Attitudes towards social housing: a study amongst residents of adjacent neighbourhoods

Michiel van Eerden
S2406675

Summary

In 2015 a new law entered into force which made it possible for corporations to subject tenants to criteria based on their socioeconomic status and possible history of crime or nuisance. Since adjacent neighbourhoods interact with each other, this will also have effects on the surrounding areas. But before the effects of a law like this can be studied, a general attitude towards neighbourhoods with social housing is needed. The aim of this thesis is to find the attitudes of neighbouring residents towards neighbourhoods in which the majority of housing is social by using a qualitative method. The interviews were held in adjacent neighbourhoods with a lot less social housing. By interviewing neighbours on their perception of crime, poverty, ethnical segregation and overall amenity provision, this thesis indicates that the attitude towards a particular neighbourhood with social housing is influenced by the perception of a deserving or an undeserving poor. Neighbourhoods in which a lot of the residents are characterised as being undeserving tend to have a more unsafe and uninviting atmosphere and more crime is perceived. The results also indicate that ethnical concentration is not seen as worsening the image of a neighbourhood, and is in some cases even seen as improving a neighbourhood. Neighbourhood design and architecture also tend to influence the image of surrounding neighbours. High-rise and homogeneous architecture are said to be deteriorating the image of a neighbourhood, and in some cases even said to increase crime-rates, whereas parks and greenspace tend to improve a neighbourhoods' outlook and exposure with other neighbourhoods.

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Introduction

In the Dutch housing system, there is a heavy emphasis on social housing, about 32% of all houses are owned by housing corporations (Scanlon et al., 2014), of which approximately 96% is social housing (Rijksoverheid, 2016). Social housing in the Netherlands has its basis in the 'Housing Act', originally from 1901. This agreement resulted in the construction of a solid affordable housing stock by non-profit housing corporations. Selection of new residents was never permitted for those corporations, but since 2015 a new law entered into force, namely the 'Wet bijzondere maatregelen grootstedelijke problematiek'. The selection system before this law was based only on time, so whoever had been longest on the list was "first in line" when housing became available. This way, the populations of neighbourhoods with social housing were supposed to be a mixture of all kinds of socio-economic groups. However, this system was found to be struggling to maintain liveability of certain neighbourhoods (Factsheet Wbmgp, 2016). The law contains measures corporations can take when deemed necessary. They now have permission to act in the following three ways when selecting for streets or neighbourhoods. They can limit the influx of tenants with a weak socioeconomic status, prioritize certain target groups when allocating housing based on certain socioeconomic characteristics, and prevent the influx of potential tenants who are prone to nuisance or criminal behaviour. These measures are taken for improvement of the liveability within the area of social housing, but these streets and neighbourhoods are always located within a larger area. Neighbourhoods interact with each other on many different levels, which is why it would be important to study what effects a law like this would have on surrounding neighbourhoods as well. To be able to do this, there first needs to be a general idea of the attitudes of residents of neighbourhoods adjacent to neighbourhoods with a lot of social housing. This need is emphasized in an academic review of the available literature on this topic (Freeman and Botein, 2002). It states that "Although subsidized housing is characterized as a disamenity, it may not be a universal one like a toxic waste site, for example" (Freeman and Botein, 2002, pp. 376). This could be caused by the notion of a deserving and an undeserving poor in the US, and the different attitudes towards racial and socioeconomic diversity. Some people are negative towards diversity, whereas others could value it. This study will assess if subsidized housing in the Netherlands is generally considered an amenity or a disamenity for people who live nearby. They mostly live very close by, but do not share the same problems as the residents of social housing. Therefore, the main research question will be: What is the attitude of residents of adjacent neighbourhoods towards neighbourhoods in which the majority of housing is social? To find an answer to this question, an assessment of neighbourhood impacts of social housing on surrounding neighbourhoods is needed. Firstly, I will set out the academic context of this topic by discussing the main, relevant scientific work in this field, distinguishing between attitudes towards crime, poverty, ethnical segregation and general amenity provision. Secondly, I will discuss the used methods of research. Thirdly, I will elaborate on the results from the interviews, and this will lead us to the conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Academic Relevance

There has been quite some research on the effects of social/subsidized housing on neighbourhoods. However, all of these studies are (logically) focused on small geographical areas or singular cities, mainly in America. There has been a case study on public housing in Amsterdam (van Ommeren and van der Vlist, 2016), but it just focused on house pricing of the public housing itself and willingness of households to pay for those houses. Just for this reason, it would already be interesting to do a study that focuses on neighbourhood impacts of social housing in the Netherlands. But, another reason would be the inconsistency in the existing literature when it comes to models used, resulting in

conclusions contradicting each other. For example, a study in Virginia, USA, finds that subsidized housing does have negative impacts on property values in the neighbourhood (Guy et al., 1985). But on the other hand, there are also studies which conclude that the effects of subsidized housing on neighbourhood property values are not consistently negative, and are, in some cases, even positive (Ellen et al., 2007; Freeman and Botein, 2002; Schwartz et al., 2006). Context-dependency applies for all cases of the impacts of social housing on property values, which makes reliable results from data analysis very difficult. Therefore, this has not been subject of research in this study. There have also been multiple studies that showed other neighbourhood impacts of social housing units. For example, McNulty and Holloway and Roncek et al. showed that there is a positive relationship between social housing and crime rates, but this accounts only for two cities, and should be viewed as way more context dependent (McNulty and Holloway, 2000; Roncek et al., 1981). Woo and Joh even suggest that subsidized housing projects tend to mitigate crime related problems in the neighbourhood (Woo and Joh, 2015). According to Massey and Denton subsidized housing causes racial segregation in cities (Massey and Denton, 1993), whereas another study (Schwartz et al., 2006) finds that subsidized housing projects in New York have positive spillover effects, increasing with increasing project size. According to this study there is a gain in tax-revenue that exceeds the subsidies provided by the city, a disamenity elimination and amenity provision, but nothing about negative effects, like racial segregation, is mentioned.

In their review of literature on neighbourhood impacts of social housing, Freeman and Botein point out that "Attitudes of the neighbors of subsidized housing also should be considered" (Freeman and Botein, 2002, p. 376). This study tries to improve the knowledge of impacts of social housing on neighbouring areas by using a qualitative method. It will address the commonly studied issues of crime, poverty, ethnical segregation, and overall amenity provision. Social housing is commonly regarded as causing neighbourhood decline in these fields (Freeman and Botein, 2002), so if residents of adjacent neighbourhoods also view social housing negatively, then it will be seen as a disamenity for their own neighbourhood as well. Also, this study will add the case of the Netherlands to the mainly USA-filled database of case studies in this field.

The above mentioned issues of crime, poverty, ethnical segregation and amenity provision will be explained according to a couple of concepts. The defensible space theory by Newman states that spaces where people do not have a sense of ownership, crime will be more actively present than in spaces where people do feel these components (Newman, 1973). High-rise buildings are considered spaces which house so many people in a small space that residents feel less of a sense of ownership, and this sense of ownership is already mitigated in rented housing compared to owner-occupied housing. However, in 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' (Jacobs, 1961), Jacobs emphasized that neighbourhood safety is greatly influenced by the walkability and permeability (or accessibility for pedestrians as well as vehicles) of the area. Furthermore, the degree of organisation within an environment has shown to positively affect a neighbourhoods' social cohesion (Ellaway, Macintyre and Kearns, 2001). This could have an effect on the perceived safety levels of residents of surrounding neighbourhoods. Those theories will be central in how crime is perceived in neighbourhood with social housing. Another important part of this perception is how the poor are portrayed. According to Katz people separate between a deserving and an undeserving poor (Katz, 1986). The deserving poor being people who are poor not because of their own fault, by sickness, disabledness or age for instance. The undeserving poor being poor due to problems they created themselves, due to crime, drugs or laziness for example. In European countries there seems to be the highest form of solidarity towards the elderly, followed by the sick and disabled, then solidarity towards the unemployed, and finally, the lowest solidarity for immigrants (van Oorschot, 2006). As far as poverty concerns, this distinction will be used for analysing the general desirability of a neighbourhood with social housing. One would expect that neighbourhoods with a lot of elderly are seen as "least undesirable" and neighbourhoods with many immigrants are seen as "most undesirable". For the analysis of ethnical segregation an aspatial dimension of segregation by Massey and Denton will be used (Massey and Denton, 1988). Concentration, to determine whether certain ethnical population groups tend to concentrate in a neighbourhood. And if there is a noticeable concentration, exposure, to find out whether or not the

particular population groups tend to create some sort of a closed community. Whether the participants generally see the neighbourhood with a lot of social housing as an amenity or a disamenity I will base upon the previously mentioned categories combined including extra mentions of either positive or negative experiences.
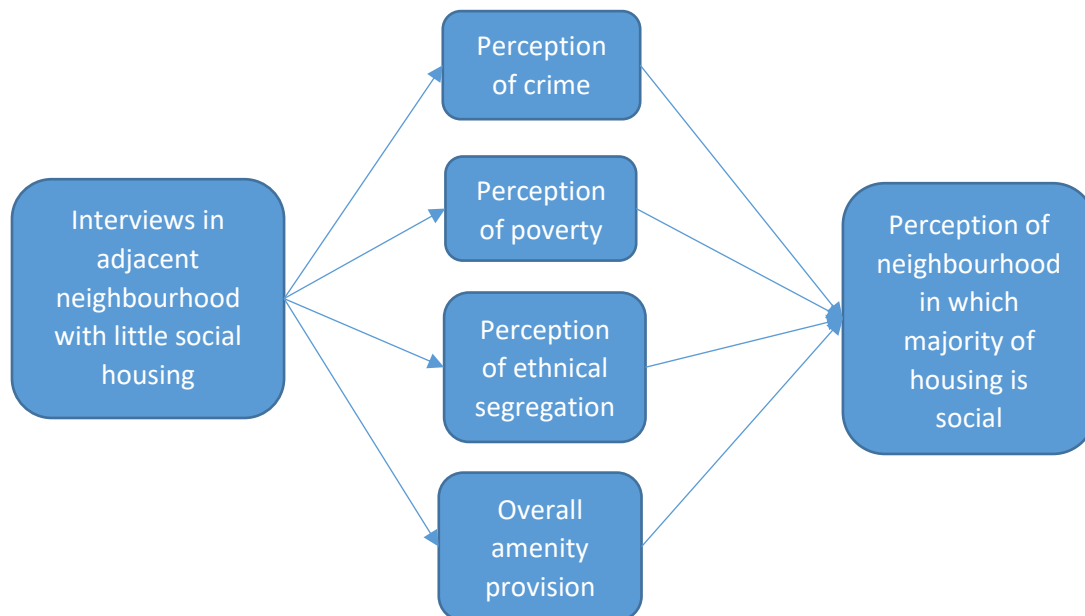
Methodology

