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Moving Out and Going Down?

A Review of Recent Evidence on Negative Spillover Effects of Housing Restructuring Programs in the United States and the Netherlands

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Abstract: *Comparing US and Dutch experiences, this paper seeks to determine whether the demolition of public or social housing results in negative spillover effects, i.e. the shift of crime and other social problems to nearby neighbourhoods, as a result of residential relocation patterns. Notwithstanding fundamental contextual differences, existing research shows that many relocatees do recluster in low-income areas not much better than the public or social housing sites they moved from. Furthermore US and Dutch research highlights concern among public officials, politicians and community activists that this clustering is resulting in higher crime, increased neighbourhood dissatisfaction (among existing residents), more conflicts between residents, lower school test scores, etc. Few researchers have, however, been able to go beyond correlations and establish cause-effect relations between the in-movement of public/social housing relocatees and increased social problems. Attempts to identify a statistical threshold for clustering, beyond which negative effects occur, have not been successful. Nevertheless, existing evidence regarding negative spillover effects is compelling enough to warrant expanded and improved monitoring of both relocation and neighbourhood change patterns and to initiate programs to address the concerns of residents in destination areas.*

Key words: spillover effects, restructuring, demolition, relocation, displacement, HOPE VI, vouchers

Introduction

Over the last decades, the United States and several European countries have witnessed substantial neighbourhood renewal programs, which attempt to improve the prospects of deprived neighbourhoods and their residents (e.g. Popkin *et al.*, 2004; Andersson & Musterd, 2005; Lawless, 2006). While there is ample research into the effects of such programs on both target neighbourhoods and the fates of individual residents, regardless of whether they stay or relocate within the restructuring area or move to a different destination, far less attention has been devoted to (unintended) program effects *outside* restructuring areas. Tracking studies of individual relocatees usually cannot establish impacts of these relocatees on *destination* areas of relocation, because the perspective of incumbent residents in these areas is lacking. For example, is crime displaced to other areas as a result of demolition or anti-crime measures in target areas or due to (related) efforts preventing multi-problem families from returning to restructured sites? Or do property values in destination neighbourhoods go down because of uncertainties about the in-migration of public housing relocatees?

Such issues are especially salient for neighbourhood renewal programs which require substantial relocation of residents from public or social housing slated for demolition. The most notable American example is the HOPE VI program (Popkin *et al.*, 2004). In Europe, a clear example is the Dutch program of Urban Restructuring (Musterd & Ostendorf, 2008). A common element is that demolition of public or social housing is accompanied by new construction of more expensive rental and owner-occupied housing, and rehabilitation or replacement of the subsidized housing. As a result of these mixed-tenure and mixed income projects, the majority of the original residents often have to move away from the site (e.g. Buron *et al.*, 2002; Kleinhans, 2003; Popkin

et al., 2004; Curley, 2007). Sometimes, these moves are temporary, but most are permanent, as the number of affordable replacement units is usually lower than the number of units demolished. Another commonality (despite context differences, see next section) is that Dutch Urban Restructuring and HOPE VI combine a people- and a place-based approach, although the balance between these approaches is a matter of dispute. HOPE VI explicitly aims at resident self-sufficiency, empowerment, changing the physical shape of public housing and poverty deconcentration by creating mixed-income communities (Popkin *et al.*, 2004; HUD, 2006, p.83)¹. Dutch Urban Restructuring policy has significantly changed tack since 2006, moving from a primarily area-based program to a much broader renewal strategy which promotes upward social mobility of residents in target areas (Vogelaar, 2007; Musterd & Ostendorf, 2008), i.e. remaining residents and those who will relocate (Curley & Kleinmans, 2010).

There is a widespread perception among politicians, practitioners and community activists, at least in the US and the Netherlands that multi-problem tenants from restructuring areas often move to and recluster in already fragile (nearby) neighbourhoods where they cause incivilities, conflict and crime. Thus, existing residents in destination communities *may* be adversely affected by housing restructuring and mobility programmes through reductions in neighbourhood quality (Johnson *et al.*, 2002). Although multi-problem tenants appear to comprise a minority among relocatees they can make life unbearable for neighbours and destabilise entire buildings or subneighbourhoods (Power, 1997; Smith, 2002; Varady & Schulman, 2007; Kromer, 2009, p. 267). Many Dutch practitioners use the term ‘waterbed’ effects to refer to the displacement of aforementioned phenomena. We will not use this term but stick to the term negative neighbourhood spillover effects, which typically refers to negative effects of the neighbourhood environment on individuals. Precisely because program effects may be felt

outside target areas, these programs should also be evaluated by looking at unintended problems they may cause elsewhere apart from evaluating their target area goals (Andersson & Musterd, 2005, p. 386; Lawless, 2006; Bolt & Van Kempen 2010, p. 160).

