Abstract
This paper deals with the theme of aging of the population of the Netherlands and the housing market. Should the elderly live in the expensive city center or in the quiet suburb?

Keywords
Elderly, aging, housing market, sheltered housing complex, city, suburb

Introduction: Aging and the housing market
The Apple Market in Amsterdam, the location for my graduation studio Dutch Housing, is almost the last un-built space inside the busy city center. The question arises what to do with this empty plot? In 2015 almost 18 per cent (3 million) of the Dutch population is older than 65 years. According to the population forecast of the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS) in 2040 is risen to a peak of more than 26 per cent (4,75 million) of the population. This means an addition of 1,75 million people older than 65. Within this group of older than 65, the people older than 75 grows the strongest (Van Dam, 2013). With the aging peak in 2040 in the Netherlands due to the baby boom it’s obvious to build for the elderly. The social situation of the elderly has changed over the years. The following statement is taken: What do elderly complexes add to the city center from a socio-spatial perspective?

The history of the elderly in society
Before the 19th century the elderly care was mainly organized by churches and individuals (Graaff, 2016). The social situation of the elderly was equal to the poor and sick. They had almost nothing to spend, were left lonely and were dependent of charity. The majority had to rely on the cheapest and worst housing, their living conditions reflected their low social status (Mens & Wagenaar, 2009). The end of the Second World War was the beginning of reconstruction and welfare. Since then, care has tried to shape a better regulatory and financial framework. The workers now took care of the non-employed persons in society. In 1947 the income insurance for the elderly was realized with the introduction of the ‘Noodwet Ouderdomsvoorziening’ by Willem Drees. Through this system, the elderly received a financial significance in society, because they have worked hard all their lives. Increasingly, the regulatory was better developed and in 1963 elderly had more to spend and could play a better role in society. Therefore, more widely shelter could be organized (Mens & Wagenaar, 2009). Under the influence of the functionalist thinking the elderly got an increasingly isolated place in society. Most of the institutions arose in new residential neighborhoods. For each type of care which was offered had been built a building type. The construction of these large specific complexes stood an integration with the environment in the way. The trend towards scaling promoted the appearance
of elderly colonies. The population became older and showed more flaws. It thus became more and more a care complex instead of a residential complex (Mens & Wagenaar, 2009).

This development of a city with clearly separated atmospheres was criticized. One of them was Lewis Mumford (1895-1990), an American historian and philosopher. He describes in 1937 in "What is a City?" to view the city not only as a purely physical fact, but have a broader view and see it as a social institution. He defines cities through a comparison with the performing arts: “the city is a theater of social action.”, and that everything else such as art, politics, and education, only serve to "make the drama more richly significant, as a stage-set, well-designed, intensifies and underlies the gestures of the actors and the action of the play." Another opponent of the separation of atmospheres was Jane Jacobs (1916-2006), in her book “The Death and Life of Great American Cities” (1961) she argued that urban renewal did not meet the needs of every city-dweller. Many of these neighborhoods were dealing with a declining economic vitality as a result of policies that was inspired by supporters of the CIAM. She writes: “City districts will be economically and socially congenial for diversity to generate itself and reach its best potential if the districts possess good mixtures of primary uses, frequent streets, a close-grained mingling of different ages in their buildings, and a high concentration of people.”

In 1972 a building stop was introduced for the uncoordinated construction of nursing- and care homes. Functionalism should no longer lead to mono-functional enclaves. The burden on the government was increased, because it was so attractive for elderly to move into popular elderly housing. Unfortunately, due to the number of elderly people rising the government could no longer provide care as happened since the war (Mens & Wagenaar, 2009).

In 1991 It seems that the elderly in general does not exist and elderly individuals are varied in needs of care. From now on, living and care were separately organized and funded from each other. In districts support and care for normal homes was provided to deploy finance and organizations. The elderly would be able to live longer independent, it gave the elderly a better self-esteem. Only the elderly for who it was impossible to take care of themselves were paid for the nursing homes. The elderly housing that was still under construction consisted mainly of independent dwellings with spacious floor plans or communities with specific needs of care (Mens & Wagenaar, 2009). Due to a system change in 2015, the responsibility of the government was shifted to the municipalities and insurance companies. Also elderly have more responsibility, what suits their rapidly growing individuality, and can choose how and where they want to receive care.

A need for elderly dwellings

Nowadays, the new generation elderly is born between 1945 and 1960, they are according to Hooimeijer (in Van Dam, 2013) in general higher educated, wealthier, more vital, more mobile, more active, more independent and have a higher life expectancy. These characteristics are from great influence on the housing market The elderly group can be divided into the younger elderly (65-74 year) and the older elderly (75+). The younger elderly has after their retirement a shift in activities from work to free time. They barely need household or personal care, only when for instance their partner passes away (Breedveld, 2009). A part of their time they spent on volunteer work and offering informal help and care to others (Van Dam, 2013). The older elderly perform less often to volunteer and give less often informal help. This fits the image of older people from that age, who increasingly earlier needs help than they can give help (Van Dam, 2013). So the main difference between these two groups can be made between self-supported and in need of help. Elderly obviously cannot indefinitely live in their home, there comes a time when they have to move to a care facility (Van Dam, 2013). In this position paper the focus is on the older elderly in a care facility.

Due to the aging there is a need for more elderly dwellings, but where should they be placed? Inside the expensive city center or in the quiet suburbia? With aging, the home and the immediate surroundings are becoming an increasingly important place in the daily activities and social contacts. In particular, when the health is deteriorating and the radius of action decreases (Fillius, 1993).
The elderly dwelling

When people get older it is clear that the dwelling gets more important. The home is important in forming an identity and receiving appreciation and status. The dwelling is the primary place, for elderly, where activity can be found. The physical well-being contributes to goals as autonomy, privacy, comfort and safety. To social well-being contributes to goals as contact, appreciation and status (Hooimeijer, 2007). The more physical aspect of the elderly dwelling lies in the accessibility and (major) home modifications. The suitability of a home for the elderly does not only depend on the presence or absence of a staircase. Also adjustments as installing a ramp to the front door widening the doors, a stair lift and adjustments to the kitchen or bathroom allow older people to remain in their homes after they receive a physical disability (De Klerk, 2004).

The government policy is deployed to live as long as possible independently for the elderly, with or without care, the solutions are sought in the private domain. Before that it was mainly the task of the public domain, which was divided between independent living without care and non-independent living with care (Blok, 2016). Elderly homes come with a various of forms: a kangaroo flat, life appropriate housing, zero entry dwelling, sheltered housing complexes and care complexes. The small scale of sheltered housing complexes unlike care complexes, are mostly in urban areas and often realized near facilities. This means for elderly that they can continue to do the shopping and remains more self-reliant (Hooimeijer, 2007).

Elderly in the suburbs

Why do older elderly need to occupy the expensive city center space while they can have everything they need in the suburb? Older elderly, in a sheltered housing complex, do not daily come out of their houses. Approximately 23% leaves their home daily and 10% does not leave their home at all (De Klerk, 2005, p. 30). What stands out in a sheltered housing complex, is the diversity of the residents. There is on the one side a large group with severe disabilities, but on the other side residents that are relatively healthy and active. Relatively, because everyone obviously needs an indication to live in a sheltered housing complex (De Klerk, 2005).

The city is not the most obvious environment for elderly. Young people can profit more than elderly from the city, they can find more likely suitable work, a partner and have more choice from a wide range of urban facilities. After the elderly are retired, they do not need to work anymore and can make place for other people in the city. For instance, the working people in the city. This prevents employees to spend less time commuting and it will benefit the environment (Dichterbij je werk wonen is duurzamer, 2016). Another example are the students who wants to live in the city, currently it takes too much time to get a room and they the rooms are way to expansive (Piersma, 2016). Also the suburbs are a quieter residential area than the city center and do have more space for recreational parks, what they like. Furthermore, the use of an electric bike could be more enjoyable in the quiet suburb than in the busy city. According to Van Dam, the local governments see the supposed migration of wealthy elderly who come to the peace, space and lower housing prices as an opportunity for a living countryside. The idea behind this is that the retirement migrants can counteract the shrinking of rural communities.

Elderly in the city

Although the big cities are clearly leaving municipalities, it is too short-sighted to say that big cities are not attractive for the elderly (Van Dam, 2013). According to Hooimeijer (2007), mainly the wealthy and active older people are moving to the city center. Heins and Keers et al. (in Van Dam, 2013) state that the migration of older people from the countryside to the city may indicate a lack of suitable housing, such as apartments and care services in rural areas. Van der Meer (in Van Dam, 2013) makes clear that on the functional level of healthcare, cities in this regard have more to offer than villages. It’s better to build elderly homes inside the city instead in rural areas, to prevent vacancy after the
What do elderly complexes add to the city center from a socio-spatial perspective?

Mike de Lange 15-12-16

aging peak (Van Dam, 2013). The facilities inside the city are denser than in the suburb, like the museums and the public transport.

An interesting city is always mixed. In terms of ages, lifestyles and backgrounds. Elderly can take care for social control in the neighborhood. It is generally safer and there is less nuisance. Elderly can take an important role in the private equity firm (Marlet, 2016). Older elderly still have the right to enjoy their lives the fullest and should have a choice where they want to live the rest of their life. The elderly can provide a mix of population which gain awareness for the younger people.

**Position: relations between the city and the elderly**

The elderly housing of the 19th century until the 21st century has been significantly developed. The social status of the elderly who were similar to the sick and the poor changed to a recognized group. Also there came a shift from a place where functions were separated to a place where a mixed environment and strong public life was seen as an added value. Mumford emphasizes on community values and the cities role in enlarging the potential of the human personality. More small scaled complexes or unities with differentiation in inhabitants could enhance that. Nowadays living and care are separated due to the regulations of the government, a communal space could prevent that elderly become isolated. Especially when they get older and their range is reduced. It’s important that there is a balance between the city and the elderly (complex), they both give and take facilities. The use of elderly complexes in the city center creates a diversity in age of people. This would be a good thing for both young and old people. Young people are able to gain respect for older people and broaden their horizon. For the elderly, the youngsters could keep them active and energized. That’s why the architecture should find a way to make a good relation between the city and a sheltered housing complex. It is the special spaces, such as neighborhood support, a restaurant, kindergarten or a library, through which people create a relationship with their neighborhood. By introducing such a public space, you make sure at the same time that the mono-functionality, that gray, breaks through. According to the architects Arons and Prosman, it is about a few years the retirement home is the center of the neighborhood (Hannema, 2010).

For example, the renovation of the sheltered housing complex De Rietvinck, by Marc Prosman architecten realized in 2010 in Amsterdam, has a ground floor that is designed as an extension of the city. Nowadays in the café-restaurant, students have a coffee and organized exhibitions are held. "Apart from designing affordable elderly housing with architectural value is the integration of elderly people in the neighborhood as I am concerned, the task for the future," says architect Prosman. Because whether you live alone or in a nursing home, loneliness among the elderly is a big problem. Certainly in our busy, individualistic society. In the end you will not only want to provide a home, but also give the feeling that elderly make a part of society (Hannema, 2010).

**Conclusion**

This topic of aging is relevant to society, it’s a current social development to which much attention is given, but where still many uncertainties are about. The question posed: What do elderly complexes add to the city center from a socio-spatial perspective? Elderly have an increasing role in our society and it is important to deal properly with it. At a higher age the facilities in the immediate environment, such as convenience stores and public parks, will be more relevant. It’s important to create awareness

Figure 1: De Rietvinck by Marc Prosman Architecten (Prosman, 2016)
about the aging of the population and provide well-designed dwellings. The advantage is that there are more facilities for older people in the city, no matter how annoying they find noise nuisance. A counter side of the elderly in the city is that they cannot profit optimal from the city, especially after their retirement if they are in need of care. There is a balance needed in the city population. Until the aging peak in 2040 there is a need for buildings such as independent housing, assisted living facilities, specific group homes and collective commissioning (CPO) due to the increasingly social position of the elderly and the reduced organization of the government. Finally, elderly bring awareness to the city and it’s important to give elderly the feeling they are still part of society.
What do elderly complexes add to the city center from a socio-spatial perspective?

Mike de Lange

15-12-16

Literature


What do elderly complexes add to the city center from a socio-spatial perspective?

Mike de Lange 15-12-16