To answer to the questions, I did in-depth interviews with residents of adjacent neighbourhoods (See Interviewguide). The argument for this method is that "qualitative description, using qualitative methods, explores the meanings, variations, and perceptual experiences of phenomena and will often seek to capture their holistic or interconnected nature" (Crabtree and Miller,1999). This way a bigger variety of answers could be found from the participants compared to when surveys are used for studying attitudes of residents. This means, however, that only four interviews were done per neighbourhood. Therefore, conclusions must be carefully approached when functioning as the basis for studies on other cities. The interviews were semi-structured. The middle part of the interview questions focused on the attitudes towards all the relevant concepts (i.e. crime, poverty, ethnical segregation and amenity provision). The beginning and the end of the interview questions were meant to make the participant feel comfortable and to get as much potentially relevant information as possible, respectively. Afterwards, the entire interviews were transcribed. The transcripts were used for the eventual coding, for which a colour based scheme was used (See coding scheme in appendix). The studied neighbourhoods were found by using 'CBS in uw buurt' (2013), which contains data on every Dutch neighbourhood about the amount of houses or apartments being owned by housing corporations . This way, neighbourhoods with a lot of social housing were located, and adjacent neighbourhoods with little social housing I appointed as locations where the interviews would being held. A total of four neighbourhoods with little social housing has been subject of the study. In each of the four neighbourhoods I did four interviews spread across the geographical area. No interviews have taken place in the same house-blocks to avoid similarities in views and attitudes of neighbouring residents influencing each other. The studied cities are Groningen and Arnhem. The percentage of corporation-owned housing in the municipality of Groningen in 2014 was 38,2%, and in the

municipality of Arnhem it was 37,2%. For both cities this is higher than the Dutch average, which was 30,3% (Rijksoverheid, 2016). But most of the agglomerations have slightly higher percentages than the national average. With Groningen and Arnhem as pretty average agglomerations in the Netherlands with regards to the amount of social housing, this made me decide to take those to cities as case studies. They both neither have the highest nor the lowest percentage of corporation-owned rental housing. Furthermore, where it might seem more logical to base the study upon neighbourhoods in Amsterdam because this city is more well-known to the public and has been subject to more academic research in this field, I deliberately chose not to study this city. Over the past few years the housing market in Amsterdam has been under extreme pressure which has its implications for social housing as well. The average housing prices for Amsterdam in the fourth quarter of 2016 were 22,9% higher than in the same quarter the year before. For Arnhem and Groningen those percentages were 10,1% and 12% respectively (König, 2017), which both are much closer to the national average (NVM, 2017). This would mean that attitudes towards social housing in Amsterdam could be highly influenced by the current situation and therefore not give a representative image for Dutch cities. The neighbourhoods in Groningen and Arnhem I chose to base the study upon are the following. The percentages are all from 'CBS in uw buurt' (2013).

Groningen (Figure 1 in appendix): I interviewed residents of Schildersbuurt (9% of social housing in 2013) about the adjacent Kostverloren (58% of social housing in 2013) (Table 1 in appendix). I also interviewed residents of Ulgersmabuurt (9% of social housing in 2013) about the adjacent Oosterparkbuurt (87% of social housing in 2013) (Table 2 in appendix).

Arnhem (Figure 2): I interviewed residents of Elderhof (9% of social housing in 2013) about the adjacent Elderveld-Noord (85% of social housing in 2013) (Table 3 in appendix). I also interviewed residents of Elden (28% of social housing in 2013) about Malburgen (West, East-North, and East-South, 56% of social housing in 2013) (Table 4 in appendix).

Table 5 shows the percentage of elderly people (65+) and allochthonous residents per neighbourhood in 2013. It also shows the purchasing power of residents in the neighbourhood in 2013. It shows that there are only small differences in percentages of elderly people between the targeted neighbourhoods. However, the differences of non-Western allochthonous residents between the neighbourhoods are clearly visible. These percentages are all higher in the neighbourhoods with the majority being social housing. Logically, the purchasing power is lower in the neighbourhoods with more social housing. Crime rates per neighbourhood were not readily available, and could therefore not be implemented as complementary information about the neighbourhoods in this thesis.

The data used comes from 2013 because this was the most recent CBS had complete data available on this topic. However, this is not problematic because of the still very small annual changes in amounts of social housing. For example, for Groningen this was a decrease of 0,38% from 2013 to 2014 and for Arnhem this was an increase of 1,13% from 2013 to 2014 (Rijksoverheid 2016).