In the US, the spillover issue was ignited by a highly controversial July 2008 *Atlantic Monthly* magazine article (Rosin, 2008) that asserted that HOPE VI demolitions have spurred increases in crime in more peripheral and suburban areas in Memphis, Tennessee. The fact that the article led to a rebuttal by 30 leading American scholars underlines the high relevancy of negative spillover effects for both academics and policymakers and practitioners (Briggs & Dreier, 2008). However, there appears to be little proper academic research on this matter.

We have three related research questions. First, to what extent are relocatees from restructured public or social housing clustered spatially? Second, to what extent is the spatial clustering of relocatees linked to higher crime, vandalism, incivilities, reduced property values, and other problems in destination areas? Thirdly, to what extent does the (re)clustering of relocatees actually *cause* such negative spillover effects?

In this paper, we review the Dutch and American literature on negative neighbourhood spillover effects. Our aim is to critically assess the current state of knowledge of these issues. Although we will not systematically compare countries, we will show that, despite fundamental contextual differences, the *discourse* about negative spillovers in both countries is so similar that it calls for a comparison (see also Mollenkopf, 2009, p. 267). Like in the US, Dutch residents increasingly are concerned about neighbourhood population changes through restructuring, as well as crime and disorder, fearing strong neighbourhood decline and “ghettoisation”. Another reason for comparison relates to relocation counselling efforts of frontline workers in both countries. They (implicitly) try to prevent negative spillovers by widening the housing search and by help-

ing to integrate relocatees into their new neighbourhoods (e.g. Galster *et al.*, 2008, p. 129; Curley & Kleinhans, 2010). In sum, it is important for Dutch researchers, policy-makers and practitioners to learn from what is going on in the US and the other way around, while acknowledging the context differences. Although we focus on negative issues, we acknowledge that in some circumstances housing restructuring could lead to *positive* neighbourhood spillovers, e.g. higher property values, less crime and vandalism in streets adjoining a restructuring site, especially if a limited number of ‘problematic’ families move into these nearby areas (Castells, 2010; Zielenbach & Voith, 2010; Goetz, 2010, p.151).

For our review, we conducted a systematic search of literature databases. The next section further explains our search methods and deals with the most important context differences between the countries. Subsequently, we describe the policies and discourses among scientists, policymakers and practitioners in the US and the Netherlands. Then, we deal with the results of our review analysis. The final section presents our conclusions and suggestions for further research.

Search methods and context differences

Methods

Our systematic literature search examined several primary sources: published journal articles, conference reports and other (unpublished) materials, and various news sources (such as magazines and newspapers) about cities dealing with negative spillover effects. Journal articles were found through systematic searches of major databases, including JSTOR, the Social Science Research Network, Ingenta, Econlit, Scopus, ABSIS (architecture, cities, urban development, urban design) Current Contents (ISI), ICONDA (International Construction Database) and Web of Science. We also utilized Google Schol-

ar. We used different combinations of the following search terms: spillover effect*, waterbed, revitali*, public housing, social housing, mobility*, demoli*, relocatee*, reclus-
tering, and HOPE VI. We limited the search to the years 1980-2009. We combed the bibliographies of relevant publications to find other sources and solicited information from the authors and other scholars working on the subject.

An important inclusion/exclusion criterion was that the studies must focus on spillover effects of residential moves of public/social housing *relocatees*, especially those relocating with housing vouchers. Several studies which emerged from our search and concern spillover effects of subsidised (public/social) *housing* on nearby property values (for an overview, see Nguyen, 2005) are not considered in this paper.

Context differences

Notwithstanding similarities in the discourses, there are fundamental contextual differences between the US and the Netherlands. First, whereas the US has a predominantly liberal welfare state regime, the Dutch situation combines elements of a social-democratic and corporatist welfare state regime (Hoekstra, 2003). These differences have impacted not only housing provision and policy, but also the nature of urban restructuring programmes. The Netherlands has traditionally engaged in high levels of state intervention in housing and welfare policies, emphasising equal opportunities and a balance between social and private housing. Unlike in Europe, housing is not a fundamental right in the US, but primarily a consumption good. The private sector has built most houses, even though the local and federal government has regulated the size and location of new housing (Curley & Kleinhans, 2010). All in all, the US federal government has much less influence over housing policies than the Dutch government. Most strikingly, social housing constitutes a far higher proportion of Dutch housing stock

(32% i.e. 2.25 million units) than public housing does in the US (2% i.e. 1.2 million units). Simply in numbers, Dutch relocatees have more options (choice) to move within the social/public housing sector than American tenants.

Second, the income distribution within public and social housing varies. This is partly the result of differences in redistributive effects of the welfare state regimes. Despite an increasing concentration of low-income households in the Dutch social rented sector (Van Ham *et al.*, 2006), many households with above-average incomes reside in social rented housing, for reasons explained elsewhere (Van Kempen & Priemus, 2002). In the US, income limits for public housing are much more strictly monitored. Hence, demolition of Dutch social housing less frequently implies relocating low-income residents than in the US. Overall, many Dutch low-income relocatees are not close to poverty by US standards. The above implies that relocatees' destination in the US is primarily a function of market constraints (i.e. location of qualifying private rental units and landlords who will rent to voucher holders). In the Netherlands, it is mostly a function of housing allocation processes and vacant social units.

Third, we note that the incidence of social problems, stigmatisation and the share of multi-problem families are often much higher in US restructuring areas than in the Netherlands. The actual severity of problems that spill may therefore differ strongly. Destination area residents in both countries may be upset because of problems very different in severity, but connected to the different context quite "justified" in their own situation. Thus, the hypothesis that forced relocation causes negative spillovers can still be tested in both countries.

A fourth difference is the composition of the relocation group. Although the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) is often seen as part of a broader poverty deconcentration strategy, in reality voucher users choose where to live and many move

to higher-poverty areas (see also Goetz, 2010, p. 149). US neighbourhoods facing negative spillovers may experience in-migration of relocatees from demolished public housing *and/or* regular voucher users. As for the Dutch discourse, we will illustrate its focus on relocatees from demolished housing.

Finally, whereas blacks and, to a lesser extent, Hispanics are disproportionately represented among public housing residents in the US, Surinamese, Moroccan, and Turkish immigrants are disproportionately represented among social housing residents in the Netherlands. Thus, actual negative spillover effects will be connected to different ethnic groups in both countries and the responses of indigenous residents are likely to be affected by their attitudes toward these groups.

Policies and discourses in the US and the Netherlands

United States

The issue of negative spillover effects in the US is connected to a broader national discourse about the locational trends of voucher housing. This is so because many of those who are relocated from public housing restructuring sites receive housing vouchers. Around 1980 American low-income housing policy shifted from subsidies to developers to tenant subsidies, that is, housing vouchers. Concerns about spatial concentration of voucher recipients have steadily grown over the last 15 years as US cities have implemented HOPE VI public housing restructuring policies (see e.g. Kingsley *et al.*, 2003). HOPE VI (*Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere*) was established in 1993 to redevelop the ‘most severely distressed’ public housing projects in the nation (Goetz, 2003; Popkin *et al.*, 2004). Amongst others, policy measures include demolition of pro-

ject-based public housing, the relocation of residents via vouchers to the private market, and the development of mixed-income replacement housing.

Over time, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has expanded its use of the *Housing Choice Voucher Program* (HCVP, formerly known as Section 8) to relocate tenants from HOPE VI. The HCVP is unique among HUD's housing subsidy programs as it makes use of the *private* rental market to assist low-income families in need of affordable rental housing (Devine *et al.*, 2003, p.1). By 2006, when funding was greatly reduced, HOPE VI had demolished more than 78,000 units, and 10,400 additional units were in line for redevelopment. Of the 103,600 replacement units being constructed, only 57,100 will be "deeply subsidized" public housing units (Popkin *et al.*, 2004). In other words, "there is no one-for-one replacement requirement, only some demolished units are earmarked for low-income replacement units, with the rest defined as either affordable or market-rate housing, both beyond the economic means of former public-housing tenants. Thus [...], many relocated residents cannot move back" (Oakley & Burchfield, 2009, p. 590). Return rates of relocatees to redeveloped HOPE VI sites range from approximately 19 to 46 per cent, with a few exceptions above these figures (Buron *et al.*, 2002; Smith, 2002; Popkin *et al.* 2004; Curley, 2007; Oakley & Burchfield, 2009).

Already in the early 1990s, academics raised concerns that an injection of new poor residents (for example through forced relocation) would increase social maladies in receiving neighbourhoods (Kingsley *et al.*, 2003, p. 428). Recently, the spatial distribution of voucher recipients stemming from public housing restructuring has also come under (popular) media scrutiny in terms of perceived impacts of voucher concentration on neighbourhoods (Briggs & Dreir, 2008; Eckholm, 2008; Moore, 2008; Rosin, 2008, Venkatesh, 2008; Husock, 2010). Rosin's controversial *Atlantic Monthly* article "Amer-

ican Murder Mystery” (2008) argues that in Memphis HOPE VI relocatees with vouchers were responsible for a sharp rise in gang violence and murders in suburban and suburban-type communities. While this article does not produce compelling empirical evidence, it highlights the intense community conflict over voucher clustering in some neighbourhoods. Moreover, HOPE VI is not the first example of housing officials responding to community concerns about concentrated subsidised housing. In Denver officials limited the density of scattered-site public housing in response to resident concerns (Galster *et al.*, 2003). Goetz (2003) notes that this media scrutiny and community opposition is hardly surprising in the light of widely publicized scientific writings on concentrated poverty. Newspapers and other media have picked up these themes. Suburban residents reading about reports on poverty concentration have become more attuned to possible effects on their communities stemming from subsidized housing or demolition-related move-ins.

The HOPE VI programme recognises that residents’ needs and concerns should be taken seriously in order to minimise any negative impacts of forced relocation, whether on relocatees themselves or on destination areas. Through its Community and Supportive Services (CSS) component, HOPE VI intends to promote residents’ self-sufficiency by providing services such as case management, computer education, job search support and child care assistance. These services are combined with relocation counselling focussed on finding suitable replacement units (Curley & Kleinhans, 2010; see also Galster *et al.*, 2008, p. 129).

Strategies to minimise negative neighbourhood impacts may also concern or assist landlords. Examples are screening out potential problem tenants, responding to landlord complaints and helping them to remove problem tenants if necessary. Other strategies include monitoring and responding to community complaints and enforce-

ment of HUD's Drug-Free Lease Addendum which allows managers to evict leaseholders if they or their guests are involved with narcotics sale, use, or possession, on the property or otherwise (Turner *et al.*, 2000, p. 19; Marr, 2005; Husock, 2010). These strategies could help in reducing objections by landlords and destination neighbourhood residents about in-migrants with vouchers.

Netherlands

The Netherlands has recently witnessed a strong political debate about negative spillover effects. Dutch restructuring policy has aimed to increase the variety and attractiveness of residential environments in early post-war neighbourhoods and to strengthen their reputation and housing market position (MVRM, 1997; Kleinhans, 2004). Housing associations are key actors; they own almost all social rented housing in post-war areas earmarked for restructuring.

Since 1997, more than 150,000 social rented dwellings have been demolished. The number of new construction units is even higher, although the majority of the replacement units are more expensive rental or owner-occupied dwellings (Curley & Kleinhans, 2010). In reaction to this policy, "most commentators agreed that mixing was not going to solve or reduce the problems of the most deprived people in the area and that people and their problems risk simply being moved around" (Kullberg & Kull-Glasgow, 2009, p. 85) or warn that "the problem that disappeared from an area with concentrated poverty might show up in another area of less concentrated poverty" (Musterd & Pinkster, 2009, p. 43).

Recently, the discussion has been re-ignited in the context of the national '40 Neighbourhoods Approach' (*40-wijkenaanpak*, see Priemus 2008), which contains a physical restructuring component. Politicians and policymakers have been keenly aware

of the potential danger of negative spillover effects through forced relocation, commonly referred to as ‘waterbed effects’ (Tweede Kamer, 2008; Vogelaar, 2008a, 2008b; Cornelissen *et al.* 2009, p. 11; Leidelmeijer *et al.*, 2009). Basically, they fear (re)concentration of relocatees in other, potentially vulnerable neighbourhood close to restructuring areas, increasing market pressure and less choice for house seekers. Politicians and policymakers were worried enough about negative spillover effects to commission a baseline measurement for a periodical ‘waterbed effect monitor’ (see Leidelmeijer *et al.* 2009). Unfortunately, the discussions concerning uneven dispersal and (re)concentration of relocatees do not distinguish between deprived residents, ethnic minorities, multi-problem families and residents causing incivilities or nuisance. Whereas only the latter category is troublesome by definition, the (concentrated) presence of these four groups is often considered problematic, both by policymakers and other residents (Kleinhans & Slob, 2008, p. 123).² Relocating these groups, whether inherently problematic or not, is assumed to create negative spillovers. In a recent interview, professor Musterd of the University of Amsterdam claimed that the majority of forced relocatees do not create problems. However, he stated that policy attention should be explicitly targeted to a small group of ‘troublemakers’ causing a substantial spillover effect (Van der Bol, 2010, *translation ours*). This reflects a general awareness that relocatees should not automatically be equated with multi-problem families, but that small numbers of the latter merit serious attention.

Another important issue connected to the Dutch spillover discussion concerns choice and return rates. Like in the US, many relocatees cannot return to new, more expensive rental or owner-occupied housing units. Yet, substantial numbers may still move within or return to their previous neighbourhood, either to a new or existing affordable social housing unit. This is facilitated by legal compensation mechanisms for

relocatees, such as a priority status on the market for social housing (see Kleinhans, 2003; Kleinhans & Van der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2008; Bolt *et al.*, 2009). Generally, intra-neighbourhood and return moves range between nil and 65 per cent, with an average of approximately 20 to 30 per cent (KEI, 2006). Usually, the share of residents actually returning is much lower than the share with a pre-move stated preference to return to the neighbourhood, for reasons explained elsewhere (Swart, 2005; Kleinhans & Slob, 2008). The above demonstrates that many restructuring areas are simultaneously destination areas (considering the intra-neighbourhood turnover). Often, the Dutch discourse does not properly distinguish restructuring and destination areas. This adds to the aforementioned confusion about different categories of problematic residents.

A third relocation spillover issue is housing market pressure. Local and national policymakers worry that the compensation mechanisms for forced movers increase the already strong pressure on the urban housing market (Kleinhans & Van der Laan Bouma Doff, 2008). Increased competition between forced movers and regular, non-urgent house seekers may harm housing opportunities and choice of especially the latter group (Van Kempen & Priemus, 2002, p. 247). Simultaneously, competition between movers with an urgency status may decrease relocation options for multi-problem families. They may increasingly end up in neighbourhoods which are already vulnerable to decline (cf. Van Bergeijk *et al.*, 2008).

Lately, there has been increasing interest in providing more intensive relocation counselling and supportive services in order to minimise negative household and neighbourhood impacts. Renewal actors are experimenting with house visits to residents. They no longer wait until people seek their advice or help, but actively approach these people, in conjunction with regular relocation counselling (Curley & Kleinhans, 2010). In restructuring areas of big cities, 'behind-the-front-door' approaches have been con-

sciously enacted not only to limit negative effects of the forced move on residents themselves, but also to prevent negative spillover effects arising from forced relocation. Notably, the success of this approach has not yet been established (Cornelissen *et al.*, 2009).

Results from studies on negative spillover effects

United States

The US studies that appeared in our literature search refer to several specific spillover effects in destination areas. Crime displacement is most often mentioned (sometimes in conjunction with lower school test scores), followed by community conflict and impacts on property values. Before we deal with these issues, we look at the evidence for clustering of relocatees and the issue of “hard to house” families among HOPE VI relocatees (Popkin *et al.* 2004, 2004).

Earlier, we showed that clustering is perceived as a highly essential, but not necessary prerequisite for negative spillover effects. Devine *et al.*'s (2003) widely quoted national study implies that housing voucher recipients are not concentrated spatially. In almost 90 percent of all census tracts with voucher recipients, the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) accounts for less than 5 percent of all households. In just under three percent of the neighbourhoods where the program is found, the HCVP utilizes at least 10 percent of the housing stock. But where vouchers are clustered, the clustering is in high-poverty, mostly minority central-city neighbourhoods. Kingsley and colleagues (2003) draw comparable conclusions after analysing a HUD information system, showing the spatial pattern of current Section 8 recipients (4,288 households) relocated from 73 HOPE VI developments in 48 cities. Recent spatial analysis in both Chi-

cago (Oakley & Burchfield, 2009) and Atlanta (Oakley *et al.*, 2009) found significant spatial clustering of voucher housing, particularly in disadvantaged, predominately Black neighbourhoods. Similarly, Varady *et al.* (2010), using hot spot analysis³, show that the implementation of Cincinnati's HCV program between 2000 and 2005 in conjunction with public housing transformation has not led to a greater dispersion of voucher recipients and either poverty or racial deconcentration.

Another reason for concern about negative neighbourhood spillovers is the substantial proportion of 'hard to house' families among HOPE VI relocatees (Popkin *et al.* 2004, 2005). Popkin and colleagues distinguished several categories, such as multiple-barrier households (low education, unemployed, and a substance-abuse or criminal record), and households with 'one-strike problems', i.e. having a member with an arrest record or other drug-related criminal history that could place the household at risk of eviction. Popkin *et al.* (2004, 2005) have developed thorough estimates which suggest that between 10 and 20 per cent of the HOPE VI relocatees might pose a nuisance threat to destination neighbourhoods. Even if problematic tenants comprise a minority among relocatees they can make life unbearable for neighbours and destabilise entire buildings or subneighbourhoods (Power, 1997, Varady & Schulman, 2007; Kromer, 2009, p. 267). However, absence of information on the 'hard to house' makes it usually impossible to determine their impact on destination areas (Kromer, 2009, p. 100).

Now we turn to crime displacement. Churchill *et al.*'s 2001 HUD funded study highlights the extent to which politicians, practitioners and community activists across the US are concerned about negative spillover effects. The authors found that at all eight study sites, rising crime, falling test scores and anti-social tenants created community conflict. Weak administration of the Section 8 housing voucher program including in-

sufficient attention to Section 8 household behaviour was a major cause of the problems.

Venkatesh and colleagues (2004) observe that as part of Chicago's HOPE VI program many public housing residents either chose to or were forced to move to another traditional public housing development but most moved to private rental neighbourhoods. They suggest that Chicago's massive public housing transformation has led to a shift in gang violence from the "projects" to more peripheral parts of the city. However, their research report fails to provide convincing evidence (whether quantitative or qualitative) that HCVP householders are directly responsible for crime in the destination neighbourhoods. Zielenbach and Voith's (2010) mixed method study of spillover effects at four HOPE VI sites –two in Boston and two in Washington D.C.— also provides suggestive evidence of crime shifts to other neighbourhoods. However, Zielenbach and Voith conclude that crime displacement was relatively insignificant because complaints from particular Boston and Washington DC communities were minimal and because overall rates of crime in these two cities decreased during this period.

Cahill *et al.*'s (2010) Urban Institute study represents the most sophisticated attempt to test whether HOPE VI leads to crime displacement. They applied point pattern analysis, weighted displacement quotient analysis and time series analysis to police data to measure changes in crime at three HOPE VI sites (one in Milwaukee and two in Washington DC). They find little support for the displacement hypothesis. Instead HOPE VI was linked to a drop in crime at all three sites. Cahill and colleagues suggest that drops in crime are attributable to both more stringent criteria for screening tenants and social services aimed at changing attitudes and behaviour. However, Cahill and colleagues provide no evidence on *how* HOPE VI actually changes the incidence of crime. Moreover, the authors explicitly ignore a key aspect of the crime displacement debate;

whether those tenants who move away from HOPE VI sites (often with vouchers) bring with them crime and other social problems to lower poverty neighbourhoods. Their assumption, not empirically tested, that families making such longer distance moves do not present a problem, is highly questionable.

Another potential spillover mechanism is whether associates of relocatees stay connected to them in a way that raises crime in the destination neighbourhood. Briggs and colleagues (2010, p. 103) have suggested this explanation for their finding that adolescent boys in a Moving To Opportunity (MTO)⁴ experimental group showed a higher incidence of crime after their move to a lower-poverty neighbourhood.

A less frequently mentioned spillover effect is community conflict between HOPE VI relocatees and other residents in destination areas. We already mentioned Churchill *et al.*'s 2001 study. A more targeted effort is Greenbaum *et al.*'s 2008 anthropological study focused on experiences of HOPE VI relocatees and their new neighbours in Tampa, Florida. Semi-structured interviews with relocatees and longer term residents show that relocatees were highly isolated in the new neighbourhoods. Homeowners believed that relocatees brought with them crime and lower property values. The owners also reported decreased neighbourhood social activity once relocatees moved in. Greenbaum *et al.* conclude that “the disaffection of the incumbent homeowners [...] is rarely mentioned in the literature on deconcentration. These attitudes and the actions that often follow (both fight and flight) are, however, having deleterious effects on all concerned” (2008, p. 221). We suspect that the community response is more complicated time-wise. Initially, residents may mobilise to resist immigration of HOPE VI relocatees, but many are likely to experience “burnout” over time when their efforts prove fruitless.

Finally, we come to an indirect effect of clustering of voucher recipients, that is, impacts on neighbourhood property values. “To the extent that middle-class white families prefer to live in areas with few low-income or minority families, or to avoid some of the outcomes stereotypically associated with the poor, the influx of low-income families could reduce the demand for housing and thereby reduce property values in host neighbourhoods” (Johnson *et al.*, 2002, p. 129). Galster, Tatian and Smith’s 1999 Baltimore County article, by far the most sophisticated empirical study available, shows that in low-valued or moderately-valued census tracts experiencing real declines in values since 1990, Section 8 sites and units located in high densities had a considerable negative impact on prices within 2,000 feet. More specifically, when the number of Section 8 households in any neighbourhood reached a certain tipping-point (six or more within 500 feet), there was a decline in housing values. Thus, the adverse influences on property values are more likely to occur when affordable *housing* is clustered and located in disadvantaged and declining neighbourhoods.

The above leads us to a connected issue: which levels of relocatees clustering (with or without vouchers) actually matter? Galster has studied *thresholds*, i.e. levels of neighbourhood poverty above which problems resulting from poverty concentration may significantly deteriorate neighbourhood conditions. Galster’s work implies that any poverty deconcentration effort, such as HCV or HOPE VI relocation, should not boost poverty in a receiving neighbourhood above such threshold levels (ibid. 2002, 2005, Galster *et al.* 2008). Building upon Galster’s work, McClure (2010) has searched for tipping points connected to the influx of voucher users in block groups⁵ and came up with various findings. Galster’s and McClure’s nuanced writings show the enormous difficulty of identifying a ‘single’ housing voucher or poverty threshold, primarily because ‘tipping’ is dependent on so many different neighbourhood variables. A simple

example: not all voucher users are poor. Nevertheless, the need to focus (voucher) relocation into low-poverty areas is clear. However, Kingsley and colleagues (2003) observe that it is unrealistic to expect HOPE VI to relocate all residents to low-poverty neighbourhoods. Residents are exercising their own location choices (see also Goetz, 2010, p. 149) and housing officials generally do not encourage daring moves.

To summarize, the available American research on negative spillover effects of forced residential relocation is both limited and inconclusive. This is partly the result of methodological challenges. Tracking individuals over time and over different areas would require exact lists of who is receiving vouchers, which landlords are accepting voucher users, and which individuals are committing various types of criminal offences. Housing authorities and police departments would understandably be reluctant on privacy grounds to provide such data.

Dutch studies

In the Netherlands, there are two types of negative spillover studies. The first type deals with issues of crime and crime prevention, often based on objective data (for a review, see Bernasco *et al.*, 2006). The second type of spillover research primarily uses *subjective* indicators such as dissatisfaction with various neighbourhood conditions, sometimes underpinned with objective data on moving patterns, crime or other social problems. In the Dutch context of restructuring and relocation, all negative spillover studies are of this second type. A few studies report that professionals assert the existence of negative spillover effects, but do not delve into the issue (Helleman & Wassenberg, 2004; Van Bergeijk *et al.*, 2008).

Earlier, we asserted that clustering of relocatees is an essential, but not necessary prerequisite for negative spillover effects in destination communities. Only a few stud-

ies provide a detailed, *neighbourhood*-level analysis of the destination of relocatees (Den Breejen *et al.*, 2004; Van der Schaar & Den Breejen, 2004; Van Paassen, 2008; Bolt & Van Kempen, 2010). These studies provide a fairly consistent pattern. Although relocatees do disperse over the city, a disproportionately large number find a dwelling in nearby, comparable neighbourhoods (in terms of the type, price and quality of the housing stock). Moreover, the overwhelming majority tend to move within the social rented sector. When relocatees from social housing are assigned a priority status this only applies to the social rented sector of the housing market (Kleinhans & Van der Laan Bouma Doff, 2008). In sum, Dutch relocatees often make short distance moves to nearby neighbourhoods with large shares of social rented housing. Some of these are likely to be targeted for future restructuring efforts. These findings are themselves quite worrisome because restructuring seems to beget more restructuring. So what do the studies tell about negative spillover effects?

In their evaluation of the first stage of the renewal of the Bijlmermeer (Amsterdam), Wassenberg and Van Veghel (1999) found broad improvements in the renovated or newly constructed blocks, but a rise in reported crime, vandalism (and the associated repair costs), incivilities and litter in the blocks awaiting restructuring, or even beyond the renewal areas. The authors *suggest* that the primary cause is a category of problematic residents, such as drug dealers and users, who relocated to dwellings slated for demolition in the future, whereas ‘better’ residents moved to new dwellings.

A study of Van der Schaar and Den Breejen (2004) does not use the term ‘waterbed effects’ but fully addresses the issue. The authors did not observe objective indications of problems in destination areas of relocatees in the city of Helmond. However, surveys revealed that long-term residents in the destination areas were significantly more negative about the recent and expected development of their neighbourhood than

the control group, i.e. families moving into the neighbourhood from elsewhere. The influx of ‘new residents who do not fit in’ is a primary dissatisfier, with some respondents explicitly complaining about restructuring relocatees, who are accused of neglecting their gardens and throwing litter on the street.

A broadly similar study of Slob *et al.* (2008) compared three destination neighbourhoods characterised by a relatively high influx of relocatees with three control neighbourhoods lacking such a strong influx. They found that residents in the former group were more dissatisfied with social and physical neighbourhood conditions and also were less confident about the future. Regression analyses indicate that these differences remain after differences in population composition of destination and control areas are taken into account. Moreover, compared to the control areas, residents in destination neighbourhoods more often report an influx of ‘new residents’, as well as tensions between long term residents and newcomers.

Sometimes, the negative spillover issue arises in a study on a different subject. Veldboer and colleagues (2007) have assessed upward social mobility patterns of individual residents in Hoogvliet, a borough of the city of Rotterdam subject to heavy restructuring. Both residents and professionals report incivilities, tensions, threats and (petty) crime in specific sub-neighbourhoods of Hoogvliet which had been in relatively good condition prior to physical restructuring. Many interviewees explicitly blamed the restructuring measures and the resulting influx of relocatees from other sub-neighbourhoods in Hoogvliet for the decline. Interestingly, this view was shared by longer term residents, voluntary movers in Hoogvliet and also by forced relocatees themselves. Data from the bi-annual Liveability Monitor Hoogvliet (*Leefbaarheidsmonitor Hoogvliet*) confirm the reported incivilities and insecurity problems for some of the

indicated sub-neighbourhoods, but there is no empirical evidence for a causal relation between the influx of relocatees and (sub-)neighbourhood decline.

Van Paassen (2008) conducted a detailed analysis of the socioeconomic characteristics and moving patterns of more than 5,300 forced relocatees from restructuring areas in Amsterdam (2004 to 2007). Van Paassen found that 30 per cent or more of the relocatees moved either within the same or to nearby neighbourhoods, often low-income areas with high shares of non-western immigrants. Furthermore, the interviewed practitioners, mostly relocation counsellors, perceived an increase in incivilities in destination neighbourhoods that received disproportionately large numbers of relocatees. While some interviewees asserted a causal relationship, others did not. Interestingly, several housing associations in Amsterdam try to prevent negative spillover effects by restricting relocatees with a track record of incivilities from moving into newly built dwellings. Precisely these efforts may (in)directly result in negative spillover effects in other blocks, especially if these relocatees are not monitored and helped.

Finally, Leidelmeijer *et al.* (2009) recently produced a baseline measurement for a periodical 'waterbed effect monitor' as part of research on the national '40 Neighbourhoods Approach' (see previous section). Their analyses are based on a complicated modelling approach predicting composite 'liveability' scores on a 4-digit zip code level for almost all administrative neighbourhoods in the Netherlands. Leidelmeijer *et al.* found some evidence for negative spillovers in neighbourhoods that had experienced an influx of many relocatees or where relatively low-income households settle. They find that most neighbourhoods with indications of negative spillover effects are vulnerable areas where renewal policies are being carried out.

In sum, while several Dutch studies provide strong evidence of *perceptions* of negative spillover effects, only a few underpin these effects with objective data on crime

or other problems. Nor are these studies able to draw causal inferences about whether and how relocatees created social problems at destination communities, if indeed that was the case. Dutch studies suffer from two further methodological shortcomings. Firstly, most studies rely on cross-sectional designs. Only longitudinal research would enable researchers to determine more conclusively whether relocatees are responsible for ‘new’ problems in destination neighbourhoods. Secondly, with the exception of Leidemeijer *et al.* (2009), they fail to properly consider other possible explanations for changes in perceived social problems. For example, increases in neighbourhood crime could reflect city-wide trends.

Conclusions and further research

This paper represents an exploratory foray into a highly contentious subject: negative spillover effects linked to the restructuring of public or social housing in the US and the Netherlands. In both countries, there is a strong and quite similar concern about adverse neighbourhood impacts of relocating residents from public or social housing restructuring sites. We have described a range of studies dealing with this subject. Most importantly, we conclude from our review that there is hardly any conclusive evidence on the nature and extent of cause-effect relations underlying negative neighbourhood spillover effects from forced relocation. This is somewhat surprising (and disappointing) in light of the magnitude and relevancy of the discussions in both countries and the existing body of research.

Notwithstanding fundamental contextual differences, there are interesting similarities in the discourse and research in both countries. Besides the aforementioned concern, reclustered relocatees is a shared issue. Although numbers do not tell a neigh-

bourhood's story (Smith, 2002, pp. 40-41; Kingsley *et al.*, 2003, p. 445; Kleinhans & Slob 2008, p. 123), and critical threshold levels are almost impossible to identify (Galster, 2005; Galster *et al.*, 2008; McClure, 2010), clustering is perceived as an essential (although not necessary) prerequisite for negative spillover effects in destination communities. The US evidence shows that relocatees from public housing restructuring recluster to a significant degree. This recluster is a reflection of spatial patterns in the broader Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) population. Similarly Dutch relocatees from social housing restructuring often move to nearby areas, to neighbourhoods with high shares of social housing and many non-western immigrants. In sum, there is a significant amount of recluster in neighbourhoods broadly comparable to restructuring sites left behind by relocatees.

While both countries offer evidence of negative spillover effects, the type of evidence available strongly differs. Whereas Dutch studies primarily deal with neighbourhood dissatisfaction and the perception of various forms of incivilities and neighbourhood decline, the US studies report objective and subjective evidence regarding increases in crime, shifts in street gang violence, community conflict and lower property values. Up to now there has been only one American study (Galster *et al.*, 1999), but no proper Dutch one showing that recluster can lead to lower property values in some situations, i.e. beyond certain voucher density tipping points and in census tracts with already declining values.

Thus far policy discourse about negative spillover effects has been polarized, especially in the US. Progressives like Peter Dreier and Xavier de Souza Briggs (2008) dispute the existence of negative spillover effects because there is little or no empirical evidence. We would argue that even though existing empirical evidence does not establish causality, the qualitative and quantitative evidence is compelling enough to show

the need for better monitoring of neighbourhood change and programs to address the concerns of residents in destination neighbourhoods. Both countries show an increasing interest in more intensive relocation counselling and supportive services, to minimise both negative individual impacts and negative neighbourhood spillovers of relocation. These counselling programs could be supplemented with educating relocatees about behavioural standards in destination neighbourhoods, expanding housing choices available to relocatees, outreach to landlords to better screen tenants and licensing ordinances mandating that owners of rental properties monitor for criminal activity and take steps to prevent crimes by residents and their guests (Krueger, 2010).

This paper highlights the need for a more honest and frank discussion of negative spillover effects, one that includes scholars, practitioners, politicians, community activists, and residents. For too long, academics have shied away from the subject out of a fear of being tarred as 'racist', which actually happened to a critic of the controversial July 2008 *Atlantic Monthly* magazine article (Rosin, 2008). Ignoring the issue does nobody any good and may fundamentally undercut beneficial effects of urban regeneration programs.

The combination of serious concerns, inconclusive evidence and the need for a more open discussion strongly calls for further research on the subject. To overcome methodological problems of earlier studies, longitudinal and experimental and multi-level designs should be used, tracking individuals over time and over different areas, comparing relocatees with other (non-forced movers) and long term residents, and simultaneously monitoring different neighbourhoods (destination areas for relocation or not). Further research should not only unearth the extent to which relocatees actually cause trouble beyond the levels of problems already occurring in destination neighbourhoods, but also identify mechanisms which cause already occurring problems to intensify.

fy. While establishing causal relationships remains notoriously difficult, research along the mentioned criteria should bring us much closer to this ultimate goal than the current body of research.

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¹ See the official program website of HOPE VI: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/hope6/about>

² Destination neighbourhood residents may correctly perceive the in-migration of troublesome families but incorrectly assume that they came from a restructuring project..

³ 'Hot spot' analysis can detect areas with significant densities of voucher recipients compared with the surrounding environment.

⁴ Moving To Opportunity (MTO) relocation differs from HOPE VI relocation in many respects. For example, MTO does not involve large-scale demolition of public housing.

⁵ Census block groups are much smaller than census tracts and correspond more closely to the sociological concept of neighbourhoods.