

New Trends in the Dutch Housing Market

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Abstract

Every few years the planning agencies in the Netherlands draw up a prognosis for the future housing needs on the basis of economic and demographic scenarios. It is our contention that, in applying this approach, the agencies neglect to take sufficient account of the influence of cultural dynamics. A recent recommendatory report by the Dutch Council for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM Council, 2009) drew attention to three socio-cultural trends which are currently manifesting themselves on the Dutch housing market:

1. A growing interest in living in 'communities' and in common-interest housing concepts;
2. Greater internationalisation and a rise in the number of people with more than one residence;
3. An increasing mix of housing and other services (care, leisure, retail, education), which is opening up the market for new players.

We believe that these three trends will have a significant influence on the demand for housing in the future, in spatial terms as well as with regard to quantity and quality. They will raise new dilemmas in spatial planning and housing policy and necessitate a different way of thinking.

1. Introduction

The Netherlands is well-known for its extensive research on housing needs and preferences. A large-scale survey is held every four years to gain insight into the short-term developments in this domain. Long-term studies are also conducted on a regular basis, but mostly along economic and demographic lines. In such studies, housing preferences are not regarded as autonomous trends, but rather as offshoots of demographic and economic circumstances. Household numbers, economic growth and government policy are seen as crucial factors in shaping the future housing demand, which is then expressed mainly in numbers, ownership sectors and types of dwelling.

The methods for forecasting trends in the housing market have remained more or less the same in recent decades and take little or no account of the fundamental changes that have taken place in society. Nowadays, people have more options open to them, internationalisation is burgeoning, environmental pollution and climate change are hot issues and lifestyle is becoming a strong determinant of socio-cultural differentiation. These developments are manifesting themselves in three main trends in the housing market (VROM Council, 2009):

1. A growing interest in living in ‘communities’ and in common-interest housing concepts;
2. Greater internationalisation and a rise in the number of people with more than one residence;
3. An increasing mix of housing with other services (care, leisure, retail, education), which is opening up the market for new players.

These three trends reflect the increased diversity in the ways that individuals, households and groups meet their housing needs. They also indicate that the dividing lines between living, working and leisure are nowhere near as clear-cut as they used to be. We maintain that policymakers have not yet recognised the true importance of these changes and that housing market prognoses will not be reliable until they take them on board.

Policymakers and project developers still think too much in terms of standard solutions and standard categories and fail to do justice to the wide differentiation in demand. This is a precarious state of affairs, especially at this time, when the economic crisis has such a tight grip on the Dutch housing market. The production of new-builds may well decline in the coming years, now that banks have become more selective about lending money and consumers are reluctant to commit themselves financially. People who still plan to move house can afford to be choosy. In such a situation it is more important than ever to listen closely and respond to the specific housing preferences of households.

The aim of this paper

This paper explores the background and the physical expressions of the above-mentioned trends in three separate sections. In the final section we discuss the implications of these trends for the spatial planning and housing policy and show that the time is ripe for a new approach.

2. Living in communities and common-interest housing concepts

More and more people want to live in common-interest communities, with neighbours who enjoy similar activities and subscribe to the same values as themselves – in other words, like-minded neighbours who share their lifestyle. The desire to live alongside like-minded people finds expression in different forms of housing (see Table 1). All the types of housing in Table 1 are characterised by a certain degree of communality, revolving, for example, around ethnicity (elderly members of ethnic groups who live together in ethnic residential care complexes), life phase (families who live together around an inner courtyard), a leisure pursuit (golf or horse-riding) or specific convictions (e.g. eco-friendly neighbourhoods). The rest of this section will discuss two important forms of common-interest housing: enclosed communities and thematic communities

