlmermeer about their opinions on the renewal plans of the high-rise district next door.
- Hoekstra, J. & F. Wassenberg (2000), Bewonerspeiling in Gouden Leeuw en Groenhoven, Delft, Onderzoeksinstituut OTB. A survey among the inhabitants of the only two owner occupied high-rise blocks in the Bijlmermeer about their opinions on the renewal plans for the high-rise district next door.
- Helleman, G. & F. Wassenberg (2001), Bewonersonderzoek Finale Plan van Aanpak Bijlmermeer, Delft, (Delftse Universitaire Pers). A very large survey among all 5000 residents not involved in the planning process yet. The results were used as the Final Plan of Approach.
- Helleman, G. & F. Wassenberg (2003), Bewonersonderzoek Verbetermogelijkheden Hakfort en Huigenbos, Delft, Onderzoeksinstituut OTB. The residents of two blocks had chosen not to demolish their housing. In this survey, they were consulted how to improve these estates.
- Wassenberg, F. (2003), Herhuisvestingsbalans Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer, Delft, Onderzoeksinstituut OTB. A study on the process of rehousing tenants, who were forced to move out because of the renewal interventions.
- Wassenberg, F. & E. van Bergeijk (2008), Bewonersonderzoek toekomst Heesterveld, Delft, Onderzoeksinstituut OTB. A survey among inhabitants of two blocks of low-rise flats, adjacent to the Bijlmermeer high-rise, about their opinion about the future of their premises.

Articles in professional Dutch journals (about the surveys, 1989-2003)
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Appendix 3 Publications by the author, related to the PhD project, 1997-2012

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Curriculum vitae

Frank Wassenberg (born 1959) graduated in social geography and urban planning at Radboud University in Nijmegen. Following this he worked for two years at the Ministry of Housing and Spatial Planning in The Hague. Since 1987 he has held several positions at OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies at Delft University of Technology. Frank has worked on a wide range of projects on themes such as urban renewal, housing market policy, urban future scenario's, neighbourhood development, problems of crime, security and quality of life, high-rise housing, rehabilitation of large housing estates and residents' participation. He publishes in a wide range of journals, gives presentations and courses and collaborates with a range of partners at neighbourhood and international level.

In 2009 Frank transferred to Nicis Institute in The Hague, where he works as programme leader in research on housing and urban development. He is involved with projects that bridge the gap between academic knowledge and application in urban practice. In the course of 2012, Nicis Institute merged into Platform31. Besides his work at Platform31, Frank is still a guest researcher at OTB.

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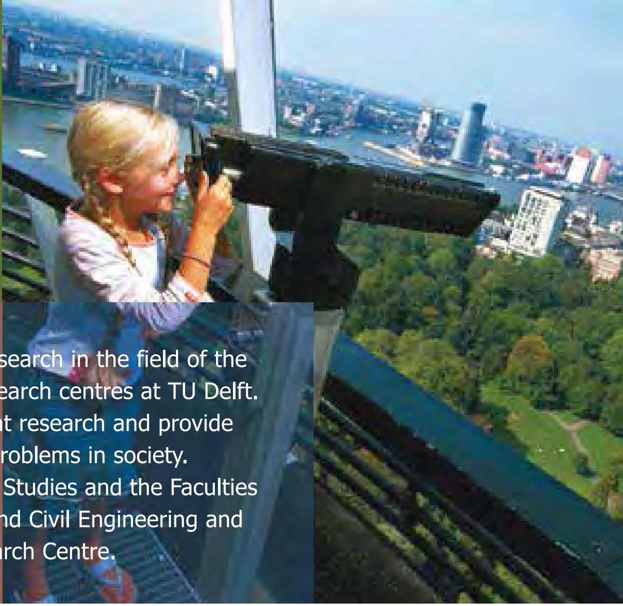

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Large housing estates: for some people these three words symbolise all that is wrong in urban planning. Large is wrong, because many people prefer a living surrounding that reflects the human scale. Housing as a single function is wrong, because mixed areas are more lively. And estates are wrong, as these refer to top-down planned areas which the residents themselves have no say in. Although many such estates function well, others have proved to be in serious problems. The question is how to deal with this legacy. For these estates to recover, an integrated solution is needed. Large-scale problems require large-scale interventions. The Amsterdam Bijlmermeer area has been the most deprived and stigmatised area in the Netherlands for at least a quarter of a century, despite its glorious design in the 1960s. The area can now be considered as a leading case for area regeneration. The author has followed this fascinating area for years and provides an analysis of its construction, fall and recovery. Moreover, he compares the Bijlmermeer with many other large housing estates in the Netherlands and abroad, and analyses what conclusions may be of use for other areas.

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