

Urban Renewal, Neighbourhood Revitalization and the Role of Housing Associations.

Dutch experience.

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Three waves of neighbourhood revitalization:

- 1940s – 1950s
- 1960s – 1970s
- 1980s-1990s
- Recent developments in neighbourhood revitalization

- How is urban revitalization currently being put into practice in Dutch urban neighbourhoods?
- What role do housing associations play in this?
- How could neighbourhood revitalization and ‘new’ urban renewal be better combined?

- Development from ‘traditional’ to ‘new’ urban renewal in the Netherlands
- The role of housing associations in the Netherlands

- Relationship between housing associations and new urban renewal
- How to revitalize urban neighbourhoods
- What can Canadian federal government learn from international experience?

First wave of neighbourhood revitalization: 1940s and 1950s.

Main focus: community thinking (not only denominational segregation).

New form of democracy.

Housing, education, care: central approach to link policy sectors.

Counterbalance: decentralization through neighbourhood approach.

Rotterdam: neighbourhood councils.

In contradiction with urban planning ideas: metropolitanism and separation of functions.

Van Doorn (1955): Neighbourhood and city: realistic frameworks for integration?

Fundamental criticism of the neighbourhood approach.

Second wave of neighbourhood revitalization 1970s
Since mid 1970s: urban renewal (first in Rotterdam)
Demolition – new housing – renovation
Project groups
Building for the neighbourhood

Change needed in welfare policy: Bottleneck Policy Document (1974)

Neighbourhood welfare work abolished by second Lubbers government (1986-1989)

Transition in focus from pre-war to post-war neighbourhoods

Revival of neighbourhood approach:

1. Breakdown of denominational segregation.
2. Aim for more socio-economic equality.
3. More articulate, emancipated citizens require customer-friendly authorities.

Third wave of neighbourhood revitalization: 1980s and 1990s.

Major supra-sectoral policy impulses from the State.

Policy on problem accumulation areas: budget by Ministry of the Interior.

Social reforms, urban renewal, major cities policy.

Social reforms: Idenburg Committee report (Rotterdam) =

New form of community structure

1995: urban renewal and major cities policy

Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment
(1997): Urban Renewal Policy Document

‘New’ urban renewal: post-war districts

Redifferentiation of the housing stock: greater variety,
more owner-occupied housing, higher quality, up-market.

Major Cities Policy 1994-1998 Kok Government I: Jakob Kohnstamm

1998-2002 Kok Government II: Roger van Boxtel

G30 – Major Cities Policy action plan, 2002-2009:

1. safety, integration and induction for immigrants, social aid for vulnerable groups, social cohesion;
2. investment in youth and education;
3. redevelopment of urban neighbourhoods;
4. improvement of economic structure and entrepreneurial climate.

Recent developments in neighbourhood revitalization.

The whole neighbourhood (1998).

Our neighbourhood's turn (2001).

56-neighbourhoods policy (2004).

(2001) Major Cities Knowledge Centre: knowledge newspaper,
knowledge network + research programme.

From 'traditional' urban renewal to 'new' urban renewal

1950-2000: selective migration between cities and suburbs. Spending power in cities lagged behind, compared with urban regions.

Traditional urban renewal: pre-war areas, technological priorities, social housing as the solution.

New urban renewal: post-war areas, market-driven, social housing as the problem.

G30: Investment Budget for Urban Renewal: long-term agreement between central government and city.

Minister of Housing: accountable for new urban renewal.

Minister of the Interior: accountable for Major Cities Policy.

Physical, economic and social quality of cities.

2004: 56 depressed neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Key players: municipality, housing associations, residents.

The role of housing associations.

Nineteenth century (second half): first (private) housing associations.

1901 Housing Act (public framework for housing associations).

After WW I and WW II: expansion of social rented sector.

1990: 42% of housing stock; now: 36%.

Wide diversity of income groups.

Hybrid status: combination of public tasks and market activities.

Cohen Commission (1997): split each hybrid organization into one purely public entity and one or more purely commercial organizations.

Ministry of Housing (2004) announces that each housing association must be split into a public parent organization and one or more commercial subsidiaries (level playing field).

Overkill = forced reduction of social rented sector.

January 1st, 1995: Balancing and Grossing Legislation

- All outstanding government loans repaid (replaced by private loans) (guaranteed by Guarantee Fund for Social Housing).
- All property subsidies already approved by the state paid.

Since 1995: no more property subsidies for new, renovated housing or housing management.

Housing associations no longer financially dependent on national government.

Treasury management.

Housing associations and new urban renewal

56 depressed neighbourhoods.

Strategy A: demolition; new, up-market housing. Housing situation for sitting tenants not improved (urban renewal nomads).

Strategy B: adapt new housing differentiation to wishes and means of sitting tenants, in particular the social climbers, who would otherwise leave the neighbourhood.

This strengthens social capital (Putnam, 2000).

Priority: reduce crime and vandalism, promote safety.

Rent increases can be compensated by lower energy costs and higher housing allowances.

Modern version of 'building for the neighbourhood'.

Now: economic stagnation with increasing shortages in the urban rented sector. This fuels public opposition against demolition and sale of social rented housing.

Housing associations adopt a radical approach, operate like commercial developers.
Debate on identity of housing associations.

How to revitalize urban neighbourhoods?

WRR (Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy)

(2005): four citizenship styles: dependent, apathetic, passive and active

Crucial: social trust.

Bonding and bridging.

Social reconquest of deprived areas:

1. Increase liveability and safety in the public space.
2. Create a balanced community structure.
3. Formulate joint competencies and rules of conduct to improve day-to-day communication between residents.

WRR (Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy) (2005) makes four recommendations:

1. Two-track policy
 - 'social reconquest'
 - build social cohesion (opportunity-driven).
2. Select from 'social reconquest' policy menu.
3. Select from 'opportunity-driven policy' menu.
4. Culture change in individual organizations.

WRR (2005) three types of logic:

- institutional logic of government;
- provision logic of social players;
- demand logic of residents.

Two concepts: living neighbourhood and learning neighbourhood.

Authorities must express their faith in residents and not disqualify them.

Support from provincial and/or state needed:

- long-term continuity of policy;
- building up and expanding civil society;
- employment opportunities;
- better opportunities for children;
- social mix in neighbourhoods (including multicultural co-existence).

Major roles in winning back the neighbourhood (the ‘main contractors’):

- housing associations (physical and social refurbishment)
- police (safety);
- schools (education, youth policy);
- welfare and community workers as ‘sub-contractors’.

Watch out for the waterbed effect: solve problems, don’t try to move them on.

What can the Canadian federal government learn from international experience?

Dutch housing associations are unique: no equivalent in Canada

Complication in Canada: two languages.

Winning back the neighbourhood ('social reconquest'): major roles for housing associations, police, schools.

Coordinating role: local government. Partnership with residents of the neighbourhood. The dynamics of their market demand could provide the benchmark for urban renewal plans.

Majority of residents: part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

Target upwardly mobile residents in particular.

No standard solutions.