Table 1: Different types of common-interest housing

What?	Why?	Where?
Enclosed housing domain, privatised public space	Need for safety and assurance	Throughout the Netherlands, especially in cities and attractive rural areas
High-rise complexes with communal amenities (swimming pool, gym)	Relax with like-minded people, club idea	Larger cities
Ethnic residential care complexes	Desire to grow old with people from the same ethnic background	Especially in areas with a high ethnic population, such as the Randstad
Collective private commissions, e.g. residential complexes built by groups of senior citizens	Like-minded people decide and organise the housing situation	Throughout the Netherlands
Thematic housing, e.g. on a golf resort or in a castle complex	Housing combined with recreation	Throughout the Netherlands, especially where there is open space
Historicised building; cultural history as input for the branding and design of living environments (retro architecture)	Appeals to values and concepts from the past	Throughout the Netherlands
Communes, artists' collectives	Living with like-minded people	Especially in larger cities
Eco-friendly neighbourhoods with e.g. energy-neutral or floating dwellings	Build a better environment, give expression to a 'green' identity	Throughout the Netherlands
Concentration of devout Christian groups in a number of larger municipalities	Secularisation and economies of scale mean that only larger municipalities can form a strong enough support base for devout Christian churches and schools	Specific, slightly larger places in the Bible Belt (a zone running from the southwest to the northeast of the Netherlands)

Source: VROM Council, 2009

Enclosed communities

The most developed and well-known type of common-interest housing is the 'common-interest housing development' (CID). A CID is a housing domain which is situated in a space that is often managed and administered by the residents instead of the local authority (McKenzie, 2003). As many of these domains are protected by a gate or some other form of security, they are also known as 'gated communities'. They are scattered across the USA and South America, but are also popular in Southern Europe. In the USA around 60 million people live in CIDs (Community Associations Institute, 2009).

Enclosed communities are on the increase in the Netherlands, but there are still far fewer than in other countries. Security is also less tight in the Dutch communities, consisting at the very most of a gate that is closed at night. However, there are often implicit barriers in the form of hedges, water and narrow entrances (Hamers *et al.*, 2007). Explicit barriers are not really necessary as most people in the Netherlands who live in enclosed communities are looking for like-mindedness and intimacy rather than protection against crime.

There is, of course, nothing new about enclosed communities. *Hofjes* (courtyards surrounded by dwellings) were being built in the Netherlands as early as the seventeenth century in order to provide a sheltered environment for vulnerable members of society, such as spinsters and widows. Most of these hofjes were built by charitable foundations; they are still very popular forms of housing in busy cities. Another historical example of a more or less enclosed living domain is the workers' village, such as Philipsdorp in Eindhoven. Workers' villages were set up by factory proprietors at the start of the twentieth century in order to provide workers with good-quality and expedient accommodation. An added advantage is that they generated loyalty to the employer and kept sick-leave at a minimum. All the amenities, such as shops, sport fields, schools and association buildings, were on hand in the village. The idea was that the factory village would form a complete community.

Be that as it may, most of the enclosed communities in the Netherlands have evolved in the past fifteen years. However, whereas the 'old' enclosed living domains were largely determined by social class, the 'new' enclosed living domains are largely determined by lifestyle. The burning question is: Where is the need to live with like-minded people coming from? We believe that changes in neighbourhood composition are partly responsible. In the past, residents of the same neighbourhood usually knew each other, at least by sight, and they certainly knew who lived where. This made them feel safe and secure. Rapid changes in the composition of the population have brought an end to such acquaintanceship in some neighbourhoods. Misunderstandings about what used to be accepted codes of behaviour can lead to conflicts and isolation. In the hope of rediscovering this acquaintanceship many house-seekers look for a dwelling in a neighbourhood where they expect to meet people like themselves and to find safety and assurance. Most of them are not looking so much for a close-knit social community as a neighbourhood where they feel comfortable. Secondly, a sense of community makes it easier to organise practical matters. For example, the residents can babysit for one another or advise one another on a change of job. Informal support is becoming more important, now that the government is taking a back seat in so many areas.

Thematic communities

The culture surrounding consumption has changed dramatically in recent decades. Greater prosperity and technological advances have reduced the costs of many products and services. And there is more choice than ever before. As a result, decisions to buy consumer goods tend to be inspired more by emotions than by functionality (Mommaas, 2003). Consumerism stretches way beyond satisfying basic human needs (food, drink, shelter); it is tied in with an inner feeling which is triggered by a certain type of behaviour. Hence, the expression: 'the experience economy'.

The same picture is emerging in housing, as more and more developers market ‘residential experience’ and build complexes around specific themes such as ‘water’, ‘castles’ or ‘golf’ (see Figure 1). As such, they satisfy a need for a communal experience, a story that the residents can share and which gives the neighbourhood a specific identity.

Figure 1: Haverleij Castle, an example of a thematic complex



Source: www.haverleij.nl

3. Internationalisation and multiple residences

The world economy has become more international in recent decades. Businesses are more mobile. Production plants and head-offices relocate with relative ease and worldwide searches are performed to find the best location for large investments. The labour market has also become more international. People come from abroad to work in the Netherlands and Dutch nationals take up jobs in other parts of the world. These processes also affect the way people live. Fewer people stay in the same house, the same neighbourhood or even the same country, for most of their lives. Moreover, more people nowadays own more than one home, sometimes in different countries. This section discusses new living styles which have come into being through internationalisation.

Labour migrants from Central and Eastern Europe arrive in the Netherlands

The internationalisation of the labour market is increasing the flow of foreign workers into the Netherlands. Many of these workers are from Central and Eastern Europe. They started coming in 2004, when the Netherlands opened its borders to citizens from the new EU member states. Most of them stay for only a short period of time, varying between weeks and months, and find jobs in the lower segments of the labour market.

Many need specific types of accommodation, such as hostels, boarding houses and readily available rented accommodation. At present, these types of housing are in short supply (Regioplan, 2007) because of institutional obstacles and stringent legislation on the one hand and tight local housing markets on the other. Some public authorities find it intolerable that housing (even temporary housing) is allocated to workers from Central and Eastern Europe while local people have to wait for years.

Expats and knowledge workers

The flow of foreign workers into the upper segments of the labour market (usually referred to as expats or knowledge workers) has also increased, particularly in the universities, where one in five of the academic staff is non-Dutch (Research voor Beleid, 2005). Multinationals and international organisations in the Netherlands also employ many foreigners; in fact, there are already more than 50,000 expats in the region of The Hague alone. International knowledge workers might be regarded as modern-day nomads. They tend to form their own communities, which are notable for a cosmopolitan lifestyle and a preference for a city environment. Their mobility options and place of residence are dictated by international businesses and organisations that, when choosing a location, often take a close interest in the type of housing that is available for their employees. Hence, employers in the knowledge-intensive sector usually prefer to locate in an attractive living environment.

Emigration from the Netherlands

The Netherlands has a fairly long history of emigration. In the nineteenth century and during the post-war years, hundreds of thousands of Dutch citizens moved to the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to start a new life. In the 1960s the numbers of emigrants fell sharply and the Netherlands became a destination for immigrants. In recent years there has again been an upswing in emigration figures, which even managed to exceed the immigration figures for a while.

Though most of the emigrants are from ethnic groups, more Dutch people (defined as people from whom both parents were born in the Netherlands) are leaving the country as well: around 42,000 in 2006 compared with around 29,000 in 2000. Dutch people emigrate less for economic reasons than out of a desire for adventure, a better climate, a natural environment, and peace and space. Some leave because they are displeased with the political and social system in the Netherlands. The majority of Dutch emigrants remain inside Europe, with

Belgium (21%) and Germany (17%) as the most popular destinations. Those who move to Belgium and Germany do not always 'leave' entirely; they generally buy homes across the border, where property prices are lower, and commute to jobs in the Netherlands.

