Urban deprivation and territorial stigmatisation

The perils of the neighbourhood policy

Symbolic power and urban inequality: Taking Bourdieu to Town
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ABSTRACT

Urban inequalities have evoked social policies in for decades. Especially in the Netherlands, the neighbourhood policies are relatively well developed. The first of these programmes were established in the nineteen seventies, and they eventually advanced into a comprehensive neighbourhood policy in 2007. In this so-called '40-neighbourhood policy', forty neighbourhoods were selected and identified in which interventions and investments were required. The primary goal of this programme was to transform the deprived areas into flourishing, vital neighbourhoods where "the residents contribute to society, have a perspective on social mobility and participate in the labour market (Van Kooten, 2009: 20, translation YW).

In my paper, which is based on my research master's thesis, I argue that this programme does not necessarily improve the living conditions of the neighbourhood's residents. In fact, explicitly designating underprivileged neighbourhoods may be interpreted as an act of symbolic violence. As a result of these policies, the areas disadvantaged status is confirmed and therefore officially approved. Building upon Becker's (1963) theory of labelling, Goffman's (1963) notion of stigmatisation and Wacquant's territorial stigmatisation (2007), I hypothesise that these policies may in fact do more harm than good. This theory is tested in four case studies: Dutch neighbourhoods that have been subject of neighbourhood policies. Working with interviews, quantitative data and secondary literature, both the achievements and threats of the policy are identified. Finally, I conclude that in some neighbourhoods, under specific conditions, the reputation of the areas was indeed harmed. In these cases, some stigmatisation occurred, which hampered the neighbourhood's potential.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Improving the conditions of vulnerable groups is regarded as one of the core tasks of the contemporary Dutch government. Especially after the Second World War, this 'emancipatory function' of the authorities was developed. Due to this welfare state, the severe poverty that was so distinctive for the period before and after the war was diminished by income distribution, minimum wages, subsidies and social housing (De Rooy, 2005: 104; De Liagre Böhl, 1999: 295). These policies are realised on different levels: the level of groups and individuals and the geographical level. An example of the former is integration policies, and the latter is most often translated into neighbourhood policies, in which the government aims to improve the living conditions of the often poor, disadvantaged inhabitants.

Especially for the last few years, neighbourhood policy has been at the heart of the public and political debate. A select number of neighbourhoods were chosen in 2007 as the nation's 'worst' neighbourhoods. Obviously, this so-called '40 neighbourhoods policy' (*40-wijkenbeleid*), led to many discussions among policy makers, residents, social workers, urban planners and politicians. The scale of the interventions was also of a size that was hitherto unknown, and the intervention consisted of different structural programmes, ranged from physical restructuring to social and socio-economic measures. In short, the character of the selected neighbourhoods was about to change dramatically. Moreover, although the current cabinet does not emphasize neighbourhood policies as much as their predecessor, many consider the neighbourhood policies increasingly to be an instrument for improving the conditions of a specific geographical area (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2009). This expectation is amplified by the many studies that have been published which emphasize positive effects of wide-ranging local interventions on the liveability of a neighbourhood (Van Beckhoven en Van Kempen, 2002; Van Bergeijk et al. 2008; Kleinhans 2005; Wittebrood & Van Dijk 2007; Van Dam 2010).

On the other hand, a specific area has some potential downsides as well. In an ideal situation, an area endowed with a concentration of poverty and deprivation is selected as one of the underprivileged neighbourhoods that require intervention. Due to interventions, such as reducing unemployment, creating a more socio-economically mixed population and ameliorating the public space, the disadvantage is converted to a situation that is similar to that of other, surrounding neighbourhoods. However, selecting an area as a 'deprived neighbourhood', in order to improve the living conditions may also lead to categorisation, labelling and eventually territorial stigmatisation. If this is the case, a neighbourhood policy such as the 2007 '40-neighbourhoods policy', in which forty neighbourhoods were explicitly selected as the nation's worst neighbourhoods, might do more harm than good. Even though many publications suggest that an impaired or stigmatised reputation has many negative effects on a neighbourhood, such as difficulties in attracting investors and selling or renting more expensive dwellings, an outflow of middle-class and upwardly mobile residents and resident's feelings of being a 'second class citizen' (Permentier, 2009).

The relation between categorising neighbourhoods in order to implement neighbourhood policies and stigmatisation is, however, has only been studied to a limited extent, especially in the Netherlands. This paper, which is the result of an internship at the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and my research master's thesis, aims to reveal whether the Dutch neighbourhood policies were indeed successful, or whether they led to (possibly irreversible) stigmatisation. In order to do this, I will first give a short introduction to the Dutch neighbourhood policies. In the following section, I will elaborate on

the notions of labelling and (territorial) stigmatisation. Subsequently, I will describe the effects of neighbourhood policies between 1970 and 2010 in four Dutch neighbourhoods and finally finish with a conclusion and discussion.

2 | THE DUTCH NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY
A short introduction

The Dutch neighbourhood policies were developed in the decades after the Second World War. Although the urban areas were more or less ignored for the first years due to suburbanisation (Wittebrood & Van Dijk, 2007; Vermeijden, 1997; KEI kenniscentrum stedelijke vernieuwing, 2007), especially from the nineteen seventies, revitalising the abandoned, impoverished and dilapidated neighbourhoods in and near the old city centres became increasingly important. In these years, the policy focused especially on the poor inhabitants of the neighbourhood, and aimed to improve their living conditions by building new, inexpensive housing (Vermeijden, 1997).

However, in the nineteen eighties, the problems seemed to flourish as much as they did before (KEI kenniscentrum stedelijke vernieuwing, 2007). This led to an alteration in focus: instead of deploying only 'physical' measures such as constructing new residential blocks, other instruments were also developed. This included improving the socio-economical position of the tenants and introducing differentiation in the housing stock (Vermeijden, 1997). In the nineteen nineties the Big City Policy (*Grotestedenbeleid)* was established, in which, next to physical and socio-economic measures, social (participation) programmes were incorporated. Nevertheless, this did not solve the problems in many communities: in 2006, the Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment noted that some neighbourhoods were in grave danger of becoming hazardous hotspots (KEI kenniscentrum stedelijke vernieuwing, 2007). In 2007, forty neighbourhoods were 'objectively' selected in which problems accumulated. By investing in housing, education, integration and safety, these neighbourhoods had to transform into flourishing, vital neighbourhoods where "the residents contribute to society, have a perspective on social mobility and participate in the labour market (Van Kooten, 2009: 20, translation YW).. Similar to the Big City Policy, it covered social, socio-economical and physical measures, and aimed to integrate different programs in order to obtain a holistic approach (Van Kooten, 2009). This so-called '40-neighbourhoods policy' was the most comprehensive vehicle for improving the condition of the most vulnerable in the big cities; not only did it aim to improve the living conditions of the urban dwellers, it also served as a means for upward mobilisation and integration (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2009).

3 | PITFALLS OF URBAN RENEWAL
Reputation, labelling and stigmatisation

The public space is more than just decoration in people's lives: it is constructed in an active, social way. Due to media, friends and acquaintances, residents and non-residents are informed of an image of an area; this gives a neighbourhood a normative connotation. By

constructing a meaning attached to an area, a stereotype is constructed. From then on, the neighbourhood will be interpreted through a biased lens; a lens that can be either positive or negative (Kleinhans & Slob, 2008). A neighbourhood reputation does, therefore, not exist 'naturally'; it is continuously constructed by personal experiences, media and straight-forward visible characteristics and functions of the neighbourhood. This eventually may lead to stigmatisation: a neighbourhood then becomes tainted by an undesirable, unacceptable trait. Possessing such an attribute, or the discovery of such, disparages the area (Goffman, 1963).

A stigmatised neighbourhood is regarded as 'contaminated'; as a 'bad neighbourhood' (Goffman, 1963), therefore, reputation has implications that go further than just appearance. In general, two distinct kinds of reputations, both with different effects and threats, can be distinguished: the internal and the external reputation. The former refers to the reputation of the neighbourhood among individual residents. This reputation is quite nuanced, because the residents have detailed knowledge of the internal problems and affairs (Ouwehand, Kempen, Kleinhans, & Visscher, 2008; Permentier, 2009). The effects of this kind of reputation can, however, be harmful. Residents may internalize the negative images of the neighbourhood that have been communicated by the media and other third parties. This can lead to feelings of shame and decrease of self-confidence. In order to deal with these negative outlooks they can develop coping strategies, such as increasing the physical distance to the neighbourhood (by moving somewhere else) or increasing the psychical distance (by breaking all ties with the neighbourhood and its other residents) (Permentier, 2009). Moreover, such territorial (self)stigmatisation may lead to the so-called 'neighbourhood effects', that imply that living in a neighbourhood with a concentration of disadvantaged inhabitants causes a further reduction of the inhabitant's chances in life and an increase in vulnerability (Musterd & Ostendorf, 2009). Eventually, a 'culture of poverty' may be developed in these areas, in which the most deprived households, concentrated in one area, become alienated from the rest of society through capitalism, profit-oriented production, low wages, failing services and neo-liberalist responsabilisation (Lewis, 1961).

The external reputation is related to the reputation of the neighbourhood among non-residents (i.e. other urban dwellers, individuals from other regions and professionals such as employees of housing corporations). Compared to the internal reputation, this reputation is based less on detailed observations, and more on prejudices. These prejudices are shaped by information that is available, often simplified images of exaggerated differences between neighbourhoods. Therefore, the external reputation is generally more negative than the nuanced internal reputation (Ouwehand et al., 2008; Suttles, 1972). The external reputation has an even stronger influence on the neighbourhoods. For instance, neighbourhoods with a degraded reputation often have to cope with an outflow of more well-to-do households, leading to a further concentration of poverty. At the same time, it becomes harder to attract middle-class residents, because they are deterred by the impaired reputation. The mixing of different populations, often regarded as one of the goals of renewal, therefore may turn out to be increasingly difficult (Leidelmeijer, Marlet, Woekens, & Schulenberg, 2011; Permentier 2009). Additionally, a negative external reputation can result in a decrease in property values: real-estate loses its worth and is subsequently harder to sell, and investments are inhibited due to enlarged risks. Finally, other effects of residing in a bad reputation neighbourhood on the population are limitations of social participation (due to a stigma imposed on the residents) (Wacquant, 1993), difficulties in finding a job or getting a mortgage (Aalbers, 2005) and restricted usage of public services (Dean & Hastings, 2000).

A bad reputation can, in sum, have harmful effects on the social, socio-economical and physical condition of the neighbourhood. Then, how does this relate to neighbourhood policies and the categorisation of neighbourhoods? This question leads us to the so-called labelling theory; a theory developed by the Howard S. Becker, which claims that every society has several rules that are imposed on all members of the group. Individuals who are not able or willing to fully adjust to the norms of the society are considered deviant, and can subsequently become outsiders. The definition of deviance Becker practices is that an individual is deviant when it fails to follow the rules of society, and that the society has the agency to decide whether these offenses are regarded as grave or as innocent. Only when an individual or institution notices the offences and is willing to make it an issue, society has an incentive to intervene (Becker, 1963). Although this theory concerns mainly individuals which suffer from mental illness or are drug use, it seems to be highly applicable to neighbourhood policies as well. Another crucial aspect of Becker's theory is the notion of stigmatisation. When an individual is caught breaking the rules, and then labelled as different or deviant, he or she will be branded as such. This stigmatisation can lead to a deterioration of the situation, because it is associated with several prejudices and assumptions about the individual's character. Subsequently, the individual is rejected and marginalized in his daily routines, leading to a life as an outlaw (Becker, 1963).

The self-fulfilling prophecy of labelling, which can be regarded as the crux of Becker's theory, is mainly related to individuals or groups, not to neighbourhoods. However, according to Wacquant (1993), a concentration of stigmatised (and labelled) groups in one area may lead to territorial stigmatisation. In *Urban Outcasts,* he explains how these stigmas have arisen, developed and exploited in order to criminalise socio-economical arrears and poverty. He substantiates this claim by referring to the French *Banlieus* and the North-American ghettos. The reputation of these areas is so bad that even initiatives for urban renewal are regarded more as an insult than as a positive development, because they served as a confirmation of the neighbourhood's corrupted reputation (Wacquant, 2007). This is closely related to Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence, which refers to systems of meaning that are regarded as (the most) legitimate, imposed by power structures on members of other groups and classes (Bourdieu, 1977). In this way, a certain meaning (i.e. the meaning of a bad, failed neighbourhood) is imposed on a certain area by a specific group of power (policy makers). This mechanism, which closely resembles the labelling theory, may eventually function as an affirmation of the deprived resident's status as secondary citizens, which leads to a further deterioration of the neighbourhood's situation. The reputation of a neighbourhood is easily damaged and hard to restore, which may lead to several problems for the inhabitants. In sum, once a neighbourhood has established a reputation that is considered negative, it may be labelled as a 'bad neighbourhood´. This can eventually lead to a further worsening of the situation. Therefore, the development of a shortlist of 'bad neighbourhoods' can have harmful effects on both the area and its inhabitants. This potential pitfall of urban renewal, however, has never been studied in the country which has one of the most elaborate urban neighbourhood policies in the world: The Netherlands. The implications of the Dutch policies will be examined in the next section.

4 | DEPRIVATION AND STIGMATISATION IN THE FIELD
Urban renewal four deprived Dutch neighbourhoods

In order to assess the both positive and negative effects of the Dutch neighbourhood policies I have conducted both a qualitative and a quantitative research in four urban neighbourhoods. The quantitative component translates into measuring the 'objective' developments in liveability, safety, demographics, the valuation of the residential environment and other statistics as they are gathered by the municipalities. This data may both indicate a positive effect of the neighbourhood policy, or a negative effect, possibly caused by stigmatisation through categorisation. I established four indicators with the intention of enabling comparisons of the restructured neighbourhoods and the rest of the city, and analysing the broader developments within the area: the physical, socio-economic and social conditions of the neighbourhood, and liveability and safety. In addition, I conducted several interviews with residents and other actors and studied archives of resident's associations with the aim of revealing the 'subjective' view of the residents themselves. Finally, I studied existing literature on restructuring of the specific neighbourhood (if available) so that the results could be triangulated. However, because of the limited size of this paper, I will only quickly touch upon most of the more general developments in the neighbourhoods. The four case-studies consist of neighbourhoods that once have been subject to urban renewal.

The first case-study differs in one important aspect from the other case-studies: the urban renewal in this neighbourhood took place about twenty-five years ago. Therefore, the data mainly originates from local archives of resident's organisations. No interviews were conducted, because most of the actors were either untraceable or did not remember the specific renewal. The neighbourhood, the Agniesebuurt, is located near the centre of the Dutch second largest city, Rotterdam. In the late nineteen seventies, it was one of the first neighbourhoods that were subject to intensive renewal in the post-war period. The Agniesebuurt was, at the time of the restructuring, heavily delipilated by decades of neglect and misuse of house owners. It consisted of small dwellings that were often in the possession of slum landlords. Moreover, the composition of the population caused particular problems: an inflow of migrants, a concentration of youth, increasing poverty and the social-action oriented political characteristics of the nineteen seventies led to a swelling tension between the residents themselves and the residents and other actors. Native Dutch, affluent families avoided the neighbourhood, causing an even greater concentration of scarceness, cultures of poverty and social unrest (Projektgroep Agniesebuurt, 1979).

In 1978 the Agniesebuurt was selected as a 'city renewal area'. A large number of the dwellings were bought by the local housing corporations, renovated, and many houses were demolished and rebuilt. Two characteristics were especially noteworthy: first, the policy focused mainly on the residential function of the neighbourhoods. Only few companