SUCCESSFUL MIXING? EFFECTS OF URBAN RESTRUCTURING POLICIES IN DUTCH NEIGHBOURHOODS

GIDEON BOLT & RONALD VAN KEMPEN

Urban and Regional Research Centre Utrecht (URU), Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University, PO Box 80.115, 3508 TC Utrecht, The Netherlands. E-mails: G.Bolt@geo.uu.nl; R.vanKempen@geo.uu.nl

ABSTRACT
Concentrations of poverty in urban neighbourhoods are generally unwanted, because of all kinds of presumed negative consequences for the social mobility and the quality of life of the residents. Because of these negative associations, policies in Western European countries are often aimed at breaking up these poverty concentrations by mixing the population composition through changing the housing stock. However, whether these policies are successful remains to be seen. We asked residents of urban restructuring areas in six Dutch cities about the consequences of mixing policies. The number of residents who perceive improvements in the neighbourhood in the past few years is substantially outnumbered by the residents who report a decline in neighbourhood quality. However, many residents have high hopes for their neighbourhood's future. This finding indicates that social mixing policies have not matched the policy-makers' expectations yet – but may do so in the course of time.

Key words: **Social mixing, urban restructuring, neighbourhood satisfaction**

INTRODUCTION

In Western European cities, urban restructuring policies have become prominent in the last decade (Murie *et al.* 2003; Bolt 2009). Such policies mostly take place in neighbourhoods with a concentration of relatively inexpensive rental dwellings. These neighbourhoods do not function well, at least not in the eyes of the policy-makers. The neighbourhoods are therefore subject to sometimes radical policies of demolition, refurbishing and renovation. Demolition is accompanied by the construction of new dwellings that are generally more expensive than those they replace. The new dwellings are almost always in the owner-occupied sector or in the relatively high-priced segments of the rented sector; these dwellings are more attrac-

tive for the middle classes than the existing stock of cheap social- or public-rented accommodation.

There are many reasons underlying this urban restructuring process, often reflecting the wish of policy-makers to create neighbourhoods that are more mixed, especially with respect to socio-economic characteristics. There are two types of motivation for this social mixing policy. The first is that a socio-economic mix is seen as an antidote to negative neighbourhood effects (Musterd & Andersson 2005). The idea is that living in a poor neighbourhood has a negative effect on a resident's social mobility over and above the effect of individual characteristics (Wilson 1987; Galster 2007). However, for the Western European context the empirical underpinning for these

neighbourhood effects is rather thin. Graham *et al.* (2009) did not find a consistent relationship in the UK between tenure mix on the one hand and health, mortality, and unemployment on the other. Van Ham and Manley (2010) show that, in Scotland, tenure mix and degree of deprivation at the neighbourhood level do not affect the residents' probability of being employed. One of the reasons why social mix does not lead to social mobility is that living in a neighbourhood with resource-rich people does not automatically increase the social capital of a poor resident. First of all, the overwhelming majority of residents' network members live outside the neighbourhood. Second, network members within the same neighbourhood tend to have the same socio-economic status, even in socio-economically-mixed neighbourhoods (Van Eijk 2010).

Although in the academic literature the role of social mix in counteracting negative neighbourhood effects is fervently debated, it is not the most relevant motivation for social mixing policy, at least not in the Netherlands. Here, policy-makers aim by social mix to increase the quality of life in urban restructuring neighbourhoods rather than the social mobility of the residents. Social mix is, for instance, expected to increase the social cohesion and liveability (Wittebrood & Van Dijk 2007). For housing associations and municipalities, 'liveability' means that neighbourhoods are orderly in the sense that they exhibit a low level of crime, vandalism and nuisance. It is believed that social order can be generated in disadvantaged neighbourhoods by drawing in members of the middle class (Uitermark *et al.* 2007). In this paper, we focus on this second type of motivation for social mixing policies. Our aim is to find out whether urban restructuring has led to an improvement of the neighbourhood, according to its inhabitants. We do so on the basis of a research study we undertook in 2007 in six Dutch urban restructuring areas (Van Bergeijk *et al.* 2008).

WHY WOULD SOCIAL MIX LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTS' QUALITY OF LIFE?

The most general indicator of the quality of life in urban areas is satisfaction with the neigh-

bourhood (Mohan & Twigg 2007; Permentier *et al.* 2011). There is, however, no positive link between mix and overall satisfaction with the neighbourhood. Baum *et al.* (2010) find a negative association between socio-economic mix and satisfaction. The explanation could be that people feel more at home among similar others. This feeling applies particularly to homeowners and natives. For renters and non-natives there is no negative association between mix and satisfaction.

Evaluations of mixing policies show mixed results with regard to satisfaction with the neighbourhood. Some studies report that neighbourhood satisfaction in mixed areas has been improved, whereas others have reported no change (Kleinhans 2004; Bond *et al.* 2011). In a few cases tensions between owners and renters have arisen (Goodchild & Cole 2001), which obviously affects neighbourhood satisfaction negatively.

As the overall satisfaction with the neighbourhood is strongly determined by the satisfaction with specific neighbourhood attributes (Mohan & Twigg 2007; Permentier *et al.* 2011), the remainder of this section deals with the attributes that are most likely to be affected by social mixing: services, social cohesion, safety, and neighbourhood reputation.

Better services – A population change in a neighbourhood almost automatically leads to a change in the level of services in the area. When an area is characterised by an outflow of poor households and an inflow of middle- and high-income households, there will be more income to be spent there. On the one hand, this increase enhances the possibilities for amenities like cafés, restaurants, and up-market shops. A new, more prosperous, population can thus lead to a higher quantity as well as higher quality of amenities (Arthurson 2002). On the other hand, it has also been found in some mixed-tenure regeneration areas that new inhabitants of the area are less prone to shop there and prefer to do so elsewhere (Van Beckhoven & Van Kempen 2003; Camina & Wood 2009)

The inflow of higher-income households may not only attract commercial facilities, but also increase the political power of a community to improve municipal services (Joseph *et al.* 2007). Although there is hardly any research on

this issue, there is some indication that social mix produces more effective collective action (Jupp 1999).

More social cohesion – There is a strong belief among policy-makers that social mix leads to social cohesion (Van Kempen & Bolt 2009). While social mixing does not lead to social ties between different social classes (as mentioned above), that is not to say that social mixing has a negative effect on social cohesion. Social cohesion is a multidimensional concept, which includes not only social networks, but also shared norms and values and place attachment (Kearns & Forrest 2000; Dekker & Bolt 2005). Case studies of urban restructuring report mixed results. While Brown *et al.* (2004) found a relatively strong attachment of the residents in new dwellings in Salt Lake City, the opposite was the case for two Dutch cities: Utrecht and The Hague (Dekker & Bolt 2005).

On the basis of more quantitative studies, it seems justifiable to refute the widely-held claim that mixing leads to more social cohesion. Using the nationwide Survey of English Housing, Kearns and Mason (2007) assessed the impact of tenure mix (as a proxy for social mix) on a variety of neighbourhood problems. A greater diversity of tenure was found to be associated with the incidence of problems with neighbours, which is an indication of a lack of social cohesion in mixed neighbourhoods. Wittebrood and Van Dijk (2007) compared the assessment of place attachment in 24 restructured neighbourhoods in the Netherlands with 24 comparable neighbourhoods in which restructuring (mixed tenures) had not (yet) taken place. Place attachment turned out to have evolved more positively in the other neighbourhoods than in the restructuring neighbourhoods. This finding is in line with other evaluations of social mixing policies. Mixing is reported to have either no effect (Bond *et al.* 2011), or a negative effect (Kleinhans 2004), on social cohesion.

Social control and safety – Another argument for a social mix is that the presence of higher-income groups leads to more social control. The idea is that higher-income residents – in particular, homeowners – will be more likely than low-income residents to take action to maintain social control (Joseph *et al.* 2007; Uitermark *et al.* 2007). As this leads to reduced levels of crime, residents of all income levels benefit (Sampson & Groves 1989). Wilson (cited in Tunstall 2003), indeed, notes that people in mixed neighbourhoods draw attention to deviant behaviour more often than do people in homogeneous poor neighbourhoods. However, the evidence on the effects of mixing on (perceived) crime is rather ambiguous (Wittebrood & Van Dijk 2007; Bond *et al.* 2011).

Reputation – As the reputation of a neighbourhood is strongly associated with the socio-economic composition of the neighbourhood (Permentier *et al.* 2011), it seems reasonable to expect the mixing of poor neighbourhoods to lead to a better reputation. However, in practice it is not easy to overcome place-based stigma (Bond *et al.* 2011). Hastings and Dean (2003) showed in their study of an English neighbourhood that the current reputation was related to the social class of its original (pre slum-clearance) residents of many years before. This finding indicates that it might be much more difficult to change outsiders' opinions of an area than to change the view or satisfaction of the residents of mixed neighbourhoods.

RESEARCH AREAS, DATA, AND METHODS

The analyses reported in this paper are based on research in six post-Second World War neighbourhoods in six different cities in the Netherlands.[1] They vary in size, ranging from 5,000 to 16,000 residents. The six neighbourhoods have in common that they were all built in the period just after the Second World War, when there was a massive shortage of housing in the Netherlands. They mostly consist of a mix of single-family dwellings and multifamily housing, often in four-storey blocks. Most of the dwellings are in the social-rented sector. In the 1960s and 1970s these neighbourhoods were considered pleasant, green, and open and were popular places in which to live. This state of affairs started to change in the 1980s. Today, these neighbourhoods are often at the lower end of the housing market. There are problems with poverty, nuisance, and criminality among

other things. Most residents belong to low-income groups and relatively many of them are ethnic minorities (Van Bergeijk *et al.* 2008). In each of the six neighbourhoods a few hundred social-rented dwellings have been demolished and replaced by new dwellings, which are mainly in the owner-occupied sector.

The survey was carried out in the spring and summer of 2007. In each neighbourhood a random sample of 600 addresses was drawn, so altogether 3,600 addresses were selected. At each address the head of the household was asked to complete a questionnaire. This was sent by post and respondents were asked to return it by post as well. In the case of no response after four weeks, a reminder was sent. The questionnaire was in Dutch, but the accompanying letter was translated into Turkish and Moroccan Arabic to stimulate the response of Turks and Moroccans. When corrected for non-existing addresses and houses that were not occupied at the time of the survey, the response rate was 29.5 per cent (N = 1,017). In the response there is a slight, but significant over-representation of native Dutch and owner-occupiers. As a correction with weight factors does not reveal different results, we present unweighted data in this paper.

The aim of this study was to find out whether urban restructuring has led to an improvement of the neighbourhood, according to its inhabitants. This was done by examining how both the overall satisfaction with the neighbourhood and the satisfaction with specific neighbourhood attributes have been changing during the last few years. The analyses are restricted to those who have been living for at least three years in the current neighbourhood (including those who have moved within the neighbourhood in the last three years), as people with a short length of residence are not likely to have a good insight into how the neighbourhood has developed. Before we focus on the perceptions of the residents, we consider whether urban restructuring has led to social mix, as that is seen as the main remedy to improve neighbourhood quality.

RESULTS

Social mix – One of the main objectives of the urban restructuring policy was to create a better mix with respect to income in an area. Newly-

Table 1. *Household monthly income of the respondents in the older stock and in the new or renovated dwellings (N; %).*

	Old dwellings	New or renovated dwellings
Low (<€1,100)	24.8	13.1
Middle (€1,100–2,600)	61.3	61.4
High (>€2,600)	13.9	25.6
N	617	176

Cramer's V = 0.16; p = 0.000.

Source: Authors' own survey.

built dwellings are designed to keep and to attract middle- and higher-income households. Did this work? Table 1 shows that, indeed, the newly-built dwellings accommodate more households with higher incomes than the old dwellings did. However, the difference between the two types of dwelling is not large. Interestingly, the income profile of households who moved within the neighbourhood to a new dwelling does not differ from the households in the old dwellings. Most of the households who moved from within the neighbourhood to a new dwelling (which amounts to 36% of the residents of new dwellings), moved within the social-rented sector, while most movers from outside the neighbourhood were owner occupiers. While creating more housing-career opportunities for present inhabitants has become an increasingly important motive for tenure diversification in the Netherlands (Van Kempen & Bolt 2009), the results imply that combining that goal with the creation of a social mix is difficult. Social mix is stimulated by building housing for owner occupiers, but owner-occupied dwellings are beyond the reach of most current residents of urban restructuring neighbourhoods (Dekker & Bolt 2005). Consequently, the new more expensive buildings are meant for the residents of other neighbourhoods.

Satisfaction – We asked our respondents whether they were currently more satisfied with the neighbourhood than they were a few years ago. Compared with the outcomes of a nationally-representative sample on housing, the research neighbourhoods turn out to be
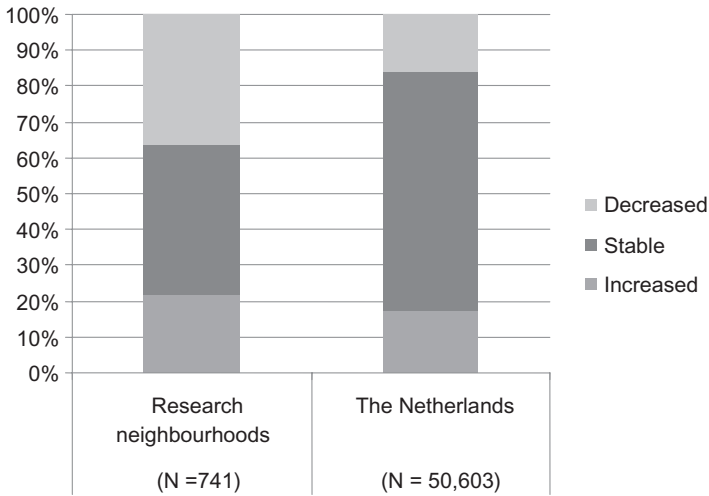
Figure 1. *Did the satisfaction with the neighbourhood increase or decrease?*[a]

relatively dynamic. The number of people whose satisfaction with the neighbourhood has increased is slightly higher than in the Netherlands as a whole (Figure 1). At the same time, there is a substantially larger group whose satisfaction with the neighbourhood has decreased.

This negative trend in the overall satisfaction with the neighbourhood does not apply equally to each specific aspect of the neighbourhood (Figure 2). The trend with regard to the physical aspects of the neighbourhood is rather positive. There are more residents who think that the green public spaces and the maintenance of the dwellings have been improved than residents who think the contrary. With regard to the public transport and shopping facilities, the numbers of positive and negative evaluations are in balance.

The scores on the social attributes are much more negative. That is bad news, as these attributes are much stronger determinants of the overall satisfaction with the neighbourhood than the physical attributes are. Table 2 shows the Spearman's correlation coefficients between the satisfaction with each of the neighbourhood attributes and the overall satisfaction. The score can vary between 0 (no association) and +1 (perfect positive association) and −1 (perfect negative association). There is only a moderate positive correlation between satisfaction with the maintenance of dwellings and the public green spaces on the one hand and overall satisfaction on the other. Satisfaction with services is even very weakly associated with overall satisfaction. Satisfaction with each of the social attributes is rather strongly associated with overall satisfaction (Spearman's correlation ranging between 0.52 and 0.60). About a quarter of the residents think that there is less social cohesion than a few years ago, while a third signals a decline in the reputation and the social safety of the neighbourhood. Also, according to residents' representatives and many professionals working in the neighbourhoods, social mixing has not contributed to more social cohesion. Existing social networks have been destroyed and the newcomers have no social cohesion (yet) with the residents who remained.

The most negative score can be found on the question about population composition. Only 13 per cent of the residents are more satisfied with the population composition than they were a few years ago against 43 per cent of the residents who hold the opposite view. This result must be depressing news for policymakers, since the change of population composition is the main mechanism through which the revitalisation of the neighbourhood is expected to take place.
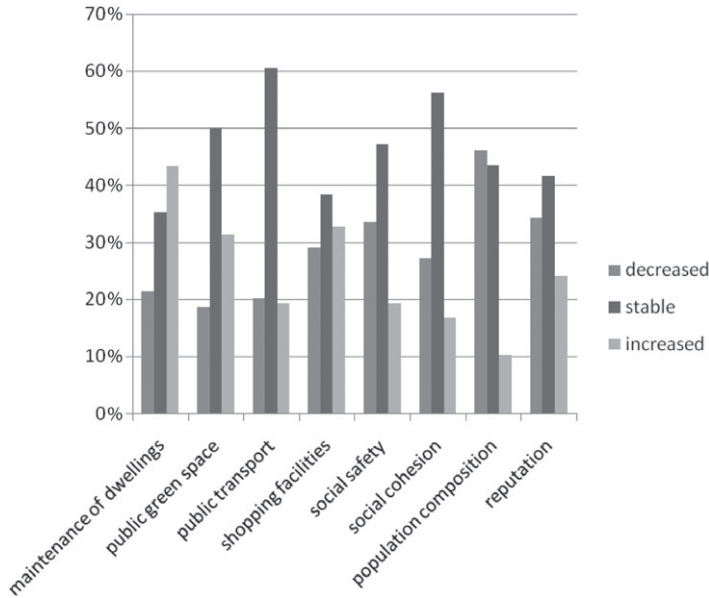
^a This analysis is restricted to residents who have lived for at least 3 years in the current neighbourhood (N = 741).
Source : Authors' own survey.

Figure 2. *Did the satisfaction with several aspects of the neighbourhood increase or decrease?*[a]

Table 2. *Spearman's correlation coefficients of overall satisfaction with several aspects of the neighbourhood.*[a]

Physical attributes	
Maintenance of dwellings	0.39
Public green space	0.27
Services	
Public transport	0.17
Shopping facilities	0.18
Social attributes	
Social safety	0.52
Social cohesion	0.58
Population composition	0.57
Reputation	0.60

All correlations are significant (with $p < 0.01$).
[a] This analysis is restricted to residents who have lived for at least 3 years in the current neighbourhood (N = 741)

Source : Authors' own survey.

It would not be fair to blame the inhabitants of the new dwellings for the decreased satisfaction. Despite the fact that most respondents think that the new dwellings are too expensive for residents within the neighbourhood, the majority of them sees the new and renovated dwellings as a posi-tive development (Table 3). That finding seems to confirm the assertion of Uitermark *et al.* (2007) that residents by and large accepted the dominant discourse that equates socio-economic mix with neighbourhood improve-ment. Apparently, the new dwellings have not been able to curb the process of neighbourhood decline yet, but they give rise to a remarkable optimism about the future. Half the respondents indicated that they expected that the neighbour-hood would improve in the next few years. That proportion is three times that of the optimists (17%) in the National Housing Survey 2006 (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment 2007).

CONCLUSIONS

It would be best to evaluate the effects of urban restructuring on the basis of a panel study (Kleinhans 2004). However, longitudinal data on residents' perceptions are not available. We have therefore used retrospective questions as the next best option. A second limitation of our study is that we do not know how the

Table 3. *Reactions to statements with regard to the new dwellings in the neighbourhood[a] (%).*

	Agree (%))	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	N
The new dwellings are too expensive for most people in this neighbourhood	59	6	35	731
I am glad that new people move into the neighbourhood as a consequence of the new dwellings	50	8	42	730
Newly-built and renovated houses mean that the neighbourhood is improving	71	7	22	727

[a] This analysis is restricted to residents who have lived for at least 3 years in the current neighbourhood.

Source: Authors' own survey.

neighbourhoods would have developed without urban restructuring. There is one Dutch study that has tried to overcome this limitation by choosing a quasi-experimental approach (Wittebrood & Van Dijk 2007). For each urban restructuring neighbourhood ('experimental neighbourhoods'), a similar one was sought where no intervention had taken place, but with otherwise similar characteristics ('control neighbourhoods'). The conclusion of this study (based on neighbourhood-level data), points in the same direction as our conclusion that the expectation with regard to mixing policies has not yet been fully met.

The findings of this paper give rise to questions concerning the policy philosophy of social mixing. Creating more population diversity by varying the housing stock is believed to lead to a wide variety of positive outcomes, but our research on inhabitants' satisfaction has led to some contrary conclusions. No progress has been made with respect to the neighbourhoods' safety, reputation or social cohesion, at least not in the eyes of the neighbourhood residents. The level of satisfaction with the population composition has even declined sharply. Ironically, it is the change in the population composition that is the main target of urban restructuring policy. It is not that the inhabitants of the new dwellings are seen as the main problem. Most residents welcome the inflow of higher-income groups in these dwellings. However, the inflow of these new residents was not large enough to increase the socio-economic status of the neighbourhoods substantially (cf. Wittebrood & Van Dijk 2007).

It is too early for a definitive conclusion on the effects of urban restructuring, as it is a process that takes many years. Although a substantial number of new dwellings has been built in our research neighbourhoods, the tenure-diversification operation is still going on. It will take some time for the neighbourhoods to find a new balance. Therefore, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the effects will be more positive in the long run. A promising sign is the widespread optimism about the future of the neighbourhoods, which stands in striking contrast with the negative opinions about the developments in the past few years.

Notes

1. The neighbourhoods are: Pendrecht (Rotterdam), Holtenbroek (Zwolle), Bouwlust (The Hague), Malburgen (Arnhem), Kruiskamp (Amersfoort), Heuvel (Breda). See Van Bergeijk *et al.* (2008) for more information on these neighbourhoods.

REFERENCES

ARTHURSON, K. (2002), Creating Inclusive Communities through Balancing Social Mix: A Critical Relationship or Tenuous Link? *Urban Policy and Research* 20, pp. 1–29.

BAUM, S., K. ARTHURSON & K. RICKSON (2010), Happy People in Mixed-up Places: The Association between the Degree and Type of Local Socio-economic Mix and Expressions of Neighbourhood Satisfaction. *Urban Studies* 47, pp. 467–485.

BOLT, G. (2009), Combating Residential Segregation of Ethnic Minorities in European Cities. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 24, pp. 397–405.

BOND, L., SAUTKINA, E., & KEARNS, A. (2011), Mixed Messages about Mixed Tenure: Do Reviews Tell the Real Story? *Housing Studies* 26, pp. 69–94.

BROWN, G., B.B. BROWN & D.D. PERKINS (2004), New Housing as Neighborhood Revitalization: Place Attachment and Confidence among Residents. *Environment and Behavior* 36, pp. 749–775.

CAMINA, M.M. & M.J. WOOD (2009), Parallel Lives: Towards a Greater Understanding of What Mixed Communities Can Offer. *Urban Studies* 46, pp. 459–480.

DEKKER, K. & G. BOLT (2005), Social Cohesion in Post-war Estates in the Netherlands: Differences between Socio-economic and Ethnic groups. *Urban Studies* 42, pp. 2447–2770.

GALSTER, G. (2007), Should Policy Makers Strive for Neighborhood Social Mix? An Analysis of the Western European Evidence Base. *Housing Studies* 22, pp. 523–545.

GOODCHILD, B. & I. COLE (2001), Social Balance and Mixed Neighbourhoods in Britain since 1979: A Review of Discourse and Practice in Social Housing. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19, pp. 103–121.

GRAHAM, E., D. MANLEY, R. HISCOCK, P. BOYLE & J. DOHERTY (2009), Mixing Housing Tenures: Is it Good for Social Well-being? *Urban Studies* 46, pp. 139–165.

HASTINGS, A., & DEAN, J. (2003), Challenging Images: Tackling Stigma through Estate Regeneration. *Policy & Politics* 31, pp. 171–184.

JOSEPH, M.L., R.J. CHASKIN & H.S. WEBBER (2007), The Theoretical Basis for Addressing Poverty through Mixed-income Development. *Urban Affairs Review* 42, PP. 369–409.

JUPP, B. (1999), *Living Together – Community Life on Mixed Housing Estates*. London: Demos.

KEARNS, A. & R. FORREST (2000), Social Cohesion and Multilevel Urban Governance. *Urban Studies* 37, pp. 995–1017.

KEARNS, A. & P. MASON (2007), Mixed Tenure Communities and Neighbourhood Quality. *Housing Studies* 22, pp. 661–991.

KLEINHANS, R. (2004), Social Implications of Housing Diversification in Urban Renewal: A Review of Recent Literature. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 19, pp. 367–390.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING, SPATIAL PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT (2007), *National Housing Survey 2006*. Amsterdam: VROM.

MOHAN, J. & L. TWIGG (2007) Sense of Place, Quality of Life and Local Socio-economic Context: Evidence from the Survey of English Housing, 2002/3. *Urban Studies* 44, pp. 2029–2045.

MURIE, A., T. KNORR-SIEDOW & R. VAN KEMPEN (2003) *Large Housing Estates in Europe – General Developments and Theoretical Background*. Utrecht: Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University.

MUSTERD, S. & R. ANDERSSON (2005), Housing Mix, Social Mix, and Social Opportunities. *Urban Affairs Review* 40, pp. 761–790.

PERMENTIER, M., G. BOLT & M. VAN HAM (2011), Determinants of Neighbourhood Satisfaction and Perception of Neighbourhood Reputation. *Urban Studies* 48, pp. 977–996.

SAMPSON, R.J. & W.B. GROVES (1989) Community Structure and Crime: Testing Social-disorganization Theory. *American Journal of Sociology* 94. pp. 774–802.

TUNSTALL, R. (2003), 'Mixed Tenure' Policy in the UK: Privatisation, Pluralism or Euphemism? *Housing, Theory and Society*, 20, pp. 153–159.

UITERMARK, J., J.W. DUYVENDAK & R. KLEINHANS (2007), Gentrification as a Governmental Strategy: Social Control and Social Cohesion in Hoogvliet, Rotterdam. *Environment and Planning A* 39, pp. 125–141.

VAN BECKHOVEN, E. & R. VAN KEMPEN (2003), Social Effects of Urban Restructuring: A Case Study in Amsterdam and Utrecht, the Netherlands. *Housing Studies* 18, pp. 853–875.

VAN BERGEIJK, E., A. KOKX, G. BOLT & R. VAN KEMPEN (2008), *Helpt Herstructurering? Effecten van Stedelijke Herstructurering op Wijken en Bewoners*. Delft: Eburon.

VAN EIJK, G. (2010), *Unequal Networks – Spatial Segregation, Relationships and Inequality in the City*. Amsterdam: IOS Press.

VAN HAM, M. & D. MANLEY (2010), The Effect of Neighbourhood Housing Tenure Mix on Labour Market Outcomes: A Longitudinal Investigation of Neighbourhood Effects. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 10, pp. 257–282.

VAN KEMPEN, R. & G. BOLT (2009), Social Cohesion, Social Mix, and Urban Policies in the Netherlands. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 24, pp. 457–475.

WILSON, W.J. (1987), *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.

WITTEBROOD, K., & T. VAN DIJK (2007), *Aandacht voor de Wijk – Effecten van Herstructurering op de Leefbaarheid en de Veiligheid*. Den Haag: SCP.