Second homes

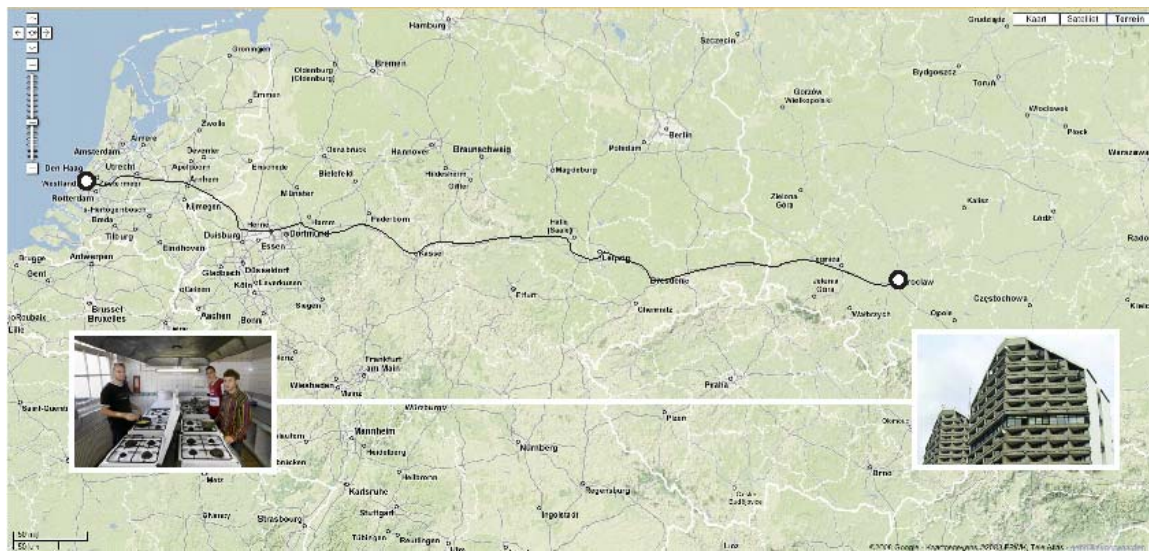
More people in the Netherlands own two or more homes. This trend can be explained by the increase in prosperity and the rising house prices. People often use surplus capital from the first home to purchase a second home, which they also expect to rise in value. In addition to this, the experience economy also plays a role, as leisure and recreation continue to gain in importance in people's lives. Many people buy second homes to escape the stress and strain of everyday living. They pursue a busy and successful career during the week and chill out in their second home in the weekend. That way, they get 'the best of both worlds'.

Second homes come in all shapes and sizes: detached villas, bungalows in holiday parks, mobile homes, beach houses and even chalets on allotments. Second homes that are used for recreational purposes usually lie in a specific location with, say, water, woods or both in the immediate vicinity.

Based on a broad definition (which includes mobile homes and allotment chalets) the number of second homes in the Netherlands is estimated at around 400,000, which is equal to around 5% of the Dutch housing stock (RPB/RIGO, 2003). Ownership of a second home is low in the Netherlands compared with other European countries. In Denmark there are 2.4 million first homes and around 200,000 recreational homes (8.3%) and in Belgium 7.9% of households have a second home. The percentage of second homes is far greater in the countries farther south: one in ten in France and one in six in Spain. Italy comes out top, where 19% of the housing stock consists of second homes (Gordijn & De Vries, 2004). The large number of second homes in Southern Europe is sometimes attributed to the compact cities, which are common in Southern European countries. People who live in a compact city often find peace and quiet in a second home during holidays and at weekends (Módenes & López-Colás, 2007).

Not all second homes are used for recreational purposes. A growing number of people have a *pied-à-terre* in the city where they spend the night after a day's work. These homes are usually situated in the cities or in areas with labour-intensive employment. Migrant workers from Central and Eastern Europe often have two homes as well: a permanent home in their own country and a temporary home in the Netherlands (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The two dwellings of a Polish worker in the Netherlands



Source: Urban Unlimited

Normally, a dwelling is the base from which people work, participate in leisure activities and maintain social contacts. So, when someone decides to buy a dwelling, he needs to consider all these aspects. People who own, or intend to own, two or more dwellings make their decisions on different grounds. They may choose one dwelling because it is close to their place of work (important during the week) and the other because of the opportunities for leisure pursuits (important at weekends and during holidays). Many buy an apartment in the city (close to work) and a holiday dwelling in the country (good recreational opportunities). However, if they had decided on only one dwelling, they might have opted for a single-family dwelling in a suburban setting.

Ownership of second homes is leading to debates and spatial planning dilemmas in the Netherlands. The increase in second homes – like the demand for housing among foreign workers – is impacting on the social and spatial structure of some areas. On the one hand, owners of a second home in a rural area are regarded as a welcome addition to the sometimes shrinking population; on the other, people dread the prospect of ‘ghost villages’, given that the second home is often unoccupied outside the holiday season. A sharp rise in the number of second homes could increase tailbacks and pollution and have a detrimental effect on wildlife and landscape.

An added problem is that many recreational dwellings are actually used as permanent residences. Though this is against the law, the ban is difficult to enforce. Permanent habitation of recreational dwellings is most prevalent in areas with a tighter housing market, where it could push up the prices and lead to a shortage of this kind of property.

4. Amenity-based housing

Housing is becoming more and more intertwined with other services. A dwelling is no longer just a place to eat and sleep; it is also a place to work, relax, or receive care services. Rising prosperity, an ageing population and pressure of time have created a growing market for all sorts of new services in, amongst others, healthcare, convenience and leisure, and are ultimately turning the dwelling and the environment into an integrated whole. Home comfort is no longer a question of having the right modern conveniences and gadgets; it also depends on the amenities that are available in and around the dwelling. We call this trend ‘amenity-based housing’. The supply side of the market is capitalising on this growing need. Alliances between housing providers and service providers are on the increase and new players (private as well as commercial) are emerging. This section looks at the most common mixes of housing and other types of service.

Housing, healthcare and convenience

Housing and care is the most well-known and common mix of housing and other services. An ageing population that wants to live independently for as long as possible is creating a growing demand for care in and around the dwelling. Some home-care combinations go hand in hand with community housing concepts, such as the Parc Hoogveld project (see boxed text).

Parc Hoogveld in Sittard-Geleen

Parc Hoogveld is a home-care project based on Disney’s *Celebration* resort, south of Orlando in Florida, USA, where all sorts of people, young and old, working and disabled, live together in a ‘civil society’ with lifelong housing and amenities provided for and by the people themselves. The aim of Parc Hoogveld is to create a close community where neighbour support and informal relationships play an important role. Parc Hoogveld consists of five cube-shaped urban villas with a total of 120 rented apartments, three apartment buildings for active senior citizens (72 dwellings) and a multifunctional community-cum-residential care centre with 94 apartments and residential care facilities for groups of dementia-sufferers.

This centre provides the residents with a whole range of facilities including a café-restaurant, a shop, a hairdresser, a chiropodist and an odd-job service. A day centre and a swimming pool for wellness and care packages may be added in the future. The leading partner in the project is Orbis care provider. The real estate component is in the hands of four housing associations and three commercial developers. To ensure that there is enough help on hand, contact is sought with healthcare training institutes to create work placements. The public space in the project (a park with an ornamental pond, various theme gardens, and sport and games facilities) will be provided by the Municipality of Sittard on a leasehold basis.

More and more home-care projects are also being organised by private individuals. Many of these initiatives have been prompted by dissatisfaction with what is currently on offer. A classic example is the Thomas Houses, set up in 2001 by a father of a son with a mental disability. A Thomas House is a small-scale dwelling for groups of six to eight people with a mental disability. The house is run by two care providers (often a married couple) who are responsible for the care and support that the residents receive. The residents can choose their own room and decorate it to their own taste. They decide how they spend their day and what they purchase in terms of care and support. As Thomas Houses are such small-scale concepts, services can be customised to suit individual needs.

IRS woongemak is a classic example of combined housing and convenience services.

Residents can contact a whole host of services, including cleaners, odd-job firms, meal providers, a florist, a laundry, a supermarket and a taxi switchboard via Internet or a control panel. The services are tailor-made to meet the needs at complex level.

Housing and energy

So far, housing and energy combinations have been geared mainly to generating and saving energy. Solar boilers, solar panels and heat pumps are slowly but surely becoming established in the Netherlands. Many people try to lower their energy consumption by means of insulation and ventilation control systems. Often, the initiative comes from the individual, with or without a government grant. Large-scale projects which combine housing and energy in one integrated concept are on the horizon, but many are still in the development phase. These include floating dwellings that derive their energy from the movement of the tides and eco-neighbourhoods that are completely self-supporting.

From housing consumer to housing prosumer

Residents are demanding and exercising a stronger influence on design processes and are thus playing a role in value creation. In plain terms, they become co-producers of the ‘housing’ product. This phenomenon has been around for a while in the world of consumer goods – with IKEA as a prime example. IKEA deliberately opted to involve the consumer in value creation. In traditional stores consumers buy a bed or cupboard and arrange for it to be delivered ready-for-use to their home address. However, IKEA customers pick up the products from the storeroom, take them home and assemble them themselves. Because the consumer takes over part of the work of the producer, the product can be sold far more cheaply. Similar trends are emerging in some supermarkets, where customers can scan the purchases themselves, add up the bill and pay at the check-out. It seems therefore that we are fast becoming consumers and producers at the same time. Futurist Alvin Toffler (2006) coined the term *prosumer* to describe this new role. Prosumers are now gradually establishing themselves in the housing market – with IKEA again as a pioneer (see boxed text).

Boklok (IKEA homes)

Boklok (Swedish for 'smart living') is a concept for prefabricated affordable dwellings, developed by IKEA in partnership with a major Swedish construction firm (Skanska). Three and a half thousand Boklok dwellings have already been built in Sweden and the concept is spreading to Norway and the UK as well. The dwellings meet high eco-requirements (solar panels are standard) and are usually built around a communal inner space (to improve social cohesion and safety). The target group is mainly first-time buyers who cannot find an affordable dwelling on the conventional housing market.

The successful IKEA concept of standardised mass production and prefabrication also applies to the Boklok dwellings. Between 70 and 80 percent of the dwellings is produced on a factory conveyor belt and then transported *en masse* to the location, where it is assembled by tradesmen.

Each dwelling comes with an IKEA kitchen, an IKEA bathroom and IKEA soft furnishings. The buyers also receive a voucher to spend in IKEA stores. To prevent speculation and rising prices the owners of Boklok dwellings are obliged to re-sell the dwelling to Boklok if they decide to move house. Boklok dwellings are proving a huge commercial success. In Scandinavia IKEA even has to draw lots for Boklok dwellings among its regular customers.



Source: Urban Unlimited, www.boklok.com

5. Implications of the new trends

We predict that the trends described in this paper will gather strength in the future, though the current economic recession may cause some delay, and that they will have both positive and negative implications. For example, enclosed housing domains could easily lead to exclusion and spatial segregation. On the other hand, they could encourage social cohesion (Manzi & Smith-Bowers, 2005). It all depends on the scale, the physical layout and how the domains are organised.

In the Netherlands enclosed housing domains could help to keep families with children in the city, as they would provide peace and safety and still be within easy reach of urban facilities. Housing that enables like-minded people to live together within a larger socio-economically and ethnically mixed district might help to build more integrated society. Common-interest housing can play a key role in the regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods (see boxed text below).

Le Medi

Le Medi is a housing project in Delfshaven, Rotterdam. It consists of 93 single-family dwellings based on the type of architecture that is common in countries around the Mediterranean. The initiative came from a Moroccan Dutchman called Hassani Idrissi, who had worked for years in Rotterdam social services. Idrissi came up with the idea of building a Mediterranean housing complex in Rotterdam, as a means of expressing the multicultural character of the city in the built environment. The Municipality liked the idea and called in a housing association and a project developer to work it out in detail.

Le Medi is based on 'identity-based development'; in other words, it is a common-interest community. The main elements in the design are a central square with a water feature; gates to close off the complex; flexible, easily extendable dwellings; and unconventional use of colour and materials.

The central square is semi-public space; like the streets and the parking garage, it is managed by the residents. The space is of a higher quality than is customary in Rotterdam. The residents receive a grant from the Municipality for the maintenance of the semi-public space, provided the gates to the complex are left open during the day.

The population of Le Medi is wide-ranging: ethnic and non-ethnic, families with and without children. The binding factor is that most of the residents are real city-dwellers. The dwellings are relatively expensive by Rotterdam standards: 220,000 euros for a property measuring 100 square metres. Before Le Medi was built, urban renewal in Delfshaven focused mainly on creating opportunities for existing residents to pursue a housing career. Le Medi is targeting a new affluent group, with the aim of bringing more diversity to the neighbourhood population.





Source: www.lemedi.nl

Second homes and temporary homes can undermine liveability if they go hand in hand with nuisance, declining social amenities, and lower involvement in the community. But they can just as easily have the opposite effect; suppose, for example, the residents of recreational homes join a fight to preserve the quality of the landscape; or hostels and service hotels result in a larger customer base for local services. Second homes can also contribute to gentrification of deprived areas (Paris, 2009). Finally, vacant buildings could be used to provide temporary accommodation for migrant workers and students. This would also help to solve the vacancy problems.

Moving towards a new policy

Clearly, the new trends on the housing market are presenting both opportunities and threats. What is needed is a policy that optimises the opportunities and eliminates as many threats as possible. The current policy instruments in the Netherlands date from another time and cannot accommodate these new trends, so it is essential to develop new lines of approach.

To begin with, more attention needs to be paid to mixed amenities. Policymakers should think more intelligently about combining housing, work, leisure, mobility and sustainability.

Instead of concentrating on a one-to-one relationship between the problem and the solution as at present, governments should look for models that integrate housing, job creation, leisure and nature. This will also challenge architects, urbanists and spatial planners to come up with new urban concepts that cater to different preferences and needs. Good spatial quality is crucial.

This change of mindset will necessitate new legislation and regulations. The dividing lines between designations and functions (housing, work, learning and leisure) are getting fainter all the time. Different functions are being accommodated more and more frequently in one and the same building, but the regulations are still based on separation, with different norms for each function, for example with regard to architectural quality, noise nuisance and traffic. We believe that functions should only be separated if they are likely to adversely affect third parties or pose a threat to the environment or public health. This strategy would increase flexibility in both new-builds and the existing housing stock.

Ownership of a second home can also create friction with the regulations. The Dutch government does not distinguish between a ‘first home’ and a ‘second home’ but between a ‘main residence’ and ‘a non-main residence’. Nowhere does the law define “main residence”, so it is a matter of interpretation. It is generally assumed that a tenant has his main residence at the place where his “social interests” converge. However, registration in the local register is

an important factor. Other factors may be the layout of the home, the energy consumption and subscriptions to sport clubs and societies in the immediate surroundings. The address of the main residence is copied to the public records, the electoral roll (in contrast with the USA, where people decide for themselves where to register as a voter), the records of the healthcare providers (GP, dentist) and the mortgage interest relief. In short, citizenship and all the accompanying rights and duties, are organised around the main residence. But, if people have two dwellings, which one should count as the 'main residence'? The 'main residence' concept is apparently at odds with the trend towards temporary accommodation and second homes, as it assumes that personal ties and involvement are connected to one specific geographical location. It is debatable whether this sort of singular vision of citizenship is still applicable in this day and age (see also Paris, 2009). Perhaps the time has come to think in terms of plural citizenship.

Clear shifts are slowly but surely occurring on the supply side of the housing market. New players cannot wait to get a foot in the door. These include healthcare organisations (integrated housing and care), employment agencies who are seeking accommodation for workers from Central and Eastern Europe, and private individuals who develop their own dwelling or join a group to realise collective housing. The options are multiplying all the time, but not because of a planned government programme. On the contrary, this new scenario has emerged because people and businesses have become disillusioned with the current concepts and are developing new ones. We believe that the government should give these new players as much scope as possible by, for example, making land available for building projects by private individuals, residents' collectives, developers and housing associations.

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