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LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

HOW DUTCH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS ENGAGE WITH THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF LIVEABILITY



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MASTER THESIS SOCIETY, SUSTAINABILITY AND PLANNING

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PREFACE

I am pleased to present to you my master's thesis *Liveable Neighbourhood: How Dutch Housing Associations Engage with the Social Aspect of Liveability*. This master thesis marks the finalization of my studies in the master's program Society, Sustainability & Planning at the University of Groningen. From May 2022 until June 2023, I have been researching and writing this thesis. Hopefully, the results presented by this research will contribute to academic research as well as to knowledge in planning and housing practice.

Over the past 5 years, I have been studying at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen, encompassing both my bachelor's and master's. Throughout this time, I created an interest and fascination in the concept of liveability, as well as housing associations as organizations. The opportunity to delve deeper into these topics has been a pleasure and a rewarding experience.

My interest in housing associations is something that I shared with my grandmother. On the 8th of September 2022, she sadly passed away. In loving memory, I dedicate this thesis to my grandmother.

Thank you *oma* for your advice, support and blessings,
and most especially, your inspiration and love.

In expressing my gratitude, I would like to acknowledge several people who have played an important role in the completion of this thesis. Foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Christian Lamker, for his valuable supervision, guidance, and constructive feedback throughout the entire process of researching and writing my thesis. Additionally, I would like to thank all of the research participants for their time, sharing their insights and their contributions to this research. Finally, I want to thank my family, friends and fellow students, for their help, assistance, feedback, brainstorming sessions, motivational talks, and mental support. I am really appreciative of everyone who supported me through this journey.

Hopefully, you will enjoy reading this thesis.

Roos den Boer
Groningen, June 2023

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the concept of liveability has gained increasing importance in housing- and planning practice. The amended Housing Act 2022 reflects this significance by providing housing associations with expanded opportunities to engage with liveability in neighbourhoods. This legal change has resulted in increased financial resources for housing associations, and the possibility to contribute to social interaction among their tenants. The social aspect of liveability encompasses various concepts, including social cohesion, social interaction, social mix, sense of belonging, sense of community, safety, cleanliness, nuisance, and criminality. While some of these factors primarily relate to the social aspect of liveability, others have a physical component as well, overlapping with both social and physical aspects. All of these factors contribute positively to liveability in neighbourhoods. This thesis examines how Dutch housing associations engage with the social aspect of liveability. The research explores the approaches, strategies, collaborations and activities that housing associations undertake in their respective neighbourhoods. Qualitative data has been obtained through semi-structured interviews with 11 experts from housing associations, municipalities, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Aedes and Woonbond. The research reveals that housing associations are actively involved in activities aimed at enhancing social cohesion, community involvement, social interaction, and the sense of community among residents. Often, these activities are combined with efforts to improve the physical environment of a neighbourhood, such as clean-up activities. Furthermore, housing associations encourage resident initiatives in which they take a facilitating role. Moreover, they use existing collaborations with municipalities and tenants' organizations and collaborate with the police and healthcare- and welfare organisations to engage with the social aspect of liveability. Social mixing is viewed as an effective intervention and is typically carried out in collaboration with municipalities. This research was conducted in the cities of Groningen, Almere and Tiel. To examine the applicability of the findings in diverse local contexts, follow-up research could repeat this study in different geographical contexts, for example, smaller villages or cities in the Randstad. Housing associations adopt an integrated approach that combines social measures, resident participation, collaborations and physical interventions to enhance the liveability in neighbourhoods. However, further research is needed to determine the effectiveness of approaches in promoting liveability.

Keywords:

Liveability, Social Housing, Housing Policy, Neighbourhoods, Social Mix & Social Cohesion

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List of Abbreviations

AW	Autoriteit Woningcorporaties Authority Housing Associations
Btiv	Besluit toegelaten instellingen volkshuisvesting Decree admitted institutions public housing
CBS	Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek
CCV	Centrum voor Criminaliteitspreventie en Veiligheid Centre for Crime Prevention and Safety
BZK	Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
ISA	Integrale Straat Aanpak Integrated Street Approach
Rtiv	Regeling toegelaten instellingen volkshuisvesting Regulation admitted institutions public housing

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Dutch housing crisis is a complex issue that has been growing over the years. There is an increasing shortage of affordable housing in the Netherlands, with rents and house prices rising rapidly (DNB, 2023). Housing associations have been building fewer dwellings over the past years, whilst the population in the Netherlands has grown significantly and the number of people seeking social housing has increased. All of this results in longer wait lists for social housing (NOS, 2021).

The housing market in the Netherlands consists mainly of social housing, private rental, and owner occupancy. Both social housing and private rental housing are provided by individuals, market parties and housing associations (WerkaanWonen, 2023). Social housing refers to housing with a limited rent which is called the liberalization limit. It is therefore considered affordable for households with a limited budget (Rijksoverheid, 2023a & Rijksoverheid, 2023b). In 2021, 33.62% of the dwellings in the Netherlands were considered social housing, of which almost 95% was owned by housing associations (CBS, 2022). In 2022, housing associations owned 28.5% of the total housing stock in the Netherlands (CBS, 2023a).

Housing associations build, rent and maintain dwellings and contribute to liveable neighbourhoods (WerkaanWonen, 2023). Most of the housing stock of housing associations is considered social housing (Aedes, 2023a). As agreed with the European Commission, the most important task of housing associations in the Netherlands is to provide affordable homes for people with low income. Therefore, the primary article in the Housing Act is: *'Housing associations are required to provide rental homes for people with lower incomes'* (Rijksoverheid, 2023c, p.1). Furthermore, liveability is one of the priorities for housing associations, as stated in the new public housing priorities 2021-2025: *"Investing in liveability – through differentiation of neighbourhoods, encounters between residents and social management"* (Rijksoverheid, 2020, p.3).

Building affordable housing and investments in liveability is important to improve the quality of the living environment in neighbourhoods. A lack of affordable and suitable housing has negative consequences for liveability in neighbourhoods. The scarcity of housing results in strong competition among housing seekers, which could force people to live in unsuitable or expensive homes. Additionally, the lack of affordable housing can lead to a lack of diversity in a neighbourhood.

The Housing Act is amended on the first of January 2022 and has been put into operation. Through the amended Housing Act, it is assumed by the Dutch national government that housing associations now have more opportunities to work on societal tasks, since there is more room for local customization. The abolishment of the maximum investment amount (maximumnorm) on

liveability is one of the changes in the Housing Act 2022. Furthermore, housing associations are now allowed to contribute to activities that aim at social interaction (Volkshuisvesting Nederland, 2022). This is closely linked to the social aspect of liveability. Contributing to liveability is one of the core tasks of housing associations in neighbourhoods where they own housing stock (Volkshuisvesting Nederland, 2023a).

1.2 Research Objective

In the past decades, the concept of 'liveability' has become increasingly important in planning practice and housing policy. A shift took place in perceptions of what liveability is (Kashef, 2016). The Housing Act 2022 shows the importance of liveability. Due to the amendments, there is an increase in available resources and opportunities for housing associations to work with liveability in neighbourhoods. This results in a changed approach to liveability. The main task and role of housing associations is not only the provision of affordable housing but also contributing to liveability in neighbourhoods. The amended Housing Act puts emphasis on liveability but does not provide any guidelines on how to do it nor does it define liveability clearly.

This research aims to investigate the variations in approaches, strategies, and practices regarding the social aspect of liveability in Dutch neighbourhoods among different housing associations in the Netherlands. This research focuses on three different municipalities in the Netherlands: Almere, Groningen and Tiel.

This research provides insights and examples of how housing associations deal with the social aspect of liveability in neighbourhoods and how their approaches might differ. Furthermore, it reveals the potential of the position of housing associations to act upon the improvement of liveability in neighbourhoods.

Different regions have different challenges and therefore, it is expected that housing associations differ in their approaches to engaging with liveability. Furthermore, while the amended Housing Act provides more possibilities to engage with liveability, it is expected that there currently is a greater emphasis on liveability, engaging with liveability, and the associated approaches, among housing associations.

1.3 Research Questions

This research is structured around a main research question and supplementary secondary research questions. The following main research question has been formulated:

“How do Dutch housing associations engage with the social aspect of liveability in neighbourhoods in the Netherlands?”

To answer this main research question, the following sub-questions have been established:

[1] How do housing and planning research, housing associations, and governmental institutions, define liveability and the social factors of liveability in neighbourhoods?

[2] Which amendments have been made in the Housing Act 2022 and how did these amendments aim to impact the policies and practices related to the social aspect of liveability?

[3] How do collaborations to establish performance agreements within the local triangle function and which role do these agreements play in housing associations' engagement with liveability?

[4] What varying strategies, practices and initiatives do Dutch housing associations utilize to improve the social aspect of liveability in neighbourhoods within different local contexts in the Netherlands?

1.4 Relevance

1.4.1 Academic Relevance

Liveability is an important concept in housing and planning research. This research contributes to the existing academic literature on liveability and housing associations and adds to academic knowledge about liveability in neighbourhoods and the role of housing associations in creating liveable neighbourhoods. Academic literature on role of Dutch housing associations in promoting liveability in neighbourhoods is limited. Housing associations can play a crucial role in promoting liveability in neighbourhoods.

The research explores how Dutch housing associations are engaging with the social aspect of liveability in neighbourhoods. Furthermore, it explores the collaborations between housing associations and local communities and stakeholders such as the municipality and tenants' organizations to promote liveability in neighbourhoods. The research can provide valuable insights into the strategies, practices, and challenges involved in dealing with liveability and the social aspect of it. The research also shows the potential of housing associations as an actor to improve liveability in

neighbourhoods. Lastly, it can also inform future research on housing policies, housing associations, social housing neighbourhood liveability, and urban planning by providing a framework for further investigation of the role of housing associations in effectively promoting and contributing to liveability in neighbourhoods.

1.4.2 Societal Relevance

The amended Housing Act increased available resources and opportunities for housing associations to engage with liveability in neighbourhoods. However, the impact of this revision on housing associations in the Netherlands has not been studied yet. This research aims to explore how Dutch housing associations engage with the social aspect of liveability, especially after the amendments of the Housing Act. While the act does provide guidelines for what is allowed, concrete examples are lacking. Therefore, this research will offer valuable insights and examples of how different housing associations deal with the social aspect of liveability.

The outcomes of this research have a potential value to support the development of liveable neighbourhoods by housing associations. The findings will benefit both housing associations and municipalities, by mutual enrichment of their knowledge base. It can provide insights into how housing associations, municipalities and the national government can improve their strategies and policies to promote and increase liveability. This is also relevant for policymakers and practitioners working in the field of housing and planning. Lastly, the Housing Act will be evaluated in the coming year. The results of this research can be used in this evaluation as well as generate possible improvements and recommendations for the Housing Act.

1.5 Reading Guide

This chapter formed the introduction to this research with complementary research questions. The following chapter consists of a theoretical framework in which the main concepts of this research are explained followed by a conceptual model. Chapter 3 elaborates on the Housing Act. The methodology is presented in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 presents the results, and a discussion of the results can be found in Chapter 6. Conclusions, answers to the sub-questions and main research question are presented in Chapter 7 followed by a reflection and recommendations in Chapter 8. The last two chapters contain the reference list and appendices.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter consists of a literature review that discusses the main concepts relevant to this research through research on existing literature, to be able to answer the research questions. Firstly, the concept of social housing will be discussed including an historical overview of social housing and the present situation in the Netherlands. Thereafter, the concept of liveability and the different ways to measure liveability will be addressed. Subsequently, factors that influence the social aspect of liveability will be discussed. At the end of this chapter, a conceptual model can be found based on the concepts discovered through literature research.

2.1 Social Housing

2.1.1 Social Housing in the Netherlands – History

The beginning of the Dutch social housing sector originates between 1850 and 1860 (Hoekstra, 2017). The first housing cooperatives were founded around the period 1850-1852 (Bulder, 2018). Shortly after, more housing associations were established based on the English model of ‘philanthropic capitalism’ (Beekers 2012; Bulder, 2018), which is similar to social entrepreneurship. The associations were owned by for example shareholders or employers from companies and took the form of cooperatives (Bulder, 2017; Hoekstra, 2017). The housing associations aimed to provide employees with a spacious and healthy living environment in the form of housing (Bulder, 2018). An underlying motive was to increase employee productivity and employee loyalty (Hoekstra, 2017).

Housing associations were initially a private initiative. However, the introduction of the Housing Act (Woningwet) in 1901 functioned as the foundation of social housing in the Netherlands (Hoekstra, 2017). As a result, the housing associations became influenced by the government as it started interfering. The main aim of this act was to create healthier and safer living conditions for the working class in the Netherlands and to combat poor health conditions in urban working-class neighbourhoods (Hoekstra, 2017 & Musterd, 2014). Musterd (2014) extends the aim with the right of households to live in a decent dwelling with suitable facilities for a reasonable rent. In the first decade of social housing in the Netherlands, attention to liveability did exist, however, it mainly consisted of improving living conditions in neighbourhoods.

The Housing Act established guidelines for housing quality and a framework for the government’s financial support to housing associations (Hoekstra, 2017). The implementation of the Housing Act resulted in a gradual increase in the number of housing associations. The protestant and catholic movements resulted in the establishment of new housing associations. These replaced the housing cooperatives of which the organizational structure did not comply

with the new act. Municipal housing companies were established by municipalities without housing associations in the region (Hoekstra, 2017).

In the 1960s the share of social housing in the Netherlands was approximately 35 per cent. However, social housing was not targeted at low-income households only. Middle-income households also started living in the dwellings provided by housing associations which resulted in a strong social mix (Musterd, 2014). Between 1950 and 1990, the share of social housing in the Netherlands increased from 10% to 40%. An explanation for this is the housing shortage after the Second World War caused by demolition and population growth. To counter the housing shortage, the national government introduced new policies among which a subsidy system for housing associations aiming at building large numbers of new social housing. This indicates a strong influence of the national government on the housing market (Hoekstra, 2017). The rapid increase within the social housing sector was caused by governmental interventions due to the housing shortage caused after the Second World War (Musterd, 2014).

In 1974, housing allowance was introduced as an additional policy measure. In this way, it was possible to have more market-oriented rents while keeping them affordable for lower-income groups (Scanlon et al., 2015). From the 1980s onwards, housing associations obtained more independence after the diminished subsidies from the national government. Low-interest rates and increasing housing prices, strengthened the financial situation of housing associations. This resulted in a diversification of activities within housing associations. Besides the provision of housing, housing associations also invested money in social programs, commercial real estate, and buildings with a public purpose (Hoekstra, 2017).

Until 1996, the primary focus of housing associations was on the realization, rental, and maintenance of housing. Municipalities had the responsibility for supervising the liveability and quality of the environment. However, housing associations had a growing desire for the government to take a step back. The establishment of four new performance fields for housing associations expanded their scope of responsibilities. The 'Bruterings' Act increased the financial independence of housing associations in the subsequent years, which resulted in an expansion of their responsibilities (Ten Holter Noordam, 2022). The introduction of liveability as a new performance field in 1997 marked a fundamental change in the role of associations (Wetten Overheid, 2000). Liveability was not solely focused on social housing, but on improving the quality of the neighbourhood. According to Ten Holter Noordam (2022), the lack of a clear definition for the term liveability led to difficulties in the years that followed.

2.1.2 Social Housing in the Netherlands – Present

In the present circumstances, social housing in the Netherlands is provided by housing associations. Housing associations provide affordable housing for people with a limited budget

without a profit motive. Their responsibility is to build, manage, and rent out housing. Nowadays, they also contribute to liveability in neighbourhoods (WerkaanWonen, 2023). On the first of January, 2023, the Netherlands had 279 housing associations (Ilent, 2023a). Furthermore, in 2022, these housing associations owned 2.3 million rental properties (CBS, 2022).

One of the requirements to be eligible for social housing is to be registered. Furthermore, in some municipalities, an affordable housing permit is needed, and housing associations are allowed to set requirements based on for example family size or age. Social housing is meant for people with low incomes. Therefore, housing associations decide eligibility for social housing based on income and financial assets (Rijksoverheid, 2023d).

A maximum rental limit and income requirements apply for the allocation of social housing. Furthermore, there are regulations on maximum rent increase and arrangements available for rent allowance provided by the government (Rijksoverheid, 2023a). In 2023, a basic rent of a housing unit that is € 808,06 or lower is considered social housing. A housing unit belongs to the private rental sector when the basic rent is higher. This is called the liberalization limit, which determined the difference between the private rental sector and the social housing sector (Rijksoverheid, 2023b).

Based on the quality of a house, the housing valuation system determines the maximum rent limit. Moreover, every three years the Dutch government determines an annual maximum percentage of rent increase (Rijksoverheid, 2023e). As mentioned before, specific arrangements are available for rent allowance. However, the rent allowance has specific requirements and depends on the level of income, assets and the rent itself. Furthermore, the housing unit needs to be independent, and a different rent limit applies to people below 23 years old (Belastingdienst, 2023).

2.2 Liveability

Planners and policy-makers use the concept of liveability as a basis within decision-making for shaping the physical, biological, urban, social, and economic environment (Ruth and Franklin, 2014). Liveability is a broad and complex concept, and it has numerous definitions. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2022, p.1), liveability is *'the degree to which a place is suitable or good for living in'*. According to Paul & Sen (2020, p.90), liveability is *"the sum of the socio-physical and socio-cultural factors that can improve and upgrade living standards of any spaces"*. Ruth & Franklin (2014), state that liveability can be defined by the social and environmental characteristics and the interaction between the two elements.

Paul & Sen (2020) argue that liveability has both cultural and environmental dimensions and that there are different approaches to the concept of liveability. The Australian government (2012), mention the three characteristics of liveability: the cultural, societal and physical

characteristic. Land use, public spaces, recreational opportunities, buildings, and nature are physical characteristics are part of the environmental dimension. Social capital, social cohesion and inclusion are societal characteristics, and meanings that have been attached to a place are cultural characteristics and therefore part of the cultural domain of liveability (Australian Government, 2012).

According to Ruth & Franklin (2014), two central elements of liveability have an interrelationship: 1) characteristics of the population and their demands for goods and services and 2) the city’s environment defined by its physical and biological characteristics. Bailey (2021, p.1) states that liveability is “an assessment of what a place is like to live in, using particular criteria”.

AARP is an American non-profit organization that defines a liveable community and environment as one that is secure and safe, and gives options for residents of all ages, races, ethnicities, abilities, and socioeconomic statuses. The environment enhances independence, for example, elderly can continue living in their own house or stay in their community. Furthermore, a liveable community includes mixed-use zoning (including amenities), a variety of safe transportation options, diversity in housing, and public spaces that are accessible to everyone (AARP, 2023a). The Dutch National Government defines liveability as: “The extent to which the environment meets the requirements and wishes of the people who live there. This concerns the physical living environment, the housing stock, facilities, social cohesion, nuisance and (in)safety.” (Rijksoverheid, 2023f, p.1).

Ling et al (2019), define liveability as the sum of factors that contribute to the overall quality of life within a community. Examples of these elements are the built-and natural environment, economic development, social cohesion and equality/equity, educational opportunities, as well as cultural, entertainment, and recreational offerings. The concept of liveability can be divided into the physical environment and the social environment. These two categories consist of multiple aspects as visible in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Physical and social aspects of liveability (Ling et al., 2019)

Physical aspects	Social aspects
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessibility to public transportation facilities. 2. Safe, reliable & economic public transportation. 3. Quality of car parking facilities. 4. Quality of children playground. 5. Quality of housing indoor spaces in the apartment. 6. Quality of gymnasium facility in the apartment. 7. Level of cleanliness. 8. Level of air quality. 9. Level of noise. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety (and without harassment). 2. The sense of community. 3. Community interaction. 4. Volunteerism. 5. Happiness. 6. Healthiness.

2.3 Measuring Liveability

Measuring liveability is a complex task since it consists of objective and subjective indicators (Oxford University Press, 2016). Multiple indexes try to measure liveability in a city or neighbourhood, but they all differ in the criteria they use (Gawlak et al., 2021). According to Oxford University Press (2016), liveability is generally measured by factors that relate to ‘good quality of life’. How liveability is experienced and viewed depends on several factors such as age, income, values and beliefs and cultural background. Objective and subjective factors can be used to measure people’s experiences of liveability. Figure 2 shows the different objective and subjective factors of liveability according to the Oxford University Press (2016).

Figure 2: Objective and subjective factors of liveability (Oxford University Press, 2016)



The Global Liveability Ranking from the Economist Intelligence Unit is one of the most well-known liveability indexes (EIU). This index ranks cities around the world on their living conditions. Cities are assessed on qualitative and quantitative factors that are sub-divided into five weighted categories: stability, healthcare, culture & environment, education, and infrastructure (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2022).

Mercer (2023) ranks cities around the world on their Quality of Living. Quality of Living is not similar to Quality of Life, since that concept focuses on individuals whereas Quality of Living focuses on objective aspects of daily life that are important for having good living standards.

Mercer uses 39 criteria on a scale from 0 to 10, which can all be clustered into 10 categories: Political & Social Environment, Medical & Health Considerations, Public Services & Transport, Consumer Goods, Recreation, Socio-Cultural Environment, Natural Environment, Housing, Economic Environment and Schools & Education (Mercer, 2023). In addition to a liveability score, Mercer also assesses cities across different categories. It allows users to choose which factors are most important to them when comparing. Unlike the Global Liveability Ranking from the EIU, the Mercer Index does not include career prospects (Kashef, 2016).

The earlier mentioned AARP developed a liveability index as well. The AARP Liveability Index assesses 'community liveability' in the United States of America in seven categories: Housing, Neighbourhood, Transportation, Environment, Health, Engagement and Opportunity (AARP, 2023b).

2.3.1 Leefbaarometer

The Leefbaarometer is a Dutch governmental liveability index developed by 'RIGO Research and Advies BV' and 'Atlas voor gemeenten' commissioned by the former Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning, and the Environment in 2007. The first version of the Leefbaarometer was created in 2008 and has been revised twice since then.

The origin of the Leefbaarometer was rooted in two reasons: 1) The cities' need for a liveability monitor and, 2) Advice from the civic platform 'liveability and urban renewal' to the minister of VROM. This advice was a nationwide instrument to periodically measure liveability on a small-scale spatial level (Leefbaarometer, 2022b).

The Leefbaarometer helps monitor liveability in the Netherlands by showing the current situation and how it has developed in recent years (Leefbaarometer, 2023a). This information can be used by for example governmental organisations and housing associations to create or evaluate policies on liveability. The Leefbaarometer is an instrument for signalling and monitoring liveability on different scale levels and does not indicate what should be changed to improve liveability (Leefbaarometer, 2023b).

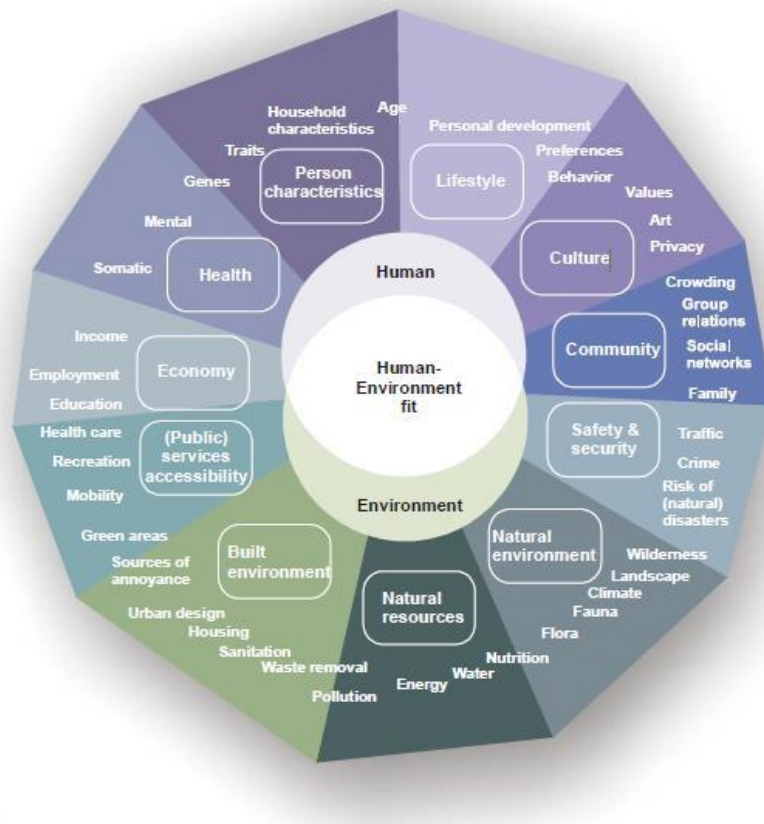
Leefbaarometer 3.0 is the current version of the Leefbaarometer in which the data from 2020 is used. The Leefbaarometer 3.0 consist of five dimensions: physical environment, housing stock, amenities, social cohesion, and nuisance and unsafety. The five dimensions contain 45 types of environmental characteristics, divided into 94 indicators (Mandemakers et al., 2021). The dimensions and environmental characteristics are visible in Table 1.

Table 1: Dimensions and environmental characteristics Leefbaarometer (Mandemakers et al., 2021)

Dimension	Environmental characteristics
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proximity to roads, highway railway tracks, high voltage pylons, transmission towers, wind turbines, greenery, water, dunes, open nature, agriculture and semi-built environment ● Risks to earthquakes and floods ● Functional mix ● Heat stress and noise exposure ● Road safety, accidents and car density ● Store vacancy
Housing stock	Housing surface, monument proximity, building height, house vacancy, building period, ownership, overcrowding and tenure type
Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proximity to amenities: education, hospitality industry, culture, retail and healthcare ● Amenity accessibility ● Amenity density ● Concentration of amenities ● Job accessibility
Social cohesion	Diversity in stage of life, population density, mutation rate, development households and perceived social cohesion
Nuisance and unsafety	Perceived safety, perceived nuisance and registered crimes (violent crime and vandalism)

Leidelmeijer and Van Kamp (2003), conducted extensive literature research on the concept of liveability and defined it as: *“The degree to which the environment is in line with the demand and wishes made by humans”* (Mandemakers et al., 2021, p.13). This definition is the basis of the first Leefbaarometer and the Leefbaarometer 3.0 continues using this definition. However, the importance of environmental characteristics has been added. In this approach, the characteristics of the environment that are related to the (un)attractiveness of a residential environment are not determined in advance but determined in research. Using statistical models, the influence of environmental characteristics on liveability is estimated. This is based on the extent to which they contribute to how pleasant people find it to live (stated preferences, the opinion of residents) and what people are willing to pay to live somewhere (revealed preferences, transaction prices of homes) (Mandemakers et al., 2021). Figure 3 shows the domains of (human) ‘liveability’ and (environmental) ‘quality of life’ used in the research from Leidelmeijer and Van Kamp (2003).

Figure 3: Domains of (human) 'liveability' and (environmental) 'quality of life' (Leidelmeijer and Van Kamp, 2003)



2.4 Social Aspects of Liveability

Social aspects that influence liveability are social mix, social cohesion, social interaction, sense of community, belonging and place, safety, nuisance, criminality and a clean environment. It is about how people feel connected to their neighbours and their neighbourhood. Multiple studies have shown that the social aspects of liveability play an important role in reducing crime rates, improving health, and creating a sense of well-being.

2.4.1 Social Mix

Creating diverse neighbourhoods through social mixing policies is important since it promotes social cohesion and therefore contributes to neighbourhood liveability. Social mixing is believed to improve social cohesion, reduce criminality and anti-social behaviour, and promotes a sense of community. Using social mixing policies and creating diversity in the neighbourhood can be accomplished, which contributes positively to liveability.

Social mix is a concept that gained significant attention in housing policy and urban planning over the past decades. Urban policies aiming at the reduction of neighbourhood

inequality and promoting inclusive cities have a long history in the Netherlands (van Gent et al., 2018). Social mixing is one of the most well-known interventions in urban planning to create more inclusive cities (Musterd et al., 2017).

According to Uitermark (2003), social mixing is a public intervention aiming at a diverse composition of inhabitants in a specific geographical area. This could be for example a neighbourhood, but also within an apartment block. The idea behind social mixing is to promote social integration and reduce social inequality by creating diverse communities in terms of income, ethnicity, and other characteristics. The goal is to create a more socially integrated neighbourhood instead of segregated neighbourhoods with a mix of people with different backgrounds.

There are multiple motives for social mixing. Social mixing as an intervention can promote social mobility and social integration of lower socio-economic classes since middle-class household function as an example. Another motive is that high amounts of social housing can cause a weaker position and/or decline in a neighbourhood. A diverse housing stock, for example by increasing the amount of owner-occupancy, could prevent this according to the idea of social mixing (Uitermark, 2003).

According to van Kempen and Bolt (2009), the benefits of social mixing in neighbourhoods include higher social cohesion, opportunities for social mobility, an increased social capital, a decrease in crime rates and anti-social behaviour, increased residential stability and better overall reputation for the neighbourhood. Social mixing can help to break down barriers between different social groups and promote a sense of community which is assumed to result in improved social cohesion. Socially integrated communities tend to have lower levels of crime and higher levels of community safety. In a diverse neighbourhood, individuals from lower-income backgrounds are exposed to a wider range of resources and networks, which can help to promote economic and educational opportunities for them which could result in an improvement of their situation (Galster, 2007a).

Despite the potential benefits, social mixing also poses several challenges. Firstly, social mixing is often not well-defined in policy documents. It is not always evident based on which categories mixing should take place, as well as on which spatial scale and which mix is the most ideal (van Kempen & Bolt, 2009). According to Galster (2007b), the most optimal mix depends on the specific context in the neighbourhood, for example, the composition of the population. Furthermore, according to Lees (2008), social mixing can lead to gentrification. For example, when more affluent residents move into previously low-income neighbourhoods. This can result in increased housing prices and displacement of existing residents.

According to Hochstenbach (2017), tenure mixing is a way to socially mix and create diverse neighbourhoods. However, tenure mixing policies often require the introduction of more

expensive dwellings that are owner-occupied in areas where there is more social housing. Therefore, these policies can be considered state-led gentrification since it reinforces gentrification processes in a neighbourhood. Furthermore, tensions and conflicts between different social groups or residents can also be caused by social mixing, especially when there are cultural, ethnic or lifestyle differences between them (Arthurson, 2012; Lees, 2008; Musterd & Ostendorf, 2021). Lastly, resistance from residents or a lack of affordable housing options in desirable areas can cause difficulties in practice to achieve a diverse neighbourhood.

2.4.2 Social Cohesion

Social Cohesion is a difficult concept to define since it cannot be viewed as a single concept. The complexity of the concept of social cohesion results in the fact that in academic literature and policy documents, it is often undefined, similar to the concept of social mix, assuming that it is self-explanatory (van Kempen & Bolt, 2009).

According to Lloyd (2016), the social dimensions of liveability are community, social interaction, and social cohesion. Social interaction has an important positive influence on liveability since it has psychological and physical benefits, as well as that it creates a sense of belonging and therefore a sense of community (Lloyd, 2016).

Social cohesion is *“the social harmony that enhances the quality of public and civic life by feelings of commitment and trust and participation in networks and civic organizations”* (Tolsma et al., 2009, p. 286). Common values, civic culture, social order, social control, and also a shared sense of belonging are all factors that relate to social cohesion. These factors contribute positively to liveability (Lloyd, 2016). According to Morata et al. (2023), social cohesion contains three intangible elements. Sense of belonging is one of them, as well as having a shared vision. Furthermore, they also state that social cohesion is not an outcome, but a continuous and constant process of achieving social harmony (Morata et al., 2023).

According to Forrest and Kearns (2001), there are five domains of social cohesion that are assumed to reinforce each other but cannot be used interchangeably (van Kempen & Bolt, 2009). The first domain contains shared norms and values and civic culture. The second domain is social order and social control, which would result in an absence of conflicts and incivility. Social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities are the third domain and can mainly be reached through equality and redistribution. The fourth domain is social networks and social capital through social interaction. The last domain is place attachment, personal identity, and place identity (Forrest and Kearns, 2001).

Uitermark et al. (2007) state that housing associations consider a neighbourhood liveable when they are orderly and exhibits a low level of crime, vandalism, and nuisance. Furthermore,

they also state that in essence, this refers to the desire to establish a social order in neighbourhoods that are vulnerable to deterioration.

Social cohesion in a neighbourhood is not necessarily always considered good. High social cohesion in a neighbourhood can lead to divided neighbourhoods that do not interact with each other. For those with low incomes, the neighbourhood serves as a source of 'bonding capital' rather than 'bridging capital'. Bridging capital refers to the sources of knowledge about the wider society. A strong link between individuals is referred to as 'bonding capital'. Bonding capital is good for social contact and a feeling of belonging and safety. However, it might cause social fragmentation as it can weaken its ties with societies on a larger scale (van Kempen & Bolt, 2009).

Liveability and neighbourhood liveability can be improved by social cohesion (Dekker and Bolt, 2005). Investment in intergroup communication, cooperation, and differences between groups as well as the accommodation of diversity in a neighbourhood is crucial for social cohesion (Dekker & Bolt, 2009). Furthermore, according to Huygen & de Meere (2008), social cohesion contributes to safety and perceived safety in a neighbourhood. High levels of social cohesion increase liveability and safety, but also health in a neighbourhood (Huygen & de Meere, 2008). Van Kempen and Bolt (2009, p.458) describe social cohesion as "*the glue holding society together*". And Dekker and Bolt (2009) state that the quality of social integration at a local level, regarded as a bottom-up process, influences social cohesion on a wider spatial level.

2.4.3 Sense of Community, Sense of Belonging and Sense of Place

According to Macke et al. (2022) the term 'community' can be understood in two ways. Taking the perspective of the territorial and geographical notion of a community but also a relational perspective that creates relationships between humans that do not require a physical/geographical location.

Belonging to a collective is a way to understand the concept of sense of community (Macke et al., 2022). McMillan & Chavis (1986), stated that four elements are part of the definition 'Sense of Community', which are 'membership', 'influence', 'integration and fulfilment of needs' and 'shared emotional connection'. Membership is defined as a sense of belonging. The element influence refers to mattering and the notion of an individual having an influence on a particular group and therefore making a difference to a group. The third element 'integration and fulfilment of needs' is about reinforcement that derives from an individual fulfilling their needs by being part of a community. The last component 'shared emotional connection' is about a shared history that individuals identify with (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Ten years later, McMillan (1996, p. 315), defined sense of community as "*a spirit of belonging together*". Being involved and actively engaged in a community, results in an increased sense of community (Albanesi et al., 2007).

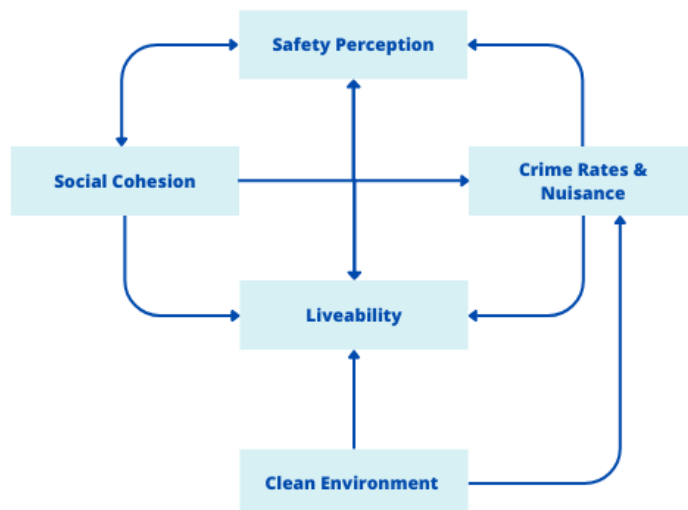
According to Morata et al. (2023), sense of belonging is one of the intangible elements of social cohesion. They explain sense of belonging as: “groups and communities work well when they have common goals and responsibilities and individuals are willing to cooperate with each other” (Morata et al, 2023, p. 570).

The emotional bonds and attachments that people form or experience in specific places are referred to as ‘sense of place’. These places or locations are ranged at scales from local, national, or even global. Describing the distinctiveness or distinctive character of a particular location or region is also linked to the concept of ‘sense of place’ (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009).

2.4.4 Safety, Nuisance, Criminality, and Clean Environment

According to Rigo (2022), a neighbourhood is liveable when the living environment corresponds with the wishes and needs of the people living there. Therefore, the perception of the residents is a key factor. The four important themes that influence liveability are 1) the physical characteristics of the living environment, 2) the social characteristics of the living environment, 3) nuisance, and 4) safety. Figure 4 visualises the relations between the previously mentioned concepts of safety, criminality, nuisance, clean environment, social cohesion and liveability.

Figure 4: Visualisation of relations between the concepts of safety, criminality, nuisance, clean environment, social cohesion and liveability (Author, 2023)



In Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, safety needs are considered to be the second most important factor after physiological needs. One will not achieve life satisfaction if the absence of threats to safety is not assured. Therefore, the perception of safety is a crucial component in achieving a higher quality of life, which is linked to liveability (Danon & Maliki, 2021). Safety in neighbourhoods refers to the extent to which residents feel secure in their neighbourhoods (perceived safety) and are protected from harm or danger. Safe neighbourhoods are characterized

by low levels of crime, violence, and fear of crime (Putrik et al., 2019). Safe neighbourhoods can also be characterized by a sense of community that promotes mutual care, mutual support and social control resulting in increased social cohesion (Hart et al., 20020).

Safety is a crucial factor in creating liveable neighbourhoods (Hart et al., 20020). One of the key benefits is improved community well-being, as residents who feel safe are more likely to participate and engage in community activities and public life (Greenberg et al., 1982). According to Putrik et al. (2019), research has consistently demonstrated a link between neighbourhood safety and the health and well-being of its residents. Safe neighbourhoods promote physical and mental health since residents feel more comfortable walking and exercising in public spaces. Safety is linked to liveability because it influences residents' perceptions of their neighbourhoods, their willingness to use public spaces, and their sense of security. High levels of social cohesion are directly connected to lower feelings of unsafety among residents in a neighbourhood (Hart et al., 2002). Furthermore, social cohesion also has a direct effect on safety itself and liveability (Huygen & de Meere, 2008).

According to the CCV (2023a), nuisance is a subjective concept since every individual experience nuisance differently. Residents that experience nuisance, are more likely to rate the liveability in their neighbourhood lower (CCV, 2023a). Akkermans et al. (2022), distinguish four types of nuisances in a neighbourhood 1) physical decay, 2) social nuisance, 3) traffic nuisance, and 4) environmental nuisance. Examples of physical decay in a neighbourhood are rubbish on the street or the destruction of street furniture. Social nuisance consists of people that cause nuisance for example people that are drunk, troubled/disordered people or loiterers. Traffic nuisance is mainly caused by parking problems or speed issues. Environmental nuisance is related to odour or noise nuisance (Akkermans et al., 2022).

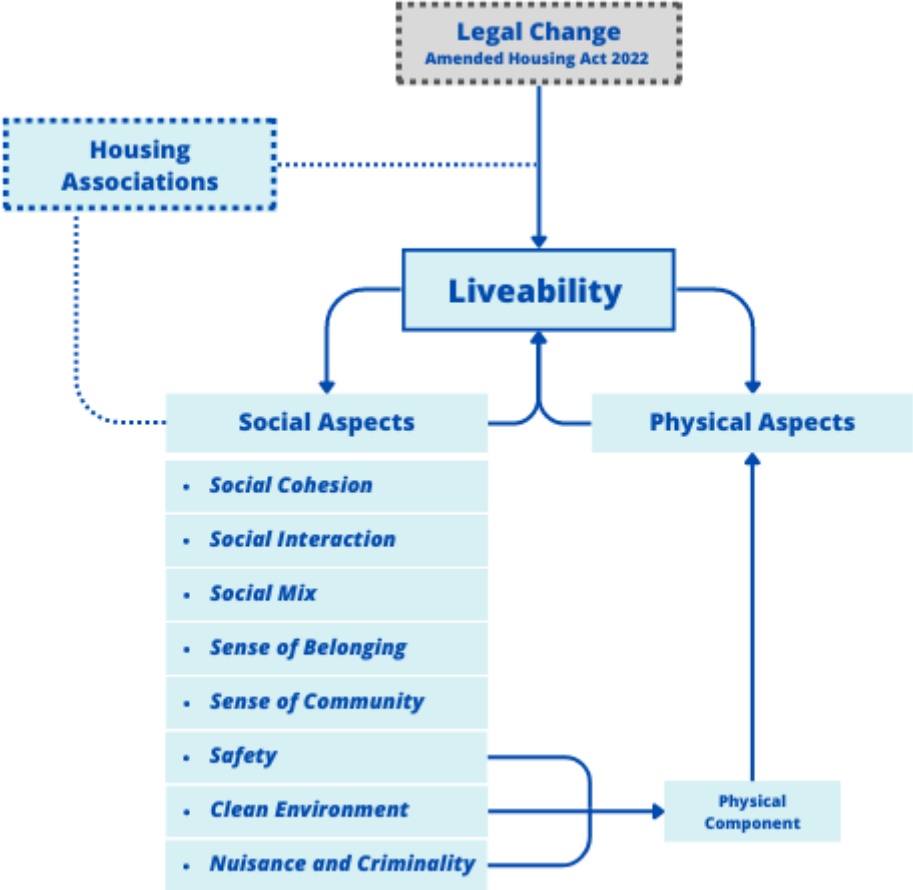
A clean neighbourhood contributes positively to liveability in a neighbourhood. Often, there is a relationship between the amount of litter and other matters such as graffiti but also the degree of safety. In addition, it also influences individuals' actions (Atlas Leefomgeving, 2023). This phenomenon can be explained using the 'Broken Windows Theory. An (urban) environment that contains visible signs of crime, incivility, and anti-social behaviour, encourages further criminality and disorder (Kelling & Wilson, 1982).

The CCV (2023b) states that perception of safety in a neighbourhood is influenced by four personal factors: 1) institutional environment, 2) social environment, 3) physical environment, and 4) criminality & nuisance. A clear, manageable, predictable, and attractive environment results in a higher sense of safety. From the institutional perspective, it is the police, municipality, housing associations and welfare organizations that have a shared responsibility for safety. The social environment plays a big role in safety perception, for example, social cohesion in a neighbourhood (CCV, 2023b).

2.5 Conceptual Model

Figure 5 shows the conceptual model that is based on the theoretical framework. The amended Housing Act is a legal change that increased the available resources and opportunities for housing associations to engage with the concept of liveability in neighbourhoods where they built, maintain and rent out housing. The concept of liveability consists of social aspects and physical aspects. This research focuses on the social aspects of liveability and how housing associations engage with it. Social aspects of liveability are social cohesion, social interaction between tenants, social mix, sense of belonging, sense of community, safety, clean environment, nuisance and criminality. These last four concepts contain a physical component as well; therefore, they overlap in terms of both the social aspect and the physical aspect of liveability.

Figure 5: Conceptual model (Author, 2023)



3. HOUSING ACT

In 2015, the Housing Act has been revised. The first change of this revised Housing Act was on July 1, 2017, and the most recent changes to the Act were on January 1, 2022 (Ilent, 2023b). The Housing Act was evaluated in 2021 on the effectiveness and effects of the taken measures, and this evaluation resulted in the amendments of 2022. The amendments are made in the Housing Act as well as the underlying 'Besluit Toegelaten Instellingen Volkshuisvesting' (Btiv) and the 'Regeling Toegelaten Instellingen Volkshuisvesting' (Rtiv). (Volkshuisvesting Nederland, 2023b & Volkshuisvesting Nederland 2023c). 'Toegelaten Instellingen' are associations and foundations with full legal capacity that are admitted by the Authority Housing Associations according to the Housing Act (Ilent, 2023c). The Btiv expands on the revised Housing Act and contains the rules for the housing associations and the Rtiv elaborates on the Housing Act and the Btiv (Ilent, 2023b).

In 2015, the 'Btiv 2015' describes that contributing to liveability can *only* entail:

- a) Residential-social work, including contributing to the implementation of behind-the-front-door programs under the responsibility of social organizations and exclusively for the benefit of the tenants of the residential units from the 'toegelaten instelling'.
- b) Construction and maintenance of small-scale infrastructure in the immediate surrounding area of the dwellings or other real estate from the 'toegelaten instelling'
- c) Contribute to the implementation of plans to promote a clean environment, prevention of nuisance, and promotion of safety.

(Wetten Overheid, 2015)

The 2022 amended version of the 'Btiv 2015' added the following sentence to what contributing to liveability can entail:

- d) Contribute to activities aimed at contact between tenants of the residential units from the 'toegelaten instelling'.

(Wetten Overheid, 2022)

Before the amendments of 2022, different regulations applied. By performance agreements, the local triangle determined what was needed and desirable to improve liveability in the different neighbourhoods. Housing associations were allowed to contribute to liveability in the immediate surrounding area of their housing units but activities for liveability could only be carried out if they were captured in the performance agreements. Furthermore, housing associations were only allowed to spend a maximum of €131,37 per rental unit per year; this was called the 'maximumnorm'. A higher amount was only permitted if this was explicitly mentioned in the performance agreements (Volkshuisvesting Nederland, 2023d). Additionally, performance

agreements can now include participation from other parties including healthcare and welfare organisations. (Volkshuisvesting Nederland, 2023e).

Local Triangle and Performance Agreements

The local triangle is a collaborative structure consisting of the municipality, housing associations and tenants' organizations (Volkshuisvesting Nederland, 2023f). Within the local triangle, performance agreements are being made on different topics. Figure 6 shows a visualisation of the concept of the local triangle.

Figure 6: Visualisation of the local triangle (Author, 2022)



Performance agreements are instruments for the local triangle to work with. Stakeholders within the local triangle jointly make agreements on the social housing task in the corresponding area. These agreements are captured in performance agreements. The Housing Act provides guidelines for making these performance agreements. Within each local triangle, there is freedom to set up a process for the creation of performance agreements. For example, they can choose for multi-year agreements or to involve other stakeholders (care organizations, welfare organizations or the police) in the establishment of the performance agreements (Volkshuisvesting Nederland, 2023e).

The current Housing Act defines the concept of liveability by indicating what contributions housing associations can make. The evaluation of the Housing Act showed that it is desirable to increase the (financial) means for housing associations in the field of liveability. Therefore, the maximum investment amount for liveability (the maximumnorm) is being abolished. The revised Housing Act made the municipal housing vision mandatory on the first of January 2022 (Volkshuisvesting Nederland, 2022e). Furthermore, it is no longer mandatory to record activities

that relate to liveability in the performance agreements. However, it remains important to discuss liveability in the local triangle and housing associations should still focus on liveability as stated in the public housing priorities. Lastly, the amended Housing Act allows housing associations to contribute to activities that aim at social connections between people (Volkshuisvesting Nederland 2022g).

According to Volkshuisvesting Nederland (2021), liveability is a broad concept and there is no unambiguous definition of it. It is a collective term for quality characteristics of a residential environment, and it indicates how attractive and/or suitable an area is to live or work in. In the Housing Act, liveability is defined by indicating which contribution housing associations can make, namely: residential-social work, construction and maintenance of small-scale infrastructure, contributing to a clean and safe living environment, prevention of nuisance and contributing to social interactions between tenants.

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the research design and data collection methods. This research uses a qualitative approach with three case studies: Almere, Groningen and Tiel. In-depth interviews have been conducted with 11 experts. The case- and participant selection as well as the strategy for analysing the qualitative data will be explained. To conclude, ethical considerations will be discussed as well as their importance in research.

4.1 Research Design

According to Clifford et al. (2010), there are two types of approaches for data collection in academic research: a qualitative approach and a quantitative approach. Quantitative research focuses on quantities such as statistics, whereas qualitative research focuses on exploring values, meanings, emotions, and intentions. Examples of qualitative research are (in-depth) interviews and observation of participants.

In a mixed-methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are combined (Clifford et al., 2010). The two different approaches, or methods, can be used in extensive and intensive research. In extensive research, a large number of (representative) cases are being used to explain causalities or processes. Within intensive research, only one or a few cases are used to explain causes and effects (Clifford et al., 2010).

This research uses a qualitative research approach as it allows to obtain the experiences and ideas of interviewees and their organizations, which is frequently absent in policy documents. The data derived from the qualitative research can be used to answer the empirical secondary questions to be able to answer the main research question in the end. Based on the outcomes and the results of this research, recommendations for practice and future research will be made. According to Yin (2003), a case study approach is a useful strategy when the research focuses on capturing information on 'how' and 'what' questions. Moreover, a case study approach can be used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2003).

4.2 Case Selection and Description

The unit of analysis, or the case, is determined by defining spatial boundary, theoretical scope, and timeframe (Yin, 2003). The spatial boundary of this research is the national country boundary of the Netherlands, and the theoretical scope is defined based on literature research.

Case selection in this research is done based on a degree of urbanity from CBS combined with differences in liveability indicators in the area, using the Leefbaarometer data from 2020. The degree of urbanity of an area from the CBS is based on the density of addresses and contains five categories: 1) very highly urban, 2) highly urban, 3) moderately urban, 4) little urban, and 5) non-

urban. The case selection has been done based on both the different liveability indicators of the Leefbaarometer and the degree of urbanity. Table 2 displays the case selection with different degrees of urbanity and differences between liveability indicators. Figure 7 provides a legend for the table.

Table 2: Overview of case selection (CBS, 2023b & Leefbaarometer, 2023c)

Municipality	Degree of Urbanity	Leefbaarometer	Deviation Total Score	Amenities	Nuisance and Insecurity	Social Cohesion	Housing Stock	Physical Living Environment
Tiel	3	Sufficient						
Almere	2	Ample Sufficient						
Groningen	1	Good						

Figure 7: Legend Table 2 (Adjusted from Leefbaarometer, 2023c)

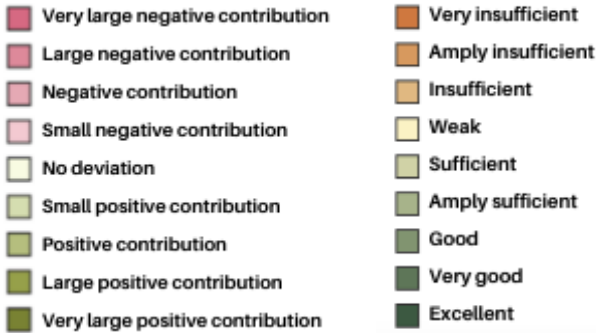


Figure 8 shows a map with the different locations of the case studies across the Netherlands.

Figure 8: Map with locations of case studies (World Map Blank, 2023, adjusted by author)



Case - Almere

The municipality of Almere is located in the province of Flevoland and had 222.919 inhabitants on the first of January, 2023 (CBS, 2023c). The city of Almere originated in 1975 and became a municipality in 1984 (Almere, 2023), and consists of five districts: Almere Buiten, Almere Haven, Almere Hout, Almere Poort and Almere Stad. The three biggest housing associations are Woningstichting GoedeStede, Ymere and de Alliantie (Woningcorporaties, 2023a). Housing association de Alliantie is part of this research. At the end of 2022, de Alliantie owned 7.410 dwellings in the municipality of Almere (de Alliantie, 2022).

Case - Groningen

The municipality of Groningen is located in the province of Groningen and is the biggest city in Northern Netherlands. The municipality had 238.179 inhabitants on the first of January, 2023 (CBS, 2023c). Five housing associations are located in the municipality of Groningen (Woningcorporaties, 2023b). This research focuses on the biggest housing association, Lefier, which rents out approximately 11.700 dwellings in the city of Groningen (Lefier, 2023a).

Case - Tiel

The municipality of Tiel is located in the province of Gelderland and is part of the Betuwe. The city of Tiel is a Hanseatic city, with a long-lasting history (Uit in Tiel, 2023). On the first of January, 2023, the municipality of Tiel had approximately 42.606 inhabitants (CBS, 2023c). Thius and KleurrijkWonen are the two housing associations that are located in Tiel. KleurrijkWonen is the housing association that is part of this research. This housing association owns approximately 15.000 housing units, spread over six municipalities. (KleurrijkWonen, 2023).

4.3 Data Collection

4.3.1 Literature Review

In the theoretical framework (chapter 2), the reviewed literature has been discussed. The literature review identified relevant (key)concepts and theories on (social) housing policy in the Netherlands, the concept of liveability, and the social aspects of liveability. Social aspects of liveability are social cohesion, social interaction, social mix in a neighbourhood, sense of community, sense of community safety and nuisance. Based on the concepts revealed in the literature review, the conceptual model, as well as the interview guides and the deductive code tree have been developed. Furthermore, a substantial amount of grey literature has been used to gain in-depth knowledge about the Housing Act 2022 and its amendments. This knowledge has been used as the basis for the interview guide and the deductive code tree as well.

4.3.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Structured, unstructured, and semi-structured are the three types of interviews. One of the most frequently used qualitative methods is semi-structured interviews (Clifford et al., 2010). This research used a qualitative data collection approach in which the data has been obtained by semi-structured in-depth expert interviews. Clifford et al. (2010, p. 103) describe in-depth interviews as: *“a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions”*.

According to Clifford et al. (2010), semi-structured interviews enable an open response with a participant’s own words; therefore, it allows the participant to elaborate on topics that they believe are important or relevant. The semi-structured interviews allow for more flexibility and thus, the research can obtain more in-depth information compared to questionnaires or structured interviews. Informal and conversational are words that characterize semi-structured interviews. For a semi-structured interview, the researcher still prepares an interview guide containing a list of predetermined questions. The interview guides can be found in Appendix 1.

4.3.3 Participant Selection

The participants for this research were chosen by the sampling method 'purposive sampling'. With purposive sampling, participants are chosen based on their relevance and experience that is related to the topic of the research (Clifford et al., 2010). According to Clifford et al. (2010), the main aim of a qualitative approach is to understand how different people experience and interpret something. There are multiple ways to recruit participants for semi-structured interviews (Clifford et al., 2010). In this research, emails, phone calls, contact via LinkedIn, and a personal network of people were all used to recruit participants. Another recruitment technique that has been used is 'snowball sampling'. Clifford et al. (2010, p. 535), describe snowballing as "*a technique used by researchers whereby one contact, or participant, is used to help to recruit another, who in turn puts the researcher in touch with another*".

The 'local triangle' is a concept that is part of the Housing Act and served as a framework to choose the participants. As previously explained, the local triangle consists of the municipality, housing associations and tenants' organizations. For each of the three cases, a participant has been recruited that works for the municipality, as well as an employee from a housing association. Tenants' organizations are represented by the Woonbond in this research. The Woonbond is the umbrella organization for tenants' organizations and is a suitable choice to get the clearest picture of the local triangles without the need of interviewing three representatives from tenants' organizations. The interviews with the Ministerie van BZK (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations) and Aedes, functioned as exploratory pilot interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the Housing Act and its amendments.

Requirements for the recruitment of participants from housing associations and municipalities

- 1) The participant is employed at a housing association or municipality in the selected case study areas.
- 2) The participant has knowledge about (the social aspects of) liveability and the related strategies and policies in one of the case study areas.
- 3) The participant has knowledge about municipal performance agreements.

Requirements for the recruitment of participants from the Ministry, Aedes and Woonbond,

- 1) The participant is employed at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Aedes or Woonbond.
- 2) The participant has knowledge about liveability activities and the related strategies and policies of housing associations and municipalities.
- 3) The participant has knowledge about the amended Housing Act.

Table 3 displays an overview of the eleven participants that were interviewed.

Table 3: Overview of participants

Profession	Organization	Date	Location	Participant number	Interview number
Policy Officer	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	14/02/2023	The Hague	P1	I1
Policy Officer	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	14/02/2023	The Hague	P2	I1
Advisor Sector Development	Aedes	03/04/2023	Online	P3	I2
Manager Area Team Groningen	Lefier	24/04/2023	Groningen	P4	I3
Area Coordinator	de Alliantie	25/04/2023	Online	P5	I4
Advisor Strategy and Policy	KleurrijkWonen	26/04/2023	Online	P6	I5
Policy Advisor Housing	Municipality of Groningen	10/05/2023	Groningen	P7	I6
Senior Policy Advisor Housing	Municipality of Groningen	10/05/2023	Groningen	P8	I6
Area Manager Almere	Municipality of Almere	16/05/2023	Online	P9	I7
Senior Policy Advisor Housing	Municipality of Tiel	22/05/2023	Online	P10	I8
Policy Office	Woonbond	17/05/2023	Online	P11	I9

4.3.4 Policies and Documents Review

In addition to the semi-structured in-depth interviews, several extra documents and policies are reviewed. After the conducted interviews, policy and informational documents were received from the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Aedes, Lefier, de Alliantie, KleurrijkWonen, Municipality of Groningen, Municipality of Almere, Municipality of Tiel and the Woonbond. The documents were either sent via email or mentioned during the interviews as something to investigate further. They are an addition to the interviews and contain more detailed information about policies, performance agreements, municipal housing visions and documents containing examples of liveability activities. All of these documents are considered grey literature. Some documents are publicly accessible, and some are internal company documents. Additional information obtained from the policies and documents review is partly used in the results section of this research, as not all information was relevant. Appendix 5 provides an overview of the additional obtained documents.

4.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is an important part of conducting research, while the collected data is being analysed, summarized and interpreted.

All interviewees who gave permission to make an audio recording were recorded using Apple Inc's Dictaphone application. After conducting the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed in Dutch using the transcribing function of Microsoft Office. Thereafter, transcripts were coded with the program ATLAS.ti. Two interviews could not be transcribed while there was no permission for an audio recording. During these interviews, notes have been made that were used for the results.

ATLAS.ti is a valuable tool for analysing qualitative research data, in this case, interview transcripts. Coding involves labelling text based on topics and themes relevant to the research. It helps structure the data analysis by revealing categories, patterns, differences and similarities between codes (Clifford et al, 2010). Since theoretical concepts are quite abstract, coding allows for the development of different themes. According to ATLAS.ti (2023, p.9), ATLAS.ti helps to *"explore the complex phenomena hidden in your data"*.

A combination of deductive and inductive codes was used to label data elements. Deductive codes are codes that are created, based on concepts, before the interviews start. Inductive codes are identified during the process of data analysis. Concepts arise from the data and are turned into inductive codes (ATLAS.ti, 2023). Based on the theoretical framework, a deductive code tree was developed that can be found in Appendix 2. An inductive codebook has been developed based on the interview transcripts, which can be found in Appendix 3.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

There is a variety of research ethics that are of great importance and need to be considered while doing research. According to Clifford et al. (2010, p.37), there are three reasons for the importance of ethical behaviour. Firstly, it *“protects the rights of individuals, community and environments involved in, or affected by, our research”*. Secondly, maintaining public confidence, and lastly, the increasing demand for accountability.

The research ethics for the in-depth interviews are met using an informed consent form that was signed by both the participant and the researcher prior to the interview. The form was used to guarantee that the participant was well-informed. The informed consent forms can be found in Appendix 4 and contain information about the research, the interview, how the data will be used and the rights of the participant. There are two versions of the informed consent form as each participant was asked for consent to make an audio recording of the interview. Two of the participants did not agree to be audio-recorded but did give approval to make notes during the interview. Lastly, the participants did not remain anonymous in this research. Job functions of the participants are being used in this thesis since their responses relate to their profession. Every participant gave consent for using their function title. Every participant was thanked by the researcher at the beginning of the interview and after the interview.

The collected data has been handled confidential and remained secure. The recordings of the interviews were only used for transcribing to be able to analyse the data and were deleted after the completion of the data analysis. After the interviews, the transcripts were sent to the corresponding participant. The participant was able to review the transcript for approval and give possible additions or adjustments. The thesis will be sent to every participant after completion.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Housing Act before 2022

Before 2015, housing associations had more freedom and received more government support to engage in various liveability activities, including social encounters and interactions such as neighbourhood barbecues. There was a common idea that big differences could be made by innovative and special initiatives (I1) and there were a lot of possibilities to work on liveability (I4). P5 illustrated this by the following quote: *“If you had a meeting room in a complex, you could simply furnish it with curtains and tables.”*

However, the Housing Act 2015 tightened regulations due to misconduct and fraud cases. Housing associations had to focus on their core task of providing affordable housing to people with low incomes. This led to the removal of some liveability activities from their scope (I1). De Alliantie mentions particular activities were not possible anymore and there was no money (I4). This was often not understood by the tenants from de Alliantie, since it used to be possible. Between 2015 and 2022, there was a strict list of contributions that were and were not allowed (I1).

“For example, no social meeting between residents, which is actually a shame if you ask me.” [P7]

There was also a maximum amount to spend on liveability and contributions were only allowed when they were included in municipal performance agreements. Over the years, waves of movements can be identified with periods in which housing associations are allowed more or allowed fewer activities related to liveability. These movements are reflected in laws and regulations (I1).

“The movement of ‘the sky is the limit’ disappeared, regulations were tightened, perhaps a little too tight, that is always a reaction.” [P1]

“At the moment that there are excesses, the thumbscrews are simply tightened again. [...]. With the idea that strict legislation is necessary to prevent the excesses.” [P1]

The evaluation of the Housing Act in 2018, identified the need for more flexibility and discretion in regulations to address specific local contexts (I1). P1 mentioned the following about the evaluation: *“Perhaps it also turned out that it can be done again. That there was little more confidence in the housing associations as well”*. Consequently, the Act was revised in 2022, allowing

housing associations to contribute to liveability, including facilitating social encounters between their tenants (I1).

5.2 Amended Housing Act 2022

Currently, housing associations are permitted to engage and participate in for example neighbourhood teams. However, they should not take on a leading role to avoid encroaching on municipal responsibilities. Furthermore, they are authorized to establish and maintain small-scale infrastructural elements, directly related to their housing stock. Examples are gardens, landscaping, or lightning. Moreover, ensuring a clean and safe living environment for tenants is also allowed. Lastly, housing associations are once again allowed to actively facilitate social interactions (I1 & Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2023). To the question of why contributing to social interactions is now again allowed, P1 answers: *“Perhaps the added value has become clearer after all.”*

A key principle of the Housing Act is that housing associations are allowed to engage in various activities but within the scope of their property. Their core task is to provide housing for individuals with incomes below the social rent threshold. Related liveability activities within pre-defined categories are allowed by the national government. However, some activities are excluded for example when they have a minimum benefit to their tenants (I1 & Ministerie van BZK, 2023).

5.3 Opinions on Amendments

Housing associations expressed their satisfaction with regard to the amended Housing Act. De Alliantie mentioned that they are happy with the amendments while it creates more leeway, especially for area coordinators (I4). However, P5 also stated that initiatives for social encounters need to come from the residents in which de Alliantie takes a facilitating role.

“We are not going to beat a dead horse. Initiatives must come from the residents, [..]. Yes, we facilitate the barbecue and the stalls, but we will not provide the meat and drinks.” [P5]

Housing association KleurrijkWonen is satisfied with the amendments as well as it provides more flexibility. However, there has not been a big shift in KleurrijkWonen’s engagement with liveability (I5).

“It’s not like things are suddenly very different now. It is nice that a little more can be done, but on balance, there is of course still a lot that cannot be done. And that makes sense because we are there to provide homes,[..] for people who cannot provide themselves with housing, [..] Not necessarily for liveability, but it is a very important task for us.” [P6]

Within KleurrijkWonen, affordability was previously considered more crucial than liveability. And if faced with financial constraints, priority will still be given to the construction of housing. Nevertheless, KleurrijkWonen does not disregard liveability, as they have numerous employees engaging with liveability, such as neighbourhood managers and complex managers (I5).

According to P4, the amendments were driven by the need for improved collaboration between the housing association and the municipality. It required a shift towards shared responsibility and finding ways to work together effectively. The interviewee mentioned the importance of establishing good cooperation and determining the responsibilities of each party involved. Furthermore, the main challenge in improving liveability is not the availability of funds but rather mobilizing and engaging people to participate in the initiatives (I3).

“We do include more money in the budget to implement plans and it just becomes a bit easier to pick things up, but actually not that much has changed because money was never really an obstacle. You also just need enough people to be able to spend the money and enough projects to be able to do that. So that’s more complicated to get that done than money being an obstacle.” [P4]

Financial commitments from KleurrijkWonen towards liveability are low, and their overall budget allocated for liveability activities remains underutilized (I5). P6 elaborated on this with the following statement: *“We basically spend little money on liveability. [...], we are not suddenly going to give neighbourhood barbecues. [...], we never used the entire budget we have, and that is still the case. So, in that sense, not much has changed for us.”*

P10 from the Municipality of Tiel said that the amended Housing Act is good and that the national government was absent, but they are taking back control now (I8). The participant mentioned that small adjustments, such as installing a bench, can have a significant impact on liveability. Therefore, the amendments to the Housing Act are welcomed, but the interviewee has a limited overview of the changes in practice. Neighbourhood managers of the municipality, who also maintain contact with housing associations, have a better view of changes and developments in a neighbourhood (I8). P9 from the Municipality of Almere has a different perspective.

“I also briefly consulted a colleague from another district about this, but we notice little difference because we actually worked very well together before that time, and we also work with housing associations on liveability. [...] but then we both notice, well, no difference, because that collaboration was good, and we already invested in liveability.” [P9]

Nevertheless, the expanded role of housing associations in facilitating social encounters and creating meaningful meeting spaces for residents is considered a positive development by the

municipality of Almere (I7). P7 from the Municipality of Groningen stated that it is good that the Housing Act changed and that the amendments are repair work of what went wrong in 2015. P7: *“[...] the rules were tightened to such an extent that it was actually a bit too much.”*

Before the amendments, the Woonbond received signals from both tenants' organizations and housing associations, expressing dissatisfaction and frustration due to the strict regulations surrounding liveability. Woonbond advocated for making liveability a priority through discussions with the Ministry of BZK and other stakeholders. P11 expresses approval and satisfaction with the reintroduction of focus on liveability. It is considered a return to normalcy rather than a notable improvement. Woonbond believes that previous regulations regarding liveability were too restrictive and led to unnecessary conflicts and limitations. It is considered a positive development, although no explicit (positive) feedback from tenants or housing associations has been mentioned to Woonbond yet (I9).

5.4 Local Triangle and Municipal Performance Agreements

Groningen

In making performance agreements, all housing associations in Groningen collaborate with the municipality (I3). The municipality has a coordinating role within performance agreements, which is essential given the involvement of multiple parties. All parties are considered equal and important stakeholders in the collaborative process, with tenants' organizations gaining more prominence and empowerment after the implementation of the Housing Act in 2015 which is considered a positive development. Tenants' organizations are recognized as representatives of the tenants, for whom all these efforts are ultimately undertaken (I6). The local triangle assesses liveability needs, housing availability, and the requirement of new constructions. The process includes research, reviewing individual stock plans, and setting collective goals (I3).

“Yes, that is actually what you do, and for liveability, we actually mainly indicate the budgets of how much money we spend on liveability. Yes, we make agreements about this with each other, but also with the tenants' organizations.” [P4]

P4 from Lefier emphasizes the importance of performance agreements with the municipality and tenant organizations, with liveability being one of the five key pillars. While aspects such as availability and sustainability, have more concrete objectives, liveability is a more abstract concept. This abstractness is necessary to maintain flexibility in addressing different liveability challenges. P4 states: *“Performance agreements are fairly general in terms of liveability.”* Collaboration with various external parties, including national performance agreements and regional deals, adds complexity to the process of fulfilling these agreements.

“So, you have quite a lot of agreements that you have to fulfil, and a part is liveability. Climate adaptation, for example, which we are also working on, naturally also has everything to do with liveability.” [P4]

Structure performance agreements in Groningen

The collaborative process for establishing performance agreements in municipal housing involves developing a housing vision, bids from housing associations based on the vision, conducting discussions with stakeholders and forming draft and eventually final performance agreements. Regular evaluations of previous agreements contribute to ongoing collaboration. Performance agreements prioritize goals and objectives over budget and task allocation and are driven by the municipality's housing vision, with multi-year agreements providing stability and annual agreements allowing for tailored adjustments.

Recent changes prompted evaluation and adjustments in the area of sustainability, but not for liveability. The interviewee expressed confidence in fulfilling objectives under both previous and current legal frameworks, appreciating the increased flexibility with recent changes (I6). P7 stated the following about changes in performance agreements after the amended Housing Act: *“Well, in practice it doesn't matter much. It's nice that you don't have to keep a close eye on that anymore, like oh am I almost at the maximum? And also, everything had indeed to be monitored and kept up to date. At the same time, that maximum amount was not very unrealistic. That is also roughly what associations spend on liveability. So that amount was actually not even as much the bottleneck.”*

Lefier and the Municipality of Groningen expressed their satisfaction with the collaboration within the local triangle and described it as positive and effective, highlighting the commitment and willingness of all parties to work towards common goals. P4 from Lefier also expressed satisfaction with the alignment of goals among the involved parties (I3). P4 elaborated on it with the following statement: *“Liveability comes very much from the neighbourhood. People of ours, work in the neighbourhoods, but of course, people from the municipality and other housing associations also work in the neighbourhoods, and the problems are actually so clear that you know what to focus on together.”*

Almere

In Almere, performance agreements involve multiple organizations and encompass both performance agreements, additional cooperation agreements with other parties, and agreements outside performance agreements. The cooperation within the local triangle is described as good and short lines of communication by P5 from de Alliantie. Once a year, the area team develops a liveability budget, which outlines the planned activities. The municipality is involved in discussions to determine collaboration and budget allocation for these activities. All requests that require municipal involvement or permission are documented in performance agreements. There is an increasing trend of collaboration between the municipality and housing associations, conducting joint discussions instead of separate dialogues. This collaborative approach enhances communication, clarifies responsibilities, and ensures appropriate resource allocation for the agreed-upon commitments. Performance agreements not only allocate responsibilities and secure funding but also play a crucial role in expressing viewpoints and achieving desired outcomes (I4).

Tiel

Tiel has multi-year performance agreements that serve as a framework for four years (I5 & I8), which primarily focus on defining actions rather than allocating specific budgets (I5). P10 states that it is crucial to be aligned and to align plans (I8). The level of specificity and focus on implementation in the agreements vary depending on the municipal approach at a given time (I8). Performance agreements involve collaborative discussions among the Municipality of Tiel, tenant organizations, KleurrijkWonen and the other housing association (I5).

“We have thought about what kind of agreements we are going to make and in Tiel that is for example, I thought that was a very cool agreement, at the time we made the agreement if we see that there is more than 60% social rent in a neighbourhood, then we will bring that back. So, then we will do less in that neighbourhood, and do a little more social rent in another area in Tiel so that it is a bit more balanced.” [P6]

In Tiel, housing associations propose their desired actions based on the approved housing vision followed by conversations about these proposes. In between there is internal coordination and subsequent conversations and debates take place to determine the responsible party, the actions to be taken, budgetary considerations and required manpower (I8).

As a result of the amended Housing Act, it is expected by the Municipality of Tiel more agreements regarding liveability will be included in the upcoming performance agreements (I8). However, the P6 from KleurrijkWonen stated the following about changes in performance agreements after the amended Housing Act: *“But it's not like we thought “wow, now a world is*

opening up for us”, it was also a piece of formality. You had to include a few things in performance agreements, but you no longer have to. As a result, that agreement is simply removed from the performance agreements.

The Municipality of Tiel perceives the collaboration with housing associations as positive, with short communication lines. However, in some cases, more structure is needed, such as having better visibility of future needs for example to request budgets in time (18). While performance agreements include the responsibilities of each party, it is noted by KleurrijkWonen that municipalities sometimes overlook their role in the implementation of these agreements, placing more emphasis on housing associations. This lack of reciprocity poses challenges to achieving the desired outcomes outlined in the agreements. It remains a focus and a challenge for the future (15).

“How do you ensure that agreements you make, that you will also carry them out? And that able to carry them out. [...] How do you ensure that it is not forgotten and that a certain value is attached to it that it actually deserves. Because there is a lot of work in the preliminary phase.” [P6]

Woonbond

Resident committees operate at a complex or street level, while tenant organizations work at the corporate level of housing associations. Tenant organizations actively participate in performance agreements, representing tenant voices and negotiating with housing associations and municipalities in which they are equal partners. Challenges arise as performance agreements become more complex, making it difficult for tenant organizations to stay connected to residents' needs as housing associations continue to grow. The involvement of healthcare organizations adds further complexity due to communication and understanding differences (19).

Furthermore, the volunteer-based nature of tenant organizations presents challenges, as their members must balance this work with their other commitments. Nevertheless, overall collaboration has improved, as evidenced by previous research. Housing associations and municipalities have more direct involvement in the collaboration process, with tenant organizations being involved in a later stage (19). The Woonbond provides support to tenant organizations through training, webinars, and informational documents, offering examples of contributions. They also provide guidance on representing tenants during performance agreement negotiations (Woonbond, 2021).

5.5 Defining Liveability

The Ministry of BZK does not provide a specific definition of liveability, considering it a broad concept related to the quality of people's immediate living conditions. Therefore, it is an intentional choice not to define liveability in law. It is mentioned that liveability can be defined in a variety of ways, there is not one clear definition (I1).

"You probably cannot include everything because that is precisely the idea of liveability, that it is a broad concept. To which you can contribute in various ways." [P1]

However, BZK does provide a guideline which has been made as a result of the changed Housing Act, on which contributions and liveability activities constitute liveability (I1). Aedes does not formally use a definition for liveability as well, since it is a broad concept. However, Aedes states that liveability is also related to (health)care and welfare (I2), which is also stated on their website: *"Housing, (health)care, welfare, safety and the physical living environment are inextricably linked to each other and liveability."* (Aedes, 2022). P3 from Aedes argued that integral thinking is essential for liveability and working on improving liveability. Liveability is about the stones (of houses) and the people, and it is important to connect those two (I2). Woonbond's definition is in line with Aedes. They state that it is important to look beyond mere construction when addressing housing needs. Instead, the focus should be on creating a sense of "home" for residents.

"It's not just about those stones. It is about the dwellings that people have to live in, it is more about creating a 'home'". [P11]

This involves considering the surrounding environment and ensuring amenities and social spaces are available for community members to meet and interact. Additionally, involving residents in decision-making processes regarding construction plans and the design of the neighbourhood is crucial. The ultimate goal is to create a living environment that meets the needs and preferences of the people who will reside there, rather than solely catering to the interests of developers (I9).

KleurrijkWonen has developed a liveability vision in collaboration with colleagues in 2022. The vision serves as a guiding framework for their actions, defines their roles and contributes to a mission. The vision provides the framework from which further interpretation and elaboration at the area level can take place. P6 said: *"We have not said what our vision on liveability is, we have said what we mean by liveability. Then we say: we want to work on a pleasant living environment for our tenants."* Furthermore, the participant also mentions the importance of flexibility and adaptability: *"Our vision is not set in stone."*

KleurrijkWonen does define three domains of liveability: social living environment, physical living environment and safe living environment (KleurrijkWonen, 2022a).

Laws and regulations are constantly changing as well as tenant perceptions. Recognizing the need for flexibility is important (I5).

“[...] a Covid-19 pandemic is an example of a situation that can suddenly change everything.” [P6]

De Alliantie perceives liveability as that someone can live in a clean, safe, and pleasant environment and that it also encompasses harmonious coexistence (I4). Lefier's definition of liveability aligns with a broader understanding that is endorsed by the national government. While the interviewee's team primarily focuses on social aspects of liveability, Lefier as an organization considers it in a broader context, encompassing the physical environment and the development of properties as well.

The involvement of Resident Participants in the planning process ensures that design and infrastructure contribute to a safe, inclusive, and socially connected living environment. The liveability policy framework allows Lefier to respond flexibly and dynamically to emerging priorities, such as the recent focus on addressing energy poverty (I3). One of the policy documents from Lefier defines liveability as *“the degree of appreciation that residents and organizations give to a neighbourhood or village. This often involves the interplay between physical quality, social quality, social characteristics and safety of the environment”* (Lefier, 2021, p.4).

The Municipality of Tiel describes liveability as a combination of quality living and quality of life. Crucial factors in this context are the physical environment as well as the condition of housing (I8). The Municipality of Almere views liveability as an interplay between the social environment, the physical environment, and safety (I7 & Gemeente Almere, 2021). They take an integrated approach to address issues that involve multiple domains of liveability simultaneously. By considering the social environment, physical environment, and safety aspects together, they aim to ensure a holistic and comprehensive response. This approach is particularly relevant in neighbourhoods that require additional attention due to the interconnectedness of various challenges in those areas (I7).

The Municipality of Groningen believes that liveability encompasses not only physical aspects of the environment but also the well-being of residents. It involves enhancing living conditions and attractiveness of the neighbourhoods, considering factors such as poverty, social issues, and the quality of the living environment. The social and physical dimensions of liveability are closely intertwined, particularly in the context of neighbourhood renewal. Therefore, it is important to consider both aspects and aim to improve overall liveability by addressing social and physical challenges simultaneously (I6). P8: *“Yes, the physical living environment, but actually also,*

yes, it is all so connected because social and physical are very much connected to neighbourhood renewal. So, if you do one, it does not preclude the other.”.

An internal document provided by the Municipality of Groningen stated that liveability is broad, diffuse and multi-dimensional. Liveability seems a concept for all different quality characteristics of a living environment that concerns the physical quality, social characteristics and safety (Gemeente Groningen, 2023).

Woonbond acknowledged that liveability is a complex and broad concept, making it challenging to define its boundaries. Woonbond does not have a specific definition of liveability. “Clean, Intact, and Safe” is a commonly used phrase but the interviewee believes that it is more than physical conditions (I9).

“I think it's about much more than that. It's really about whether residents feel at home somewhere and also have interactions with their neighbours and can express their concerns and signals somewhere and can also take initiatives themselves [...]. I think that liveability is actually mainly something about how residents who live somewhere experience it themselves.” [P11]

5.6 Liveability Concerns in Neighbourhoods

The Netherlands

The Woonbond frequently receives reports of personal experiences related to nuisances, such as noise disturbances and issues with groups of young people. In the context of tenant organizations, challenges often revolve around housing individuals transitioning from social services. The concerns are not always clearly defined but primarily involve worries and a desire to understand and address such situations effectively. The Woonbond aims to assist tenants by providing advice and organizing events where they can discuss and contribute to improving liveability (I9).

Almere

In Almere, areas surrounding the city centre experience the highest pressure on liveability. These areas are characterized by the presence of hotspots, which are identified as complex and challenging environments. In these hotspots, common issues include low-income levels, disturbances, individuals with mental health issues, criminal activities, and a prevailing sense of insecurity (I4).

The Municipality of Almere is facing difficulties in meeting demand and developments, particularly in terms of safety and policy capacity. Almere is transitioning into a larger city with accompanying urban issues. The municipality utilizes monitoring instruments, such as the Leefbaarometer and a recently developed neighbourhood monitor, to objectively measure and assess liveability. These tools assist in quantifying and evaluating various aspects of liveability,

providing a more comprehensive understanding of conditions in different neighbourhoods in Almere (I7).

Tiel

In Tiel, efforts are being made to address an imbalance in the proportion of social housing as in some locations the proportion of social housing exceeds 60%, and to create more balanced and diverse neighbourhoods. made to lower it. Other challenges include the clustering of specific target groups, nuisance, and individuals with personal issues and a large number of labour migrants. The municipality aims to reduce the concentration of social housing in certain areas and redistribute it to neighbourhoods with less social housing (I8).

The Municipal Housing Vision from the Municipality of Tiel states: 'scheefwonen' (skewed income-to-rent-ratio) is good for the diversity of neighbourhoods and they do not discourage it in all cases as it prevents clustering of people with low incomes and thus contributes to diversity and liveability of neighbourhoods (Gemeente Tiel, 2019). Lastly, neighbourhoods with relatively higher amounts of affordable housing, exhibit a stronger social cohesion compared to a neighbourhood where residents leave the neighbourhood for work during the day (I8).

Groningen

The Municipality of Groningen mentions that one of the significant problems in Groningen is intergenerational poverty which affects both the living conditions of individuals and the overall living environment. When people are struggling to survive, other aspects, such as social cohesion and addressing other challenges, receive less attention. Additionally, Groningen's compactness and relatively high housing density present challenges in creating an attractive living environment.

However, the municipality places significant emphasis on designing a pleasant living environment by prioritizing space and greenery, combating heat stress and promoting cycling. This focus is seen as noteworthy by one of the interviewees, particularly in comparison to their work experience in smaller municipalities. Focus on greening and improving the living environment is considered a prominent aspect of the city's approach (I6). P7 states: *"Look, in a village in a shrinking region, the liveability problems are very different from those we have here in the city, right? So yes, those differences are really huge."* To address the specific needs of each neighbourhood, the municipality uses execution programs (I6).

“Some neighbourhoods just need extra attention, that is very deliberate.” [P8]

“Yes, but also varieties in attention. In one neighbourhood it is more about the living environment and in another neighbourhood, it is more about social issues. It is different everywhere.” [P7]

Measurement of liveability in Groningen is conducted through Basismonitor Groningen, which captures a wide range of factors influencing residents' perceptions of liveability. This comprehensive approach includes indicators such as safety, quality of the living environment, recreational facilities, healthcare provisions, and various other aspects. Monitoring allows for the comparison of neighbourhoods and the identification of specific (liveability) issues within each area. The liveability survey provides valuable data for tracking liveability development, highlighting the need for sustained efforts and long-term strategies (16).

5.7 Liveability Activities

The ministry states there is a fundamental distinction between working on liveability in rural areas and urban areas. For instance, in Amsterdam Zuidoost, Nieuw-West, and Noord where liveability is significantly under pressure, with a particular focus on the social aspect of liveability. In a village, on the other hand, concerns the emphasis is often on the physical aspect of liveability (11). P2 states: *“It really differs greatly per housing association what they consider necessary for liveability.”* Aedes provides housing associations with examples of contributions to liveability but also best practices and other practical tips (12). An example is the “Praatplaat”, which offers a useful overview of possible interventions to help housing associations and their partners in managing liveability in neighbourhoods. The interventions are thematically categorized, examples are resident composition (e.g., social mix or targeted allocation of housing) or social management (e.g., intensifying management or investing in interaction between tenants) (Aedes, 2021).

“In general, an effective approach always requires a combination of measures” [P3]

Aedes states it is crucial to have people from a housing association, for example, housing consultants working in a neighbourhood as they are the ears and eyes of a neighbourhood (12). Furthermore, creating good living conditions in liveable neighbourhoods requires the integration of social measures and physical interventions. This necessitates an improved and joint place-based approach which directly provides residents with perspectives and solutions (Aedes, 2023b & Aedes, 2023c)

Establishing meaningful interactions among residents and encouraging resident-led initiatives, form the cornerstone of the approach from the Municipality of Almere. Active resident

participation, which temporarily declined during the COVID-19 pandemic, has regained attention. There are two budgets available to support efforts. The Neighbourhood Development Fund allows for targeted interventions often in public spaces, such as creating container gardens around trash bins and lighting enhancements to improve safety. Secondly, the Neighbourhood Budget allows residents to propose and carry out activities that enhance the safety, liveability, aesthetics, and sense of community within their neighbourhoods. These initiatives range from street barbecues to decorative figures and hanging baskets, fostering connections among residents, and encouraging collaboration. There is a diversity of projects that are supported by this budget which underscores its importance in bringing residents together and strengthening their sense of community (I7).

"[...] a budget for residents that they can apply for, to do fun things in a neighbourhood. So, to make a neighbourhood safer, more liveable, more beautiful, more pleasant" [P9]

Lefier's approach to social activities and community engagement did not change after the amended Housing Act as they continued to facilitate social interaction, organise events, and support community initiatives. Lefier employs various personnel to enhance liveability in different ways. Neighbourhood managers focus on cleanliness, safety, and area aesthetics. They encourage responsible behaviour and address issues by engaging with residents. Nudging, a positive communication approach, is used to influence behaviour like correct bicycle parking. Resident support staff handle individual cases involving disruptive behaviour resulting from underlying problems like mental health issues or addictions. Lefier aims to create harmonious living environments and coexistence among residents by providing a support services approach. Resident Participants of Lefier, organize events such as clean-up days and social gatherings to foster community engagement (I3).

"You are very much looking for cooperation with residents of how you can ensure that it [liveability] improves." [P4]

Other social-focused liveability activities include sustainability-themed events and informative walk-in markets. A neighbourhood barbecue is possible but happens less (I3).

"We do want to facilitate, make space available, things like that, and that people can meet each other. A barbecue itself, say buying the meat and things like that, that is for the residents." [P4]

Lefier encourages tenants to participate in maintenance around buildings and promotes a sense of shared responsibility. Lefier supports this by providing loan points for gardening tools, allowing residents to borrow instead of purchasing individually. They also facilitate interactions among neighbours, bringing people together to explore opportunities for mutual support. Lefier takes a facilitating role and participates actively in the maintenance of gardens and surroundings when needed (I3). The execution plan liveability from Lefier (2023b), summarizes the activities that focus on the social aspect of liveability as:

- Tackling residential nuisance
- Identifying and facilitating financial and social vulnerabilities
- Careful allocation of vulnerable groups
- Increase community involvement.

KleurrijkWonen engages in various activities that contribute to liveability and the promotion of community interaction, such as the recent establishment of a butterfly garden in Tiel. However, they do not perceive a significant change in their approach to liveability following the legislative amended Housing Act. They believe that such activities can also be accounted for within project budgets and are not exclusively attributed to liveability. KleurrijkWonen has specific budgets allocated for improving liveability, which is utilized for initiatives identified in the area plans.

These initiatives also aim to enhance the visibility of their contributions to liveability and ensure tenants are aware of their efforts to maintain and improve the neighbourhoods. This includes addressing minor issues through local field staff and contracted garden services, such as misaligned paving stones or untidy backyards. Activities like fixing pavement tiles and maintaining green spaces, carried out by their neighbourhood management team also contribute to residents' overall sense of liveability (I5).

Additionally, KleurrijkWonen has a team of skilled professionals who carry out maintenance tasks and repairs. These professionals not only address physical issues but also engage with residents, providing a listening ear and social support. Training and courses are provided to these employees to enhance their skills, including early detection of problems and effective communication with residents. Neighbourhood managers are vital for maintaining liveability as well. They have regular contact with residents, acting as accessible points of contact for addressing issues like conflicts and minor maintenance tasks. They act as a crucial link between residents and KleurrijkWonen, offering social connections and support. Housing consultants handle more complex cases.

An annual customer satisfaction survey revealed tenant dissatisfaction with liveability. Key concerns included parking issues and speeding cars. KleurrijkWonen acknowledged these concerns, although they recognized that addressing them was beyond their control. They

categorized their roles into four categories, namely: supporter, organizer, advocate and reactive responder (I5).

The Municipality of Tiel organizes occasional clean-up activities by placing containers in the neighbourhood, offering residents a convenient solution to discard their items. For some individuals who lack means of transportation or financial means to pay for waste removal, it can be challenging to dispose of furniture such as a sofa. Consequently, such items may end up in front yards or somewhere else in the neighbourhood. These clean-up initiatives can be combined with sustainability initiatives like removing pavement tiles, enhancing the appearance of front yards, and creating a more pleasing environment. This approach aligns with The Broken Window Theory (I8).

“It is a simple but effective initiative.” [P10]

Maintaining cleanliness in both public and private spaces is a vital aspect of liveability, and it also involves (addressing) the behaviour of individuals. Relatively small investments can have a significant impact and improvement in liveability (I8). Another example is Talenthouse Tiel which serves as a place for the growth of specific groups of young people that require additional attention. This initiative primarily focuses on safety, aiming to prevent disturbances and provide young people with a place in society. The underlying principle is to provide opportunities for individuals, not only through attention but also through the provision of possibilities (I8).

5.8 Collaboration in Liveability Activities

Aedes emphasizes the importance of local parties, making agreements, such as police and municipality, regarding the commitment to contribute to liveability (Aedes, 2023b)

Woonbond also states the importance of cooperation with different local stakeholders (I9).

“Liveability, [...] that's what we actually say about that, you can only tackle that in cooperation between all kinds of local partners, including residents, but also indeed, the municipality of course, the housing association, but also indeed care and welfare institutions.” [P11]

De Alliantie states that through conversations with network partners in a neighbourhood, such as the police, care organisations, social welfare organisations, neighbourhood teams and the municipality, one discovers which areas need extra attention. De Alliantie has core team meetings with a variety of organisations, for example, police, The Salvation Army, other housing associations and community workers in which they seek collaboration (I4).

The interviewee from Lefier mentioned collaborating with local neighbourhood teams which are part of the municipality. They address issues that may arise behind closed doors. When they encounter situations such as severe uncleanliness or mental health concerns, they inform the neighbourhood team to assess the situation and provide appropriate support. While the housing association does not directly help, they refer individuals to the relevant services (13).

KleurrijkWonen collaborates with welfare organizations for various initiatives, including neighbourhood clean-up actions. This partnership is also crucial for accommodating special needs groups and fostering diverse communities. KleurrijkWonen maintains a positive and cooperative relationship with welfare organizations (15). Furthermore, KleurrijkWonen collaborates with the municipality in developing neighbourhood visions. When renovating a neighbourhood, they coordinate with the municipality to explore joint opportunities. Lastly, KleurrijkWonen develops area plans in collaboration with stakeholders, including colleagues from different disciplines (15). In an area plan, plans are listed per theme, supplemented with subject, goals, measures, who is responsible, when the measure will be implemented and what the status is. Themes are subdivided into physical, social and safety. Examples of goals are a better appearance of complexes, reduction of parking problems, improvement of fire safety, a cleaner environment, and the realization of meeting places and other liveability activities (KleurrijkWonen, 2022b)

The Municipality of Almere state that collaboration with housing associations plays a pivotal role in enhancing liveability in Almere. It is acknowledged that there are differences in opinions among housing associations in terms of which liveability initiatives and budgets. However, the overall collaboration is characterized by its effectiveness. Priority is given to neighbourhoods that require additional attention, particularly older neighbourhoods, or neighbourhoods with a significant concentration of housing association properties. A comprehensive approach is adopted, involving key stakeholders including housing associations, neighbourhood teams, local law enforcement, and social welfare organizations. This collaborative effort fosters a proactive examination of viable solutions to improve the existing conditions (17).

"[...] that collaboration, because it's about an integrated approach, you just need other parties. Yes, then you need those networks, and we have that well organized in Almere, because, as I said, we work area-oriented and I don't know if that is the case, that is not the case in every municipality." [P9]

The municipality of Tiel states that housing associations play a crucial role in liveability and enhancing liveability in neighbourhoods, which necessitates close cooperation and coordination. Collaborating is essential when striving for an increase in liveability. The collaboration in the municipality of Tiel extends beyond housing associations and also includes other organizations,

such as sports clubs and community centres. They serve as meeting places and positively contribute to liveability. The loneliness of individuals also influences perceived liveability. Therefore, community centres can play an important role by facilitating social interactions (I8).

De Alliantie collaborates with Academie van de Stad which is an organization that engages students, particularly those pursuing their master's or other degrees, to improve the liveability of specific areas. They offer various services in various forms such as renting properties in targeted areas, providing support, home visits, or community-building initiatives. They often collaborate with municipalities and housing associations to enhance liveability. In a previous project, they rented a housing unit from de Alliantie in the centre of a neighbourhood that faced challenges such as high poverty rates, large families, a substantial number of refugees, and a vulnerable population. Over a two-year period, four students lived in the dwelling, allowing them to establish strong connections with the residents (I4).

Another example in Almere is the Integrated Street Approach (ISA). The ISA is a collaborative initiative involving the Municipality of Almere, de Alliantie, social welfare organizations, and other organizations. It aims to improve the neighbourhood through comprehensive efforts, combining resources and expertise. The collaborative effort has proven to be highly effective in achieving positive outcomes. The municipality provides funding, while de Alliantie contributes personnel. Examples include home visits by outreach workers and de Alliantie employees for small-scale liveability projects considering residents' needs for improvements and renovations. Other examples are incorporating residents' suggestions for communal spaces and implementing safety projects to increase the perceived safety of residents (I4 & I7). The ISA approach emphasizes understanding individual needs and concerns (I7). Balancing reasonableness in proposed changes, and monitoring for long-term effectiveness are essential within the ISA approach (I4 & I7).

The Oslostraat is the last provided example of collaboration aimed at enhancing liveability. De Alliantie initiated the project and collaborated with a care organization and the municipality to address the challenges and implement targeted interventions. The project was an innovative strategy to address problematic residents causing disturbances by allocating half of the housing units to a care organization aiming to change the tenant compositions and thereby enhance liveability (I4 & I7). De Alliantie owns a complex in the Oslostraat in Almere consisting of two buildings with 40 apartments separated by a parking area with storage sheds. The complex suffered from vandalism, crime, and hidden spaces between the poorly situated storage sheds. A renovation project aimed to improve the condition, safety, and aesthetics of the complex, while the care organization focused on community building and fostering social cohesion among residents. The establishment of a neighbourhood room within the complex, referred to as the "living room of the neighbourhood", created a positive chain of interconnected initiatives, fostering social

cohesion and engagement with local shops. The municipality provided relocation assistance to residents with limited resources and the care organization assisted the residents with paperwork. Regular meetings of a core team and project group formalized the collaboration and focused on community building, resident support, and addressing any issues. While the renovation is nearly complete, community building is an ongoing process expected to develop fully within two years with the ultimate goal of residents leading these efforts independently (I4).

5.9 Resident Initiatives & Resident Engagement

De Alliantie believes that facilitating resident initiatives is important, however, initiatives consistently originate from the residents themselves (I4).

“For instance, if residents want to establish a community garden, we want to facilitate that, although we may not provide financial support, we are willing to make certain resources available for it.” [P5]

Woonbond states that resident initiatives emerge from residents themselves, and specific examples cannot be predetermined. However, the Woonbond advocates for creating an environment that fosters and supports resident initiatives. This could involve establishing a designated platform or support system where residents can express their ideas and receive assistance. The encouragement of resident initiatives is seen as an essential aspect of the collaboration between stakeholders (I9).

Lefier encourages resident ideas to improve their living environment but has experienced slow responses. Lefier acknowledges the importance of supporting and guiding residents with promising ideas. However, residents must actively contribute and take responsibility for their initiatives. People are willing to propose ideas for activities such as a clean-up day or a gardening day, as well as climate adaptation efforts. Lefier facilitates these initiatives by providing support and necessary materials. They aim to strengthen resident engagement and empowerment, but some projects may be put on hold or not pursued if residents do not participate actively. Lefier assesses proposals for liveability activities subjectively (I3).

“And if there is enough enthusiasm for residents to do it, we actually always facilitate it. That's kind of the well, the deliberation framework. But and I can say this so loudly, because so few initiatives are put forward.” [P4]

Within the Municipality of Almere, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on resident initiatives is evident as the utilization of the allocated budget has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. To

address this, a promotional video has been created to raise awareness about the availability of the neighbourhood budget, as many residents are still unaware of its existence. Trust in the government, influenced by events like the childcare allowance scandal, has affected community participation.

Consequently, efforts are needed to increase awareness and encourage residents to utilize the budget. Safety and crime prevention are emphasized in Almere, with initiatives like "Waaks", where dog owners learn to recognize incidents and signals in a neighbourhood. Additionally, Almere has neighbourhood watch teams that actively patrol the area to monitor safety concerns. Active WhatsApp groups exist in various neighbourhoods, allowing residents to stay connected and informed about local safety issues.

These initiatives are not unique to Almere and can be found in other municipalities as well. Some individuals, while on their regular walks, take the initiative to clean up litter using trash pickers to keep the neighbourhood tidy. These active resident-led initiatives contribute to the safety and cleanliness of the area and foster a sense of community and neighbourhood cohesion. Participating in these activities with fellow residents adds a social and enjoyable element to community engagement (I7).

5.10 Social Cohesion, Social Mix, Differentiation and Allocation

Regarding social cohesion in neighbourhoods, the Woonbond highlights the importance of providing opportunities for residents to meet and interact. Tenants themselves can contribute to fostering a sense of community within their neighbourhoods. Additionally, social cohesion is often associated with mixed neighbourhoods, which can be influenced by factors such as availability and redevelopment. The allocation of housing units may also play a role in promoting social cohesion. The specific challenges and issues related to social cohesion vary locally, depending on the context and circumstances of each community (I9).

The municipality of Tiel mentioned that certain individuals, such as those transitioning from institutions or safe houses (*blijf-van-mijn-lijfhuis*), follow alternative allocation systems outside the regular processes. There are two types of systems: 1) individuals apply directly for housing themselves potentially with an urgency certificate, and 2) a direct form of housing allocation, which is outside the 'regular' process. Additional challenges regarding social mix include how the issue is presented and how it is justified (I8).

Differentiation is consciously identified as one of the mechanisms within the Municipality of Groningen to instigate change within the neighbourhood. It is perceived as a crucial step towards blending the housing stock to a certain extent. However, differentiation does not immediately entail social mixing, as other initiatives are also implemented for that purpose (I6).

“Our ambition is to create mixed neighbourhoods, not only for the sake of liveability but also to enhance resilience.” [P8]

Mixed neighbourhoods allow individuals to progress their housing careers within their neighbourhoods. Improved circumstances or changes in family situations can pursue alternative housing options without necessitating a move to another neighbourhood. It offers opportunities for residents to explore new housing possibilities within their existing neighbourhoods. This approach often benefits the overall liveability of the neighbourhood, fostering a sense of place and place attachment.

It is also closely linked to the engagement and involvement of residents (I6). The housing allocation system in Groningen operates through a collaborative framework among housing associations ensuring fair distribution of available housing (such as preventing the allocation of larger family homes to single individuals) and avoiding concentration of vulnerable populations. This aligns with intending to foster resilient communities. Collaboration and coordination among stakeholders remain essential for adapting to changing demands and monitoring the impact of housing policies on neighbourhood liveability (I6).

Lefier also mentions social mixing as one of the strategies employed to contribute to liveability. The housing association aims for a mix of affordable, medium-priced, and expensive properties, as well as housing options for different target groups such as families and seniors. They strive for a balanced distribution of residents to create a supportive environment where people can assist each other. The interviewee highlighted the importance of avoiding the concentration of vulnerable populations in a single area, ensuring a more equal distribution throughout the region. In areas with homogeneous populations experiencing significant issues, Lefier explores the possibility of introducing differentiation among various target groups. This approach aims to address specific needs and challenges within each group effectively (I3).

In the Korrewegwijk, a significant revitalization effort has been undertaken, resulting in the addition of numerous new dwellings. As a consequence, a substantial influx of families, predominantly consisting of young children within a specific age range, has occurred. While individual children may not cause significant disturbance, the cumulative presence of a large number of children can potentially lead to disruptive situations. Consequently, proactive measures have been implemented in collaboration with schools, residents, and the families themselves, aiming to ensure harmonious coexistence without causing inconvenience to others (I3).

5.11 Challenges in Improving Liveability

The Ministry of BZK recognizes that housing associations can work with the amended Housing Act. The evaluation process for the Housing Act is ongoing, with continuous monitoring of practical challenges and stakeholder feedback. Although the Housing Act may be adjusted based on emerging signals, no significant issues related to liveability have been reported to the Ministry or AW. P2 mentioned that there might still be room in the law for differentiation and/or allocation, depending on whether it appears to be necessary (I1).

The Woonbond and the Ministry emphasize the importance of preventing the mixing of tasks and responsibilities. Housing associations should not take on tasks that are not within their responsibility (I1 & I9). The Woonbond appreciates housing associations' involvement in welfare work but advocates for shared responsibility between the municipality and welfare organizations regarding social infrastructure and welfare services (I9).

Aedes highlights the changing compositions in neighbourhoods, leading to higher concentrations of vulnerable individuals. This can result in increased unsafety that affects the resilience of a neighbourhood (I2). The influx of status holders, asylum seekers, and special needs groups adds complexity to housing in Almere. Alterations to established residential areas often face resistance from residents accustomed to a specific lifestyle and living environment. Effectively managing and engaging residents in these processes becomes crucial for the municipality, even though it is difficult to meet everyone's expectations perfectly (I7).

The Municipality of Almere has experienced a declining utilization of the neighbourhood budget in recent years. Engaging residents and fostering social cohesion remain ongoing challenges, yet they are crucial for enhancing liveability (I7). De Alliantie emphasizes a shift in focus from mere construction to encompassing the environment and liveability. The future vision is centred around providing a pleasant home and living environment for tenants. One strategy is proactively encouraging resident participation for example from the beginning of new construction projects is encouraged (I4).

KleurrijkWonen identifies the execution and realization of agreed-upon actions as a key challenge. While performance agreements aim to address various aspects of liveability, their actual implementation often falls short of the intended outcomes. Changes in municipal administration and personnel turnover can hinder continuity and effective implementation. Consistent execution and sustained commitment from all parties involved remain ongoing challenges. Periodic evaluation is necessary to ensure the best practices for dealing with liveability, especially in response to changing circumstances like increased remote work or the energy crisis. These require a flexible approach and a re-evaluation of strategies (I5).

Energy poverty and the energy transition are significant challenges in Almere, particularly in neighbourhoods still connected to natural gas. Collaboration between the municipality and housing associations is crucial to collectively address these challenges (I7).

Lefier observes a growing number of people requiring care but expected to live independently at home for longer periods. There is a lack of support for individuals with severe issues, and maintaining a delicate balance in shared living environments becomes challenging. The trend of residents seeking alternative housing to avoid becoming the sole caregiver in a shared living environment leads to a decline in social cohesion and a diminishing pool of individuals available for support.

The decline in resident commitment to neighbourhood maintenance also contributes to the deterioration of the overall condition of the neighbourhood and therefore diminishing liveability. Factors such as cultural differences or financial constraints contribute to this. Cultural differences may lead to less involvement in garden upkeep, and younger generations show less interest in maintaining gardens. Financial constraints and personal problems can also reduce individuals' willingness and ability to invest in their immediate environment (I3). The Municipality of Groningen also experiences a decline in resident commitment to the neighbourhood since 2020 (OIS Groningen, 2022). One of the main issues of liveability is the long-term nature of improving it. It requires a different approach, as it involves comprehensive collaboration with various stakeholders (I6).

“You work with a lot of different stakeholders, and that is also very nice, but yes that is also more complex, it is a very complex playing field and well [...], you also have the residents and there are also somewhat more difficult vulnerable neighbourhoods, so yes there are some challenges.” [P8]

The task's complexity can cause delays in achieving results, yet also makes the work interesting for the interviewees. The broad scope of responsibilities, bringing together various areas like housing and economics, poses additional challenges for the municipality. Despite growing proficiency in handling these challenges, they remain significant and require attention (I6).

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Defining Liveability

In the interviews and literature, it is widely acknowledged that liveability is a complex and multi-faceted concept (Gawlak, 2016; Oxford University Press, 2016). Different definitions exist, encompassing both objective and subjective factors. The subjectivity was emphasized in the interview with the Municipality of Almere. Although governmental definitions for liveability exist, they are not included in the Housing Act. The Dutch government intentionally refrains from providing a definition in the Housing Act, considering it a broad concept that is related to the quality of people's immediate living environment.

Liveability encompasses various dimensions including social, environmental, cultural, environmental and economic aspects (Bailey, 2021; EIU, 2022; Leefbaarometer, 2020; Ling et al., 2019; Mercer, 2023; Paul & Sen, 2020 & Ruth & Franklin, 2014). It is often described as the degree to which a place is considered suitable or desirable for living. Creating a pleasant living environment, that considers the needs and preferences of residents, promoting social cohesion, ensuring safety, providing amenities and services, and enhancing the physical and social aspects of the community are all integral parts of liveability.

The interviewed organizations have variations and commonalities in their specific definitions of liveability. Firstly, they agree that liveability goes beyond the physical aspects of housing and the neighbourhood and includes social and safety dimensions. Emphasis is placed on considering the social environment and residents' well-being, fostering a sense of community, encouraging neighbours' interactions and providing opportunities for residents to express their concerns, take initiatives, and actively participate in decision-making processes. The interconnectedness of various factors influencing liveability was highlighted and the need for an integrated approach that addresses multiple dimensions simultaneously, such as combining the social environment, physical environment, and safety.

Flexibility and adaptability are valued by some interviewees, acknowledging that laws, regulations, and tenant perceptions can change over time. Remaining responsive to evolving priorities and adjusting strategies and actions accordingly is seen as important. However, the breadth of liveability means that it encompasses a wide array of factors, which can make it difficult for housing associations and municipalities in prioritizing liveability activities.

Both the ministry and Aedes stress the broad and multi-faceted nature of the concept. Woonbond aligns with Aedes in emphasizing the creation of a sense of "home". The Alliantie perceives liveability as clean, safe, and pleasant living environments, as well as harmonious coexistence. Lefier takes a comprehensive view of liveability, encompassing the interplay between the physical environment, physical quality, social quality and the social characteristics of an

environment, and the safety of the environment. KleurrijkWonen defined three similar domains of liveability: the social, physical and safe living environment. The Municipality of Tiel focuses on the combination of quality living and quality of life and the Municipality of Almere and Groningen share a similar perspective, viewing liveability as an interplay between the social environment, physical environment, and safety. The interviewed organizations are slightly nuanced in their definitions; however, they generally agree on the multi-dimensional nature of liveability consisting of social, physical and safety aspects.

Overall, definitions of organizations align with each other, the literature and the broader understanding of liveability. However, differences exist in the application and interpretation of the concept in practice between housing associations and municipalities. Housing associations generally focus on the physical environment, social environment and safety. They can contribute to small-scale infrastructure in the immediate surrounding area of their housing stock. Bigger infrastructural contributions do not belong to their tasks, as the municipality is responsible for them. Similar with regards to the provision of amenities such as shops, public transport or sport facilities. Housing associations are not responsible for this provision and therefore their scope of engaging with liveability is smaller and limited to residential-social work, contributing to small-scale infrastructure, promoting clean environments, preventing nuisance, promoting safety and contributing to social interactions between tenants, as stated in the Btiv (Wetten Overheid, 2022)

6.2 Social Mix

Creating diverse and liveable neighbourhoods through social mixing policies is considered important for enhancing social cohesion, reducing criminality and anti-social behaviour, and promoting a sense of community (Kempen en Bolt, 2009; Musterd et al., 2017 & Uitermark, 2003). It aims to bring together people from different income levels and backgrounds to reduce social inequality, enhance social mobility and promote social cohesion. Diverse neighbourhoods, provide individuals with greater access to resources and networks, improving their economic and educational opportunities (Galster, 2007). Therefore, additional benefits include increased social mobility, social capital, residential stability, and an improved overall reputation for the neighbourhood. It also leads to stronger bonds between residents and higher levels of community safety (Galster, 2007; Kempen en Bolt, 2009).

The new public housing priority from the Ministry BZK on liveability promotes social mixing. Furthermore, one of the examples provided by Aedes is the promotion of social mixing and targeted allocation of housing by differentiating in compositions within complexes, different housing types in neighbourhoods, and a good distribution of vulnerable groups to prevent clusters.

During the interviews, social mixing and differentiation have been mentioned in various contexts to achieve a balanced distribution, creating diverse neighbourhoods, and avoid the concentration of vulnerable people. Various municipalities and housing associations employ social mixing and differentiation strategies to achieve balanced distributions and avoid the concentration of vulnerable populations. Examples include the use of different housing types, targeting neighbourhoods with high percentages of social housing, and promoting fair distribution. The objective is to create supportive environments where residents can assist each other and foster resilient communities.

Analysing these findings, social mixing refers to intentionally creating diverse communities by bringing together people from different backgrounds and income levels, aiming for a balanced distribution and avoiding the concentration of vulnerable populations. Differentiation in types of housing plays a role in achieving social mixing. Municipalities and housing associations share the objective of creating diverse and balanced neighbourhoods but employ different strategies. Implementing social mixing policies aims to create inclusive, diverse and resilient communities, benefiting residents from diverse backgrounds and enhancing overall liveability.

While social mixing is viewed as a very effective intervention to create diverse and liveable neighbourhoods, limited attention is given to the disadvantages and challenges it may pose. These include the possibility (state-led) differentiation (Lees, 2008; Hochstenbach, 2017) or tensions and conflicts arising from cultural, ethnic and lifestyle differences (Arthurson, 2012; Lees, 2008; Musterd & Ostendorf, 2021). These disadvantages were not mentioned during the interviews as the focus was primarily on the promotion of creating diverse and liveable neighbourhoods. The interviews did not reveal one specific approach, but multiple approaches depending on the context for example the category (e.g., type of household or type of house) or the spatial scale on which the differentiation is based. The literature states that it is a challenge that it is not always evident which mix is the most optimal or at which spatial scale it needs to take place (van Kempen & Bolt, 2009).

6.3 Social Interaction and Social Cohesion

The amended Housing Act provides housing associations with the opportunity to contribute to social interaction as part of their efforts to improve liveability. Academic literature emphasizes the importance of social cohesion and social interaction for enhancing liveability, with social dimensions being community, social interaction and social cohesion. Social interaction plays a significant role in providing psychological and physical benefits, fostering a sense of belonging and a sense of community (Dekker & Bolt, 2005; Kempen & Bolt, 2009; Lloyd, 2016). The examples derived from the interviews such as the Oslostraat in Almere and the municipality of Tiel

demonstrating efforts to foster social cohesion through the establishment of community rooms and centres that facilitate social interactions. The literature review underscores the importance of investing in interactions, collaboration, and social integration at the local level to improve social cohesion and neighbourhood liveability.

As stated by Morata et al. (2023), sense of belonging is one of the intangible elements of social cohesion and communities work well when they have shared responsibilities and goals and when people are eager to collaborate. This is also visible in strategies employed by organizations such as de Alliantie and the Municipality of Almere emphasize the proactive encouragement of resident participation, the promotion of resident-led initiatives and social interactions between tenants to enhance social cohesion and liveability. KleurrijkWonen also engages in liveability activities that promote community interaction and the Woonbond highlights the significance of providing opportunities for residents to meet and interact as they can contribute to fostering a sense of community.

By linking these examples to theoretical concepts, the practical implementation of strategies for enhancing social cohesion and liveability can be observed. The efforts to establish community spaces, encourage resident participation, and promote interactions align with the literature's emphasis on the positive impact of social cohesion on overall well-being and liveability. These initiatives contribute to the creation of inclusive and connected communities, fostering a sense of belonging and improving residents' overall living experiences.

While the link between social cohesion and safety is highlighted in the theoretical framework (Huygen & de Meere, 2008), it was not directly apparent in the examples provided during the interviews. Some liveability activities mentioned by the interviewees aimed to improve safety through physical interventions in the environment, except for neighbourhood WhatsApp groups in which residents stay connected and address local safety issues.

6.4 Sense of Community, Sense of Belonging and Sense of Place

Sense of community, sense of belonging and sense of place are concepts that are closely related to social cohesion, social interactions and diverse neighbourhoods. Social interactions, diverse neighbourhoods and resident-led activities foster a sense of community and sense of belonging in a neighbourhood. The concept of a sense of community is linked to belonging to a collective (Albanesi et al., 2007; Macke et al., 2023 & Morata et al., 2023). The municipality of Almere emphasizes the importance of bringing residents together to strengthen sense of community. Similar to what Woonbond states; when tenants have the opportunity to meet and interact, they can contribute to a sense of community in their neighbourhood themselves.

Liveability activities in neighbourhoods such as barbecues, clean-up initiatives, creation of community gardens or container gardens, or improving front gardens, promote social interactions

between the tenants and also resident involvement. Enhancing the physical environment of a neighbourhood through collective efforts contributes to a meaningful sense of place and attachment. Sense of place refers to the emotional bonds and attachments people have to specific locations, ranging from local to global scales. It also encompasses the unique character of a particular place (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009). According to the Municipality of Groningen, mixed neighbourhoods allow residents to explore different housing options within their existing neighbourhood which often benefits the overall liveability of the neighbourhood since it fosters place attachment and sense of place. Engaging in the activities as a collective increases sense of belonging, as one feels part/a member of a collective, and also increases sense of community.

The term "community" in sense of community can be understood in two ways: a territorial and geographical notion, and a relational and collective notion (Macke et al., 2022). Both of these notions are visible in the examples provided during the interviews. Community and neighbourhood rooms/centres, such as in the Oslostraat or the Talenhouse in Tiel, refer to the territorial and geographical notion. Furthermore, activities related to one complex or a (part of) a neighbourhood also relate to this notion. The relational perspective can be found in liveability activities where a collective is involved and where residents engage as a community, for example during neighbourhood barbecues. Another example is the neighbourhood budget in the municipality of Almere which allows residents to propose and carry out activities. These activities enhance the neighbourhood (geographical notion), emphasizing the importance of bringing residents together and strengthening their sense of community (notion of human relationships).

6.5 Safety, Criminality, Nuisance, and Clean Environment

According to the literature, the perception of residents is crucial in determining liveability, which is influenced by the physical and social characteristics of the living environment, nuisance, and safety (RIGO, 2022). All three housing associations indicated the importance of safe and clean neighbourhoods with employees focussing on themes like safety, cleanliness, area aesthetics criminality and nuisance.

Safe neighbourhoods promote community well-being, social cohesion and the physical and mental health of residents. They are characterized by low levels of crime, violence, and fear, and residents feel comfortable using public spaces. A clear, manageable, predictable, and attractive environment fosters a higher sense of safety (Greenberg et al., 1982; CCV, 2023b & Putrik et al., 2019). During the interviews, the terms "clean" and "safe" were frequently used to describe a liveable environment. Examples like Talenhouse Tiel and initiatives in Almere, such as "Waaks" and neighbourhood watch teams, demonstrate efforts to prioritize safety and crime prevention by reducing disturbances, nuisance and criminality from youth in neighbourhoods. The ISA approach

also included a safety project that led to increased safety and security for residents in the Oslostraat.

A clean neighbourhood positively impacts liveability by reducing crime, promoting safety, and discouraging antisocial behaviour (Atlas Leefomgeving, 2023). The "Broken Windows Theory" explains how visible signs of disorder can contribute to further criminal activity and disorder in an area (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). This idea is regularly adopted by housing associations and municipalities. Housing associations and municipalities often adopt this idea, combining clean-up initiatives with sustainability efforts to enhance the appearance of public and private spaces. Maintaining cleanliness in both public and private areas is considered a vital aspect of liveability.

Nuisance, which includes physical decay, social nuisance, traffic nuisance, and environmental nuisance, is a subjective concept that affects residents' perception of liveability (Akkermans et al., 2022). Nuisance is frequently mentioned during the interviews as an issue, with specific emphasis on issues related to individuals with psychosocial problems. Higher concentrations and clusters of vulnerable individuals can lead to increased nuisance and unsafety that also impact the resilience of a neighbourhood, as highlighted by Aedes.

7. CONCLUSION

This research investigated how Dutch housing associations engage with the social aspect of liveability. This chapter is structured around the answers that are provided to the sub-questions, and thereafter, the main research question will be answered.

Overall, liveability is understood as a multifaceted concept that considers social, physical, and safety aspects in creating thriving living environments. Housing and planning research, as well as housing associations and governmental institutions (Dutch government and municipalities), define liveability as a broad and complex concept. The government defines liveability as the extent to which the environment meets the requirements and wishes of the residents, including the physical living environment, housing stock, facilities, social cohesion, nuisance, and safety. The Leefbaarometer defines liveability as the degree to which the environment aligns with human demands and wishes. Commonalities among the organizations' definitions include recognizing liveability as extending beyond physical aspects and encompassing a social and safety dimension. They emphasize the importance of fostering a sense of community, social interactions, community engagement and involving residents in decision-making processes. The interconnectedness of various factors influencing liveability is also acknowledged, requiring an integrated approach that addresses multiple dimensions simultaneously. Flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness to evolving priorities are valued, and some organizations highlight the importance of clean, safe, and harmonious living environments.

Changes in the Housing Act have influenced the historical development of housing associations regarding their liveability policies and initiatives. Prior to 2015, housing associations had more freedom to engage in various liveability activities. The Housing Act 2015 limited the scope of liveability activities and housing associations had to focus on the provision of affordable housing. Strict regulations and a list of allowed contributions to liveability were in place from 2015 to 2022. However, the evaluation in 2018 highlighted the need for more flexibility, resulting in amendments in 2022. The Housing Act 2022 enables housing associations to actively facilitate social interactions and engage in initiatives focused on the neighbourhood and community. They can contribute to residential-social work, establish and maintain small-scale infrastructure, ensure a clean and safe living environment, and facilitate social interaction between tenants. The revised Housing Act acknowledges the important role of housing associations in enhancing liveability. The amendments and therefore the expansion of possibilities to contribute to liveability is received as a positive development by most interviewees as they expressed their satisfaction. Though, the amendments have not led to substantial changes in practice yet. Factors that limit the impact of the amended Housing Act include the primary focus on housing rather than liveability, finding the employees to lead the liveability activities, the reliance on resident initiatives and the

challenge of engaging residents in initiatives. Currently, resident initiatives for liveability activities are facilitated, but most tenants do not take advantage of this yet. It is considered complex to achieve resident engagement and involvement in liveability activities. A notable change of the Housing Act is that liveability activities can be carried out without explicitly being stated in the performance agreements. Prior to 2022, every liveability activity was required to be specified in the performance agreements. Additionally, performance agreements can now include participation from other parties including healthcare and welfare organizations.

The performance agreements serve as an effective mechanism in which a collaborative approach helps to ensure that the actions taken, and resources allocated, align with the shared goal of creating liveable neighbourhoods. The local triangle and performance agreements are crucial in housing associations' engagement with liveability and interviewees are satisfied with the collaborations within their municipality. The collaborations lead to the establishment of performance agreements that serve as a framework for addressing various topics related to liveability. The municipality often takes on a coordinating role, while tenant organizations represent the interests of the tenants. The performance agreements prioritize goals and objectives related to liveability and their successful implementation. Effective communication, resource allocation, and accountability among all stakeholders are essential for the successful implementation of these agreements.

Dutch housing associations utilize various strategies, practices, and initiatives to improve the social aspect of liveability in neighbourhoods. These efforts involve collaboration with local stakeholders (such as police, healthcare- and welfare organizations, and neighbourhood teams) resident participation, and social- and physical interventions. Examples and best practices provided by organizations like Aedes include interventions such as differentiation in neighbourhoods, social management, and physical improvements. Effective approaches typically require a combination of measures, and it is essential to encourage meaningful interactions among residents and supporting resident-led initiatives. Furthermore, housing associations employ personnel like neighbourhood managers and resident support staff to enhance liveability. Neighbourhood managers focus on cleanliness, safety, and area aesthetics, while resident support staff handle individual cases involving disruptive behaviour. Lastly, the social aspect of liveability is typically combined with the physical aspect of liveability. Activities aiming to enhance social interaction and social cohesion often contain an aspect of collaboratively enhancing the physical environment. Housing associations facilitate resident participation, organize events and activities, and support community initiatives to foster connections and strengthen the sense of community and social cohesion. It was expected that liveability activities would differ among housing associations, depending on the local context. However, this expectation has not been supported by the obtained qualitative data.

To conclude, housing associations in the Netherlands engage in a variety of ways with the social aspect of liveability. They engage in activities to increase liveability by aiming for social cohesion, community involvement and interaction, sense of community and safe and clean neighbourhoods. To promote social cohesion, housing associations organize community events and facilitate social activities. By organizing events like neighbourhood barbecues and clean-up initiatives, housing associations create opportunities for residents to interact and strengthen social cohesion in the neighbourhood. Activities that aim to enhance social interaction and social cohesion in a neighbourhood are often combined with the physical aspect of liveability by collaboratively enhancing the physical environment in a neighbourhood. Housing associations encourage tenants to participate and engage in neighbourhood activities, fostering a sense of belonging and connection among neighbours. Furthermore, they support residents' initiatives in which housing associations generally take a facilitating role.

Housing associations use several collaborations to engage with the social aspect of liveability. They collaborate with municipalities and tenants' organisations within the local triangle to make performance agreements about liveability. Housing associations use, in collaboration with municipalities, social mixing and allocation in neighbourhoods as interventions to create more diverse and inclusive neighbourhoods and to prevent the clustering of vulnerable individuals. Housing associations also collaborate with external stakeholders such as police, and welfare- and care organizations to enhance liveability. Safety is an important aspect of liveability for which housing associations take both physical and social measures to ensure safe living environments in which they collaborate with local authorities such as the municipality and the police.

To summarize, Dutch housing associations use an integrated approach that combines social measures, resident participation, collaborations and physical interventions to enhance the liveability in neighbourhoods.

8. REFLECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengths, weaknesses and limitations can be identified when reflecting upon the research process. During this research, there were no major setbacks to deal with. Furthermore, there were no major difficulties in approaching participants in which the usage of the researcher's personal network was an advantage. In total, 10 organizations were approached of which nine agreed to an interview, which resulted in nine interviews with 11 interviewees. Beforehand, this research intended to include a city located in the Randstad. This turned out to be too complicated due to the complex structures (e.g., a large number of stakeholders) within the local triangles.

Overall, the selection of the participants can be considered a strength as they were experts in the field of liveability. The profession of the interviewee from Aedes is in the field of Sector Development instead of the interests or lobby side as an advocate. Therefore, this perspective from Aedes is missing in this master thesis although it is an important perspective since one of the main activities of Aedes is to represent the interests of affiliated housing associations.

The Ministry of BZK suggested to interview Authority Housing Associations (AW) unfortunately the interview request was rejected. AW has a supervisory role, receives signals from housing associations, and has a good overview of housing associations engaging with liveability and the liveability activities they execute. The lack of this perspective is not a weakness or limitation as it is beyond the scope of this research. However, it would have been interesting to identify the overall status of housing associations engaging with liveability and potential signals that AW received after the amendments of the Housing Act.

Two interviews were not audio-recorded and therefore the results of these interviews rely on another level of detail compared to the interviews that were audio-recorded. Lastly, all interviews were held in Dutch and therefore, results and quotes had to be translated from Dutch to English. The translation of quotes could have influenced the meaning of an interviewee's expression.

When reflecting upon the research method and data collection approach, it was well-suited to answer the main research question. However, this research did not include (small) villages, small housing associations or bigger cities for example in de Randstad. Follow-up research could repeat this study in different geographical contexts to examine the applicability of the findings in distinct local contexts as well as revelations of new insights.

Moreover, this research focussed on how Dutch housing associations engage with the social aspect of liveability and did not focus on the effectiveness of strategies, practices, activities and collaborations. Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of different liveability activities in improving the social aspects of neighbourhood liveability, in which housing associations are involved. Additionally, exploring the optimal collaborations and partnerships that contribute to the most effective outcomes in enhancing the social aspect of liveability is a

recommendation for future research. Furthermore, evaluating practices and activities remains important to identify their effectiveness. Evaluation of the Housing Act is necessary to fully understand and measure the tangible effects and impact on liveability outcomes.

Recommendations for housing associations include taking a holistic and integral approach with a combination of measures. With regards to liveability activities, it is about an approach that includes both social and physical aspects of liveability and the interaction between them. For instance, enhancing the physical environment of a neighbourhood in collaboration with tenants. Further research is needed on how housing associations can increase the engagement of tenants, as their engagement is in decline.

Another recommendation for further academic research is to explore the role, involvement and utilization of neighbourhoods by residents who are not tenants of housing associations, as all residents are a central part of the social aspect of liveability in a neighbourhood. Community dynamics between tenants of housing associations and other residents in neighbourhoods can be explored as well as this will enhance understanding of community dynamics and inform the development of strategies for fostering social cohesion, social interaction, and enhancing liveability in neighbourhoods. A last recommendation for future research is to explore the practical effects of using different definitions of liveability in research as well as by different organizations.

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10. APPENDICES

Overview

Appendix 1	Interview Guide
Appendix 2	Deductive Code Trees
Appendix 3	Inductive Code Book
Appendix 4	Informed Consent Form
Appendix 5	Overview of Documents

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Begin

- Allereerst heel erg bedankt dat ik u mag interviewen
- Uitleg over het onderzoek en interview
- Toestemmingsformulier (informed consent form) bespreken en tekenen. Eventuele vragen beantwoorden.
- Optioneel: Wat vond u van de onderwerpen die ik van tevoren op de mail heb gezet? Heeft u nog toevoegingen of vragen?
- Heeft u nog andere vragen of opmerkingen voordat we beginnen met het interview?

Algemene vragen

- Kunt u mij wat vertellen over uzelf?
- Kunt u mij wat vertellen over uw functie en werkzaamheden?
- Kunt u mij wat vertellen over de organisatie waar u voor werkt?

Woningwet

Op 1 januari 2022 is de Woningwet gewijzigd waardoor er meer mogelijkheden voor woningcorporaties zijn gekomen om te werken aan leefbaarheid.

- Wat vindt u/de organisatie waar u voor werkt van de wijziging van de Woningwet op 1 januari 2022?
 - Limitaties, veranderingen en verwachtingen
- Hoe is het beleid en/of visie op leefbaarheid veranderd door de woningwet?
 - Welke veranderingen?

Leefbaarheid

- Hoe ziet u/de organisatie waar u voor werkt het begrip leefbaarheid? Wat verstaan jullie onder leefbaarheid?
 - Hoe is deze visie op leefbaarheid tot stand gekomen?
- In welke wijken staat de leefbaarheid onder druk? Welke factoren spelen daarin een rol?

Leefbaarheidsactiviteiten

- Hoe draagt de organisatie waar u voor werk bij aan het verbeteren van (fysieke) leefbaarheid, maar met name het sociale aspect van leefbaarheid (sociale cohesie, veiligheid)?
 - Benaderingen, strategieën, initiatieven en prioriteiten
- Verschillen deze met andere organisaties?

Prestatieafspraken en lokale driehoek (gemeenten, woningcorporaties, Woonbond)

- Hoe ziet u de rol van de organisatie waar u voor werkt binnen het maken van de prestatieafspraken?
 - Of vragen naar de rol van woningcorporaties/gemeenten/huurdersorganisaties bij het maken van prestatieafspraken.
- Hoe omschrijft u de samenwerking binnen de lokale driehoek bij het maken van prestatieafspraken?
 - Budgetten, leefbaarheidsactiviteiten, balans en taakverdeling

Toekomst (met betrekking tot leefbaarheid, prestatieafspraken, woningwet, leefbaarheidsactiviteiten)

- Wat zijn de belangrijkste uitdagingen die u/de organisatie waar u voor werkt momenteel ervaart?
- Wat zullen in de toekomst de grootste uitdagingen zijn?
- Wat is uw/de organisatie waar u voor werkt haar visie voor de toekomst voor leefbaarheidsbeleid maar ook leefbaarheid in wijken algemeen?
- Welke uitdagingen zijn er in de toekomst met betrekking tot leefbaarheidsactiviteiten van woningcorporaties?

Optionele vragen

- Verschilt de visie op leefbaarheid van uw organisatie met andere organisaties?
- Is de visie op leefbaarheid veranderd door de wijziging van de Woningwet?
- Hoe wordt er omgegaan met leefbaarheidsinitiatieven van bewoners?

Einde

Heel erg bedankt voor uw deelname aan dit interview.

- Heeft u nog tips voor mij? Zijn er nog dingen waar ik aan moet denken?
- Heeft u nog documenten die interessant voor mijn onderzoek kunnen zijn?
- Ben ik nog een bepaalde vraag vergeten te stellen?
- Is er nog iets wat u wilt toevoegen voordat we het interview beëindigen? Is er nog een onderdeel waar u op terug wilt komen?
- Heeft u nog vragen?
- Wat vond u van het interview?
- Nogmaals bedanken

Specifieke vragen voor de verschillende organisaties:

Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken over de (gewijzigde) Woningwet

- Wat was jullie rol binnen de wijziging van de woningwet?
- Het begrip leefbaarheid wordt niet gedefinieerd in de wet maar aangeduid aan de hand van bijdragen die geleverd kunnen worden. Hoe zijn jullie tot deze 'definitie' gekomen?
- Hoe verliep het proces van de wetswijziging?
 - Motieven & beweegredenen
 - Welke rol hebben woningcorporaties en gemeenten (en eventueel nog andere organisaties) gespeeld?
- Nu de woningwet is gewijzigd, wat is de huidige stand van zaken?
- Wat waren en/of zijn de verwachtingen vanuit het Ministerie met betrekking tot de implementatie van de woningwet?
- Wat zijn de limieten van de gewijzigde Woningwet? Moet er nog meer veranderen?

Aedes

- Hoe werken jullie samen met woningcorporaties?
- Hoe beheert u de behoeften en belangen van verschillende woningcorporaties die jullie representeren?
- Welke rol heeft Aedes gehad binnen de wijziging van de Woningwet? En welke rol hebben woningcorporaties (en eventueel nog andere organisaties) gespeeld?
- Welke signalen krijgen jullie uit de praktijk na de wijziging van de Woningwet?
- Wat waren en/of zijn de verwachtingen vanuit Aedes met betrekking tot de implementatie van de woningwet?
- Hoe ziet u de toekomst van woningcorporaties en hun bijdrage aan de leefbaarheid in wijken en buurten?
- Wat zijn de grootste uitdagingen waar woningcorporaties mee te maken hebben bij het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid in wijken en buurten?

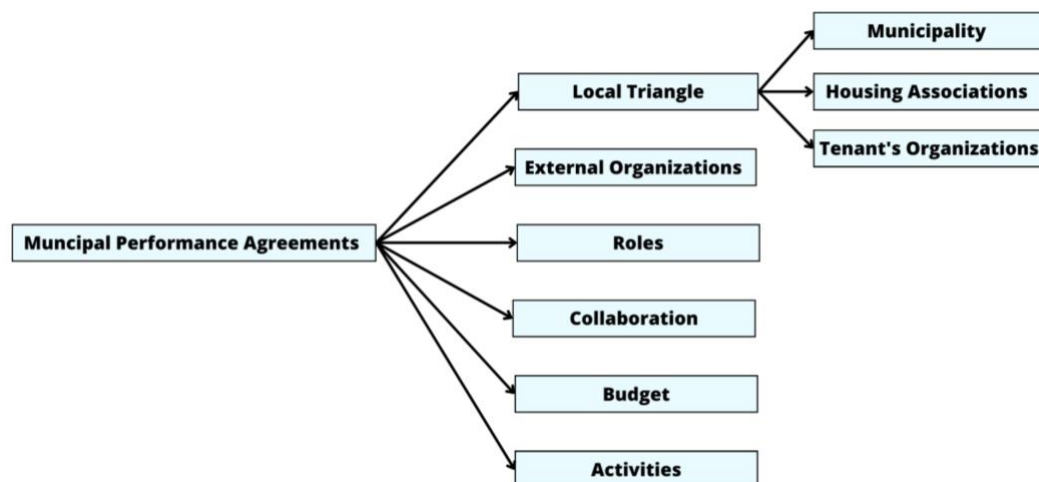
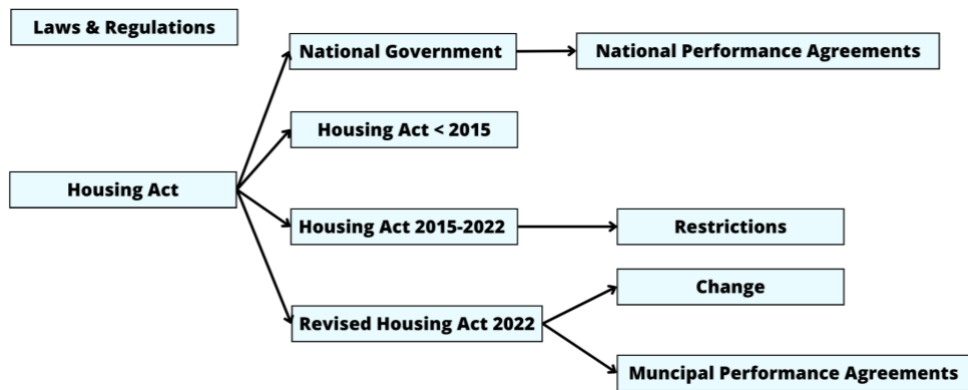
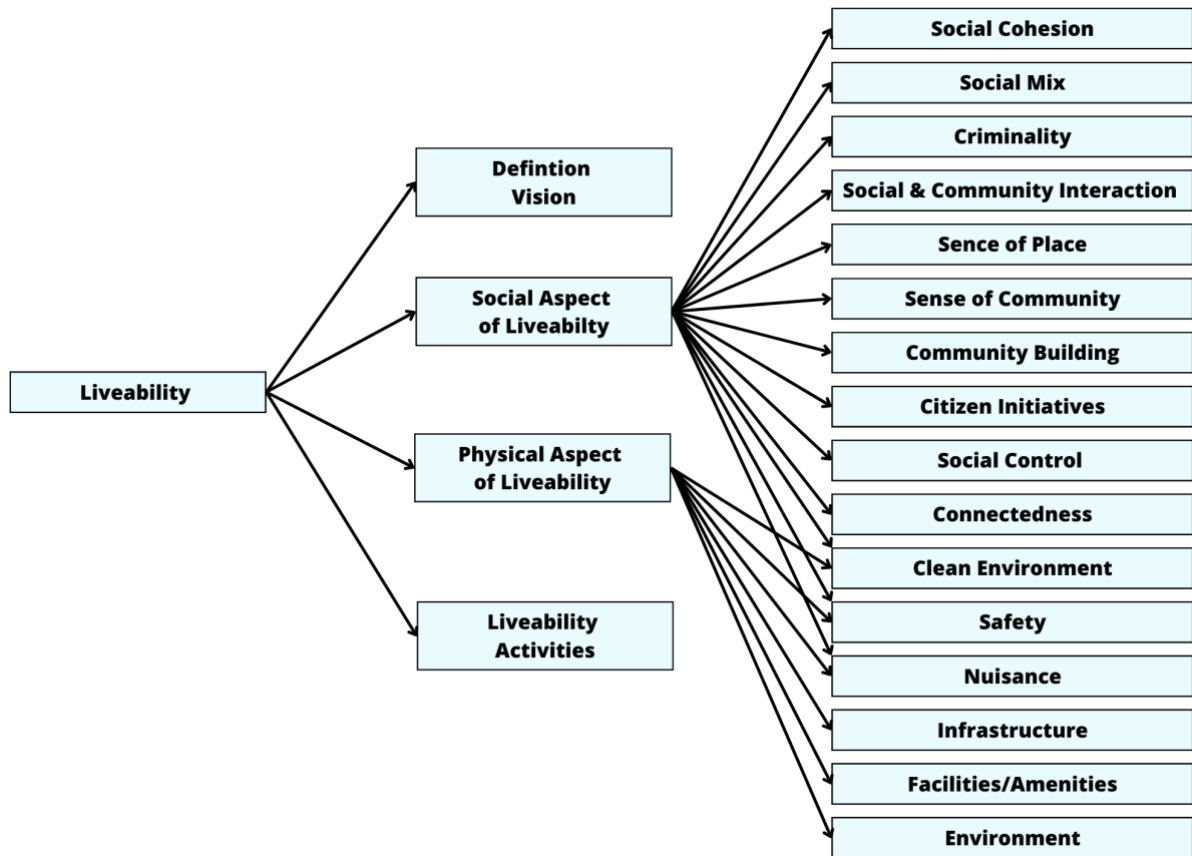
Woonbond

- Welke rol spelen huurdersorganisaties bij het bevorderen van de leefbaarheid in wijken? En wat kan de Woonbond hierin betekenen of welke rol speelt de Woonbond in het verbeteren van leefbaarheid in wijken?
- In welke mate betrekken woningcorporaties de huurders bij het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid in een wijk?
- Welke goede voorbeelden van projecten om de leefbaarheid in wijken te verbeteren kent de Woonbond, en welke lessen kunnen daaruit worden getrokken?
- Welke informatie en ondersteuning kan de Woonbond bieden aan huurdersorganisaties en anderen die zich willen inzetten voor de leefbaarheid in wijken?

Extra vragen aan woningcorporaties:

- In hoeverre is er sprake van samenwerking tussen verschillende woningcorporaties om de leefbaarheid in een bredere regio te verbeteren?
- En samenwerking met andere organisaties/belanghebbenden?
- Gebruiken jullie de veerkrachtkarten van Aedes en/of andere data?

Appendix 2: Deductive Code Trees



Appendix 3: Inductive Code Book

Category and Theme		Code label			
Roles		Facilitating role			
		Supporter			
		Organiser			
		Reporter			
		Advocate/representative			
Policies and Documents	Plans	Area plan			
		Liveability plan			
		Implementation plan			
		Team plan			
			Neighbourhood approach		
			Ambition framework		
			Coalition Agreement		
			Implementation programs		
			Activity overview		
			Guideline(s) (=handreiking(en))		
			Vision document		
			Annual Report/Account		
			Issues (problematiek)		Social
					Psychosocial
Financial					
Health					
Poverty					
Climate change					
Other		Coexistence			
		Sustainability			
		Climate adaptation			
		Subsidy			
		Integrated/comprehensive/holistic approach			
Neighbourhood with high percentage social housing		Demographic characteristics			
		Housing Characteristics			
		Concerns			
		Deprived area			

Appendix 4: Informed Consent Forms

Version 1



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Toestemmingsformulier

Ik heb de informatie (pagina 1) over het onderzoek gelezen. Ik kon mijn vragen stellen en mijn vragen werden naar tevredenheid beantwoord. Ik had genoeg tijd om te besluiten mee te doen aan het onderzoek en mijn deelname is geheel vrijwillig. Ik kan me op elk moment terugtrekken uit het onderzoek, zonder dat ik een reden hoef op te geven. Ik geef toestemming voor het gebruik van de interview data voor educatieve doeleinden. De gegevens worden zorgvuldig en vertrouwelijk behandeld en niet ter beschikking gesteld aan derden. De audio-opnames zullen worden verwijderd na het analyseren van de desbetreffende data.

Graag 'Ja' of 'Nee' omcirkelen bij elk van de volgende:

Ik ga er mee akkoord dat er een audio-opname van het interview wordt gemaakt.

Ja / Nee

Ik ga er mee akkoord dat mijn functietitel wordt gebruikt in de scriptie.

Ja / Nee

Ik ga akkoord met deelname aan dit interview.

Handtekening van deelnemer: _____ Datum: _____

Ik verklaar dat ik de deelnemer heb geïnformeerd over het onderzoek en zijn/haar rechten. Ik zal de deelnemer informeren over zaken die zijn/haar deelname aan het onderzoek kunnen beïnvloeden.

Handtekening van onderzoeker: _____ Datum: _____



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 wetenschappen

Informatie scriptie

Mijn naam is Roos den Boer en momenteel schrijf ik mijn masterscriptie voor de master 'Society, Sustainability and Planning', aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Faculteit Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen. Ik doe onderzoek naar (sociale) leefbaarheid in wijken en hoe woningcorporaties daar mee omgaan, met name na de wetswijziging van de Woningwet in januari 2022. Het is een kwalitatief onderzoek dat ik uitvoer aan de hand van interviews. Het doel van dit onderzoek is om meer inzicht te krijgen in de bijdragen van woningcorporaties aan leefbaarheid in wijken en eventuele verschillen afhankelijk van lokale context. De masterscriptie zal worden gepubliceerd in een online database van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

Rechten deelnemer:

- U heeft het recht om te weigeren deel te nemen aan het onderzoek.
- U heeft het recht om een bepaalde vraag tijdens het interview niet te beantwoorden.
- U heeft het recht om op elk moment vragen om de audio opname uit te schakelen.
- U heeft het recht om het interview op elk moment beëindigen.
- U heeft het recht om zich terug te trekken uit het onderzoek tot het moment dat de scriptie is gepubliceerd.
- U heeft het recht om vragen te stellen over het onderzoek op elk moment tijdens de deelname.
- U heeft het recht om te vragen om het wissen van materiaal waarvan u niet wilt dat het wordt gebruikt in de scriptie.

Het interview

- Er wordt een audio-opname van het interview gemaakt en eventuele aantekeningen kunnen worden gemaakt tijdens het interview.
- U kunt een kopie ontvangen van het interview transcript en u krijgt de gelegenheid om correcties aan te brengen.
- De interview data zal gebruikt worden voor educatieve doeleinden.
- De interview data wordt zorgvuldig en vertrouwelijk behandeld en niet ter beschikking gesteld aan derden.
- De gegevens worden bewaard op een veilige plek die alleen toegankelijk is voor de onderzoeker en de begeleider van het onderzoek.
- Het interview duurt maximaal 60 minuten.



Toestemmingsformulier

Ik heb de informatie (pagina 1) over het onderzoek gelezen. Ik kon mijn vragen stellen en mijn vragen werden naar tevredenheid beantwoord. Ik had genoeg tijd om te besluiten mee te doen aan het onderzoek en mijn deelname is geheel vrijwillig. Ik kan me op elk moment terugtrekken uit het onderzoek, zonder dat ik een reden hoef op te geven. Ik geef toestemming voor het gebruik van de interview data voor educatieve doeleinden. De gegevens worden zorgvuldig en vertrouwelijk behandeld en niet ter beschikking gesteld aan derden.

Graag 'Ja' of 'Nee' omcirkelen bij elk van de volgende:

Ik ga er mee akkoord dat mijn functietitel wordt gebruikt in de scriptie.

Ja / Nee

Ik ga akkoord met deelname aan dit interview.

Handtekening van deelnemer: _____ Datum: _____

Ik verklaar dat ik de deelnemer heb geïnformeerd over het onderzoek en zijn/haar rechten. Ik zal de deelnemer informeren over zaken die zijn/haar deelname aan het onderzoek kunnen beïnvloeden.

Handtekening van onderzoeker: _____ Datum: _____



Informatie scriptie

Mijn naam is Roos den Boer en momenteel schrijf ik mijn masterscriptie voor de master 'Society, Sustainability and Planning', aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Faculteit Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen. Ik doe onderzoek naar (sociale) leefbaarheid in wijken en hoe woningcorporaties daar mee omgaan, met name na de wetswijziging van de Woningwet in januari 2022. Het is een kwalitatief onderzoek dat ik uitvoer aan de hand van interviews. Het doel van dit onderzoek is om meer inzicht te krijgen in de bijdragen van woningcorporaties aan leefbaarheid in wijken en eventuele verschillen afhankelijk van lokale context. De masterscriptie zal worden gepubliceerd in een online database van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

Rechten deelnemer:

- U heeft het recht om te weigeren deel te nemen aan het onderzoek.
- U heeft het recht om een bepaalde vraag tijdens het interview niet te beantwoorden.
- U heeft het recht om het interview op elk moment beëindigen.
- U heeft het recht om zich terug te trekken uit het onderzoek tot het moment dat de scriptie is gepubliceerd.
- U heeft het recht om vragen te stellen over het onderzoek op elk moment tijdens de deelname.
- U heeft het recht om te vragen om het wissen van materiaal waarvan u niet wilt dat het wordt gebruikt in de scriptie.

Het interview

- Er worden alleen aantekeningen gemaakt tijdens het interview, geen audio-opname.
- U kunt een kopie ontvangen van de aantekeningen en u krijgt de gelegenheid om correcties aan te brengen.
- De interview data zal gebruikt worden voor educatieve doeleinden.
- Het interview duurt maximaal 60 minuten.

Appendix 5: Overview of Documents

	Name	Organization	Document Type
	Memorie van Toelichting 35517 Nr. 3	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs	Public
	Handreiking Leefbaarheid	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs	Public
	De Volkshuisvestelijke Prioriteiten	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs	Public
	Samen werken aan veerkrachtige wijken	Aedes	Public
	Samen werken aan een beter thuis	Aedes	Public
	Top 10 toepassingen veerkrachtkaarten	Aedes	Public
	Praatplaat biedt inspiratie werken aan leefbaarheid	Aedes	Public
	Mijn Buurt Assen	Woonbond	Public
	BoTu Community	Woonbond	Public
	LSA Bewoners Wijkaanpak	Woonbond	Public
	Wonen en Zorg in de Prestatieafspraken Handreiking voor Huurdersorganisaties	Woonbond	Internal
Performance Agreements			
	Prestatieafspraken 2023	Groningen	Public
	Prestatieafspraken Almere 2020-2024	Almere	Public
	Tielse Prestatieafspraken "wonen" raamovereenkomst 2020 t/m 2023	Tiel	Public
Housing Visions			
	Thuis in Almere	Municipality of Almere	Public
	Wonen in de Fruitstad	Municipality of Tiel	Public
	Een thuis voor iedereen	Municipality of Groningen	Public
Liveability			
	Visiedocument Leefbaarheid	KleurrijkWonen	Internal
	Gebiedsplan Tiel West	KleurrijkWonen	Internal
	Leefbaarheidsplan Almere Buiten	Municipality of Almere	Internal
	Teamplan Gemeente Almere	Municipality of Almere	Internal
	Activiteitenoverzicht 2023-2027	de Alliantie	Internal
	Enquete Leefbaarheid 2022	Municipality of Groningen	Public
	Ambitiekader Leefbaarheid 2021-2025	Municipality of Groningen	Public
	Picture: Overzicht Groninger Wijkvernieuwing	Municipality of Groningen	Public
	Lefier: Leefbaarheid	Lefier	Public
	Visie en Beleid Leefbaarheid	Lefier	Intern
	Uitvoeringsplan Leefbaarheid op de Kaart 2023	Lefier	Internal
	Physical document without title	Municipality of Groningen	Internal
	Physical document without title	Municipality of Groningen	Internal