Table 5: Percentage of elderly, non-Western allochthonous people, and purchasing power per neighbourhood in 2013

Core statistics Areas and Neighbourhoods 2013						
Subjects	Population	Population	Income			
Subjects	Age groups	Allochtonous people	Income of households			
Onderwerpen	65 years or older	Non-Western	Households with low purchasing power			
Onderwerpen	65 years or older	Non-Western total	Households with low purchasing power			
Regions	%	%	%			
Schildersbuurt	7	6	15			
Kostverloren	10	10	22			
Oosterparkbuurt	12	17	31			
Ulgersmabuurt	7	5	.			
Malburgen West	8	38	23			
Wijk 17 Malburgen Oost (Noord)	10	26	17			
Wijk 18 Malburgen Oost (Zuid)	18	43	26			
Elden	29	4	.			
Elderveld-Noord	19	26	19			
Elderhof	13	7	.			
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Results

As mentioned before, the study focused on four aspects of neighbourhood impact of social housing, crime, poverty, ethnical segregation and amenity provision. In this section I will analyse the 16 interviews to get a general idea of attitude towards these four aspects.

Crime

Elderveld-Noord, Arnhem

The participants from Elderhof, Arnhem all noted that they did not feel a noticeable difference in crime in Elderveld-Noord compared to their own neighbourhood. However, this does not mean that no one noticed crime. As one of the participants noticed that in one of the flats a lot of drug deals had taken place, which is why they closed the storage basements. This is in line with Newman's theory of defensible space (Newman, 1973). Those residents have less of a sense of ownership or responsibility for a particular space, in this case the flat, so crime rates tend to be higher. One of the participants called it "a big pile of people", and another one described it as "a lack of human measure". This means that in this case, the physical design of the subsidized housing unit makes for more crime, which is mentioned by Freeman and Botein as one of the reasons why social housing might contribute to neighbourhood crime (Freeman and Botein, 2002).

Malburgen, Arnhem

As far as crime in Malburgen concerns, it was mentioned twice that there were more burglaries than there were in Elden. More drug related problematics was mentioned once. The other two participants did not notice any more crime in Malburgen than in Elden. In Malburgen the crime that was noticed was not necessarily being related to the neighbourhood design, but more to the population. Nevertheless, the neighbourhood design was mentioned as being "social housing-like", "flats and ugly low-rise", "20 under one roof", and "close together". Over the past few decades corporations have broken down old buildings and started building new houses to get rid of the social problems in Malburgen. This was seen as changing the image of the neighbourhood in a very positive way, but was not necessarily viewed as a contributing factor in solving the social problems. As one of the other participants notes:

"But did [the new buildings] do any good to the neighbourhood? I don't think so. However, the street became nicer"

This means that there is a difference in perception of the problems. One would expect the physical outlook of the housing to be perceived as a disamenity due to its correlation with social problematics, following Newman's theory (Newman, 1973). Most of the neighbourhood design in Malburgen would not be considered to be defensible, and therefore would allow for higher crime rates. However, in this specific case neighbourhood design is considered as separate from the social problems taking place.

Kostverloren, Groningen

The residents of Schildersbuurt, Groningen generally had a very neutral, or even positive image of Kostverloren. The neighbourhood was mentioned to be very safe, and on the same level as their own neighbourhood when it comes to crime. Only in one case, more drug related crime was mentioned by one of the participants' children.

Oosterparkbuurt, Groningen

One of the main aspects of Oosterparkbuurt being mentioned by residents of Ulgersmaborg is that the neighbourhood crime has decreased a lot over the past few decades, but the image among most residents of Groningen remains the same. Two participants mention the crime just being contained within Oosterparkwijk, and therefore not having any effect on Ulgersmaborg. But one of the

participants mentions youth coming from Oosterparkbuurt, using Ulgersmaborg as a passageway to go to neighbourhoods on the other side of Ulgersmaborg, bringing crime into Ulgersmaborg. The infrastructure and location are in such a way that crime is by some seen as a negative spillover from Oosterparkbuurt into their own neighbourhood. In this case, the population of the neighbourhood is regarded as being more prone to crime, whereas neighbourhood design was not mentioned to be causing more crime.

Poverty

Elderveld-Noord, Arnhem

In Elderhof, two of the participants noticed a difference in residents of the two flats in Elderveld-Noord. One of the flats was mainly inhabited by the elderly, and people with mental and physical problems, whereas the other one was mainly inhabited by younger families and students. The atmosphere around the flat with the younger residents was considered to be more uninviting compared to the other flat. This had to do with the outlook, which was considered decently taken care of in the flat with the elderly and very messy in the flat with the younger residents. This shows that for this particular neighbourhood there is an image of a deserving and an undeserving poor (Katz, 1986) living in separate housing units. However, in this case it is not just the notion of two different population groups, but also different ways in which they take care of their environment.

Malburgen, Arnhem

The crime that was mentioned in Malburgen seems to be related to the poverty concentration in the neighbourhood. The image of the population in Malburgen differed amongst the participants. Groups mentioned were "Elderly autochtonous Dutch people", "People with no social network", "People in need of help with everyday activities", "Lower educated", and "working class". As for example "in need of help with everyday activities" already implies, these groups would be considered to be the deserving poor (Katz, 1986). But in Malburgen, this population was also perceived as being more prone to crime, which partly gives the neighbourhood its negative image. One of the participants also felt that this population was causing there to be fewer social control, which would also increase crime rate.

Kostverloren, Groningen

Three out of four participants had a neutral to positive image about the neighbourhoods' population, which could therefore be regarded as deserving (Katz, 1986). The fourth participant had a negative image of the population of Kostverloren, which could mainly be attributed to unhealthy lifestyles and antisocial behaviour. However, she did show empathy for their situation of poverty, and the fact that they probably did not live in social housing by own choice. As far as this demographics of this population concerns, they were seen to be mainly white "true Groningers", and the elderly.

Oosterparkbuurt, Groningen

The population of Oosterparkbuurt was characterized by a "homogeneity" of "Elderly people", and "lower income-class". These could be identified as deserving poor, but there is also a large group of "drug addicts", "alcoholics", and "structurally unemployed" mentioned, whereas these unemployed did not seem to have any mental or physical problems. One of the participants states:

"[I grew up there] There was a lot of unemployment. In the winter there was one path that was walked on, and that was our path. The rest [of the street] did not work"

This indicates that for this neighbourhood there is a particular separation between deserving and undeserving poor in the image of the neighbourhood. On the other hand, it was mentioned twice that Oosterparkbuurt had a "cosy" character and was seen as more "social". As a result of this more social

control was seen, which prevents burglaries from happening, and making the neighbourhood safer. The fact that renovations had been taking place over the past decades and new houses had been built was known to all four participants. This was seen as improvement of the neighbourhood design and crime. However, one of the participants did not have a positive attitude towards it, because the new housing was not affordable for the current population anymore. So, as the population became more mixed in terms of income, the general attitude changed positively, but in a single case it was the other way around. In this case a more heterogeneous population, and therefore less concentration of one population group, is not considered improving to a neighbourhood.

Ethnical segregation

Elderveld-Noord, Arnhem

When it comes to ethnical segregation in Elderveld-Noord there was only a small to no noticeable difference in ethnicities of residents of the neighbourhoods according to the participants. Only two of the participants said they noticed this difference, but it was not considered a disamenity, as one of the participants states:

"[Multi-culturality] is not a problem, that is fine, it can also be good sometimes"

Malburgen, Arnhem

A mixture of elderly and a large Turkish/Moroccan community was mentioned by three participants. This means that a concentration of ethnical groups was perceived, which is one dimension of residential segregation (Massey and Denton, 1988). Where one of the participants saw these ethnical groups mainly consisting of younger generations, another said they were mainly Turkish and Moroccan elderly, and again another one just mentioned there to be more foreigners. However, the image of parts of the neighbourhood where these groups seemed to reside, was not influenced by one of the population groups in particular, but was rather seen as unattractive or uninviting due to the mixture of many different population groups. As one of the participants notes:

"You do not go live in a neighbourhood where all different sorts of people live together"

Clearly, this marks a social problem rather than a problem of poor neighbourhood design. This social problem, however, makes none of the participants feel more unsafe in the neighbourhood.

Kostverloren, Groningen

Ethnical segregation in Kostverloren was not mentioned by any of the participants. The lack of concentration of certain ethnical minorities might be of importance to why this neighbourhood is regarded relatively positive. However, the amount of exposure between populations of both neighbourhoods was still very low. This means that residential segregation is perceived only to a certain extent if we follow the model by Massey and Denton (Massey and Denton, 1988).

Oosterparkbuurt, Groningen

More different ethnicities than in own neighbourhood was mentioned, which did not seem to be changing with the improvement of the neighbourhood, and was neither seen as a negative or positive characteristic. This means that concentration was perceived to some extent, but actual segregation was not mentioned because exposure of these groups to other population groups was still seen. On the other hand, there was little exposure between the two studied neighbourhoods' populations.

Overall amenity provision

Elderveld-Noord, Arnhem

The most important finding in Elderhof is that participants did not seem to really know the Elderveld-Noord, as they did not go there very often because of the uninviting, unsafe, or unhomely atmosphere in comparison to their own neighbourhood. This causes a lack of exposure between the neighbourhoods. These notions describe negative feelings, which were not only being attributed to the flats, but could also be linked to the concentration of a socio-economic class in the adjacent neighbourhood (Massey and Denton, 1988). This class was described by the participants as being the "working class". A direct effect of affordable housing would be to attract people of lower income classes, but this population group was actually considered to be more prone to making the neighbourhood into a mess by one of the participants. Other participants also noticed that the neighbourhood was more "messy" in terms of thrash laying around. An unorganized environment has earlier been shown to have a negative effect on social cohesion (Ellaway, Macintyre and Kearns, 2001), which might in this case have an effect on the uninviting or unhomely feeling.

Overall, the neighbourhood in general was not seen as a disamenity. The neighbourhood design and overall messiness, however, were. Most facilities were the same for both neighbourhoods, as they are so close together. On the other hand, when asked if Elderveld-Noord could possibly have a negative effect on Elderhof in any possible way, one participant said this could not be, because of the distance between both neighbourhoods. As he states:

"See, people worry if there is a trailer park being built right across the street, then my property value will go down"

This marks a geographically measurable distance in which housing with a negative image could have an effect on property value, but neither crime, poverty, ethnical segregation, nor neighbourhood design were mentioned to potentially be of any effect on their own neighbourhood. However, other neighbourhoods in Arnhem were mentioned as "worse" neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood of Malburgen, hereafter discussed, was three times mentioned in this manner.

Malburgen, Arnhem

The reason most participants in Elden do not go to Malburgen very often is in this case distance. Even though Elden itself has hardly any facilities, they mostly go to a place that is more easily accessible. All in all, the neighbourhood of Malburgen was not perceived to be a disamenity to their own neighbourhood, as the distance between the neighbourhoods was perceived as large. Negative spillover in neither crime, poverty or ethnical segregation from Malburgen into Elden was mentioned once. The neighbourhood improved a lot due to a newly built shopping mall, which made the facilities in Malburgen even better than in Elden, according to two of the participants. Also, newly built housing had had a positive effect on the neighbourhood's attractiveness.

Kostverloren, Groningen

The housing in the neighbourhood was considered to be smaller, and not as beautiful as the housing in their own neighbourhood, but that was mainly because the participants just preferred older architecture to newer architecture. The architecture in Kostverloren was called "Messy", "Three-story flats", and "post war-like" which gave the neighbourhood a slightly more uninviting atmosphere, but all four participants deemed social housing necessary and were therefore not negative towards the general concept of it. This attitude resulted in a very rational way of viewing the neighbourhood in most of the participants. This meant that the possible social problems could mostly not be attributed to the social housing itself, but were results of growing up in poverty. As one of the participants notes:

"So, there definitely is a problem, neighbourhoods, but that is always the result of low literacy, debts and unemployment. So, it is always about the social problematics that [social housing] is surrounded by"

These problems tend to be higher in population groups where poverty is also higher, so it is just seen as a logical result of poverty.

Facilities in the neighbourhood were viewed as being good, as they have their own shopping mall, and parks and greenspace which seemed to be maintained "decently". Also, mentioned twice was that there were neither positive nor negative spillover effects from Kostverloren into Schildersbuurt in any of the categories because there is a main road running in between. This road acted as a "barrier" between the neighbourhoods, which caused Kostverloren to be closed off from Schildersbuurt. The relative absence of crime and ethnical segregation, together with the notion of a population consisting mainly of deserving poor and a good facility provision makes Kostverloren the most positively regarded one of the four studied neighbourhoods. The architecture of the buildings was one of the few negative aspects mentioned by all four participants, but the maintenance was viewed as "decent" and two participants mentioned the abundance of greenspace and parks as a good thing about the neighbourhood. This positive attitude can be placed within Jacobs' theory about walkability of a space (Jacobs, 1961). Although none of the participants admitted to go to Kostverloren very often, the lack of exposure between the neighbourhoods did not seem to have a negative effect on the perception of Kostverloren by residents of Schildersbuurt. Again, "worse" neighbourhoods in Groningen in terms of crime and ethnical concentration were mentioned by three of the participants. Oosterparkbuurt, also subject of this study, was twice mentioned.

Oosterparkbuurt, Groningen

Facilities and neighbourhood design in Oosterparkbuurt were perceived as really good, and in some cases even better than in their own neighbourhood. "Old Amsterdam-style housing", "Beautifully renovated", and "Great parks, greenspace and playgrounds", but "Very close together" were mentioned. The majority of the participants saw these factors as the same or even better than in their own neighbourhood, but attributed this to the subsidies Oosterparkbuurt had gotten over the past decades because of its problematic past. The amount of greenspace and playgrounds was seen as positively changing the neighbourhood, and in some cases even be of a positive effect to Ulgersmaborg, as the parks attracted people from other neighbourhoods as well, and gave the neighbourhood less of an unsafe character. This is in compliance with Jacobs' theory about walkability and permeability (Jacobs, 1961)

Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to find the attitudes of neighbouring residents towards neighbourhoods with social housing in the fields of crime, poverty, ethnical segregation and overall amenity provision. Firstly, as far as crime concerns, in some neighbourhoods an unsafe atmosphere was mentioned. This unsafe atmosphere was mostly caused by a perceived increase in burglaries and drug related crime, whereas the uninviting atmosphere is mostly caused by the neighbourhood design. The architecture in most neighbourhoods was seen as homogeneous, close together and high-rise. Those characteristics did not only give the neighbourhoods a particularly negative outlook, but was also linked to crime in one of the neighbourhoods, which is in accordance with the defensible space theory by Newman (Newman, 1973). However, in the other neighbourhoods crime was mostly related to poverty within the population, not to neighbourhood design and architecture.

Secondly, what these results indicate is that the general perception of poverty and "the poor" is closely linked to what people think of neighbourhoods with social housing. For example, the general perception of Kostverloren indicated that there were not a lot of social problems seen, and the described poverty in this neighbourhood could be mainly characterised as deserving. This resulted in

a particularly rational and positive attitude towards social housing in general. On the contrary, more crime was perceived in neighbourhoods where larger groups of undeserving poor were living. Alcohol and drug users, youths and the structurally unemployed were generally seen as most undeserving, which resulted in more negative attitudes towards neighbourhoods in which those groups were better represented. Therefore, these results seem to indicate that immigrants are not the population group towards which the least solidarity is felt.

Thirdly, and building on the previous section, the attitude towards ethnical minorities was often neutral or even positive. Ethnical diversity was by some seen as something positive on itself, as it makes neighbourhoods more mixed, but was mostly seen neither as a positive nor a negative factor. One should, however, take into account that some of the participants might not have felt comfortable with expressing a strong opinion on this subject because of the current political sensitivity of it.

Finally, in all the cases there was a general lack of exposure between the neighbourhoods. Mainly because of physical barriers as distance and main roads running in between, but also because the facility provision in the neighbourhoods with a lot of social housing was mostly seen as being at the same level or even better than in their own neighbourhood, so both neighbourhoods could function independently. The results also show that overall "messiness" of neighbourhoods plays a role in the attitudes of neighbours. Both messiness in terms of thrash laying around as well as messiness with regards to architecture were mentioned in the majority of the neighbourhoods. On the other hand, presence of greenspace and parks tend to improve exposure between neighbourhoods. Participants from both neighbourhoods in Groningen mentioned they liked to cycle, run, or walk through these neighbourhoods because of the greenspace. Also, the lack of greenspace and parks in the neighbourhoods of Arnhem kept participants from visiting these neighbourhoods.

The purpose of this thesis was to give an indication of the attitudes that surrounding neighbours have towards neighbourhoods with a lot of social housing. Diversity in attitudes generally stems from differences in the solidarity towards the poor. This is why a "right" mixture of residents could positively influence neighbourhoods. Therefore it would be interesting for future research to analyse in which ways the allocation of residents is influenced by housing corporations and municipalities. This would also be very interesting in light of the new 'Wet bijzondere maatregelen grootstedelijke problematiek'.

Literature

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Appendix

Table 1: Percentage of housing owned by corporation per neighbourhood in 2013, Schildersbuurt and Kostverloren

Core Statistics Areas and Neighbourhoods 2013					
Subjects	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing
Subjects	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property
Subjects	Owner based housing	Rental housing	Rental housing	Rental housing	Property unknown
Subjects	Owner based housing	Rental housing total	Property of housing corporation	Property of remaining renters	Property unknown
Regions	%	%	%	%	%
Schildersbuurt	39	48	9	39	13
Kostverloren	28	71	58	13	1
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Table 2: Percentage of housing owned by corporation per neighbourhood in 2013, Ulgersmaborg and Oosterparkbuurt

Core Statistics Areas and Neighbourhoods 2013					
Subjects	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing
Subjects	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property
Subjects	Owner based housing	Rental housing	Rental housing	Rental housing	Property unknown
Subjects	Owner based housing	Rental housing total	Property of housing corporation	Property of remaining renters	Property unknown
Regions	%	%	%	%	%
Oosterparkbuurt	5	90	87	3	5
Ulgersmabuurt	84	16	9	7	0
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Table 3: Percentage of housing owned by corporation per neighbourhood in 2013, Elderhof and Elderveld-Noord

Core Statistics Areas and Neighbourhoods 2013					
Subjects	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing
Subjects	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property
Subjects	Owner based housing	Rental housing	Rental housing	Rental housing	Property unknown
Subjects	Owner based housing	Rental housing total	Property of housing corporation	Property of remaining renter	Property unknown
Regio's	%	%	%	%	%
Elderveld-Noord	14	86	85	1	0
Elderhof	86	14	9	4	0
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Table 4: Percentage of housing owned by corporation per neighbourhood in 2013, Elden and Malburgen

Core Statistics Areas and Neighbourhoods 2013					
Subjects	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing
Subjects	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property	Housing property
Subjects	Owner based housing	Rental housing	Rental housing	Rental housing	Property unknown
Subjects	Owner based housing	Rental housing total	Property of housing corporation	Property of remaining renters	Property unknown
Regions	%	%	%	%	%
Malburgen West	41	59	54	5	0
Wijk 17 Malburgen Oost (Noord)	48	50	38	11	2
Wijk 18 Malburgen Oost (Zuid)	19	79	71	8	2
Elden	59	38	28	10	4
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Interview Guide

Can you tell me something about yourself/yourselves?
- Age?
- Marital status?
- Kids?

How long have you been living in this particular house/apartment/room?

Can you tell me something about [specified neighbourhood]?

- History of houses/apartments/rooms?
- Demographics of the neighbourhood?
- Social events in the neighbourhood?

What do you think about [specified neighbourhood]?

- Aesthetics?
- Amenities?
- Social events?

Can you compare your own neighbourhood with [specified neighbourhood]?

What do you think about its residents?

Are you aware that many of the houses in [specified neighbourhood] are owned by housing corporations?

A recent study (Woo and Joh, 2015) suggests that crime tends to be mitigated in neighbourhoods with one or more social housing projects. What is your opinion of this statement regarding [specified neighbourhood]?
- Crime within neighbourhood with social housing, or in surrounding neighbourhood?

How do you think [Specified neighbourhood] is seen by most of the residents of the rest of the city?
- Do you agree with this image, and why (not)?

Do you see any changes in ethnicities of the residents in [specified neighbourhood]?
- If yes, do you think this could be related to the social housing?
  - If yes, in what way?

What are your opinions on the efforts the corporation is putting into [specified neighbourhood]?
- Of which projects are you aware?
- Do you think they are improving the neighbourhood?
  - If yes, in what sense?
  - If no, why could that be?

How do you think the corporation can improve the neighbourhood better?

Do you have anything you want to add about the neighbourhood or the operating corporation?

Coding Scheme:

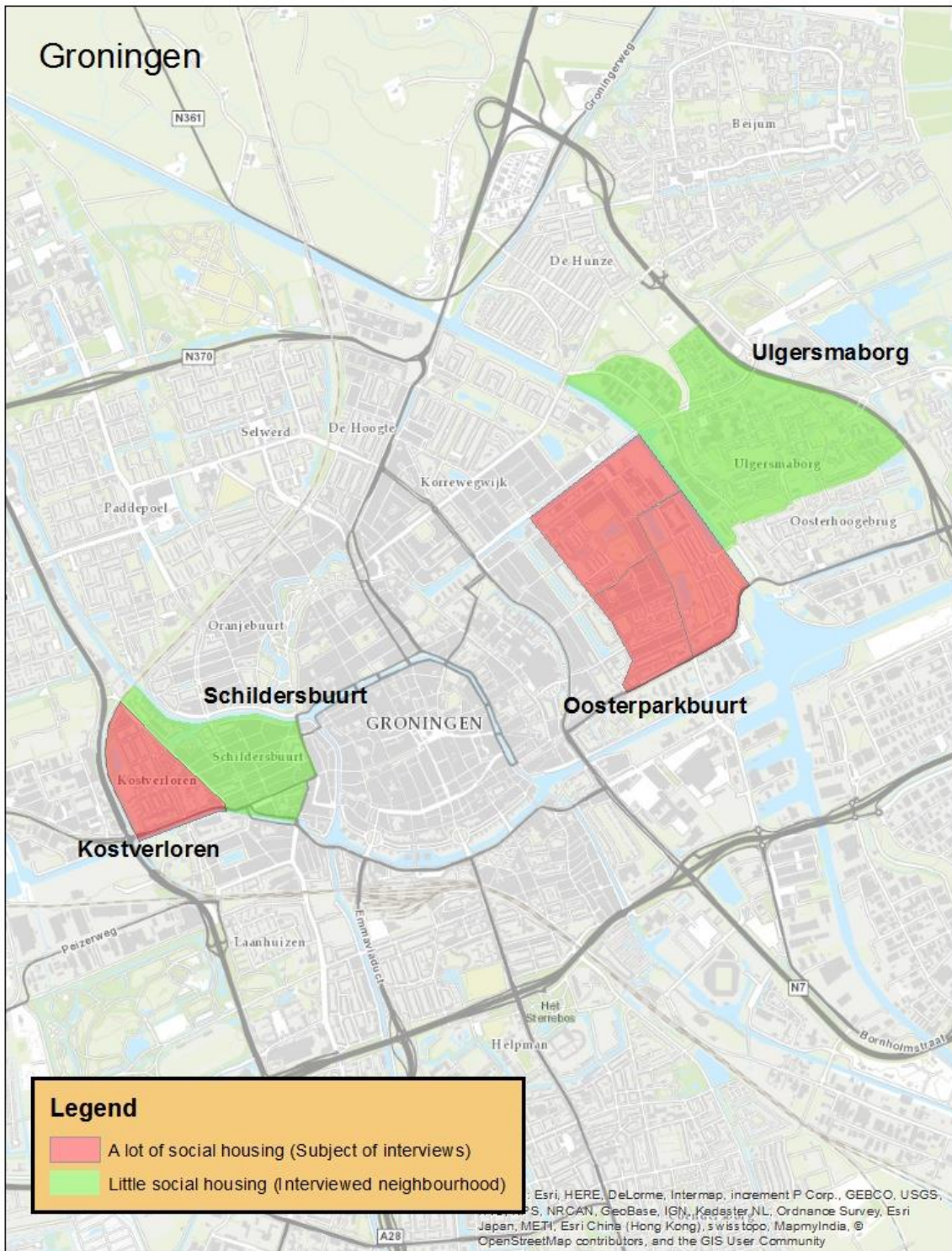| Crime increase in neighbourhood with subsidized housing (Newman, 1973 (in Freeman and Botein, 2002))	Crime increase in surrounding neighbourhoods (Freeman and Botein, 2002)
Deserving poor residing in neighbourhood (Katz, 1986)	Undeserving poor residing in neighbourhood (Katz, 1986)
Image of "poverty concentration" only for neighbourhood with social housing	Image of "poverty concentration" spilling over in surrounding neighbourhood
Ethnical segregation happening in neighbourhood with social housing (Freeman and Botein, 2002)	No ethnical segregation happening in neighbourhood with social housing (Freeman and Botein, 2002)
Neighbourhood design (typical for social housing (high-rise super blocks)) (Freeman and Botein, 2002) Also; effect on neighbourhood	Neighbourhood design (not typical for social housing (no high-rise super blocks)) (Freeman and Botein, 2002)
More amenities compared to own neighbourhood	Less amenities compared to own neighbourhood
More social events compared to own neighbourhood	Less social events compared to own neighbourhood
Positive attitude towards neighbourhood with social housing in general	Negative attitude towards neighbourhood with social housing in general (Messy)
Positive attitude towards residents of neighbourhood with social housing	Negative attitude towards residents of neighbourhood with social housing
Positive attitude towards social housing in general	Negative attitude towards social housing in general
-Mention of "worse neighbourhood" in the same city	

Figure 1:

Figure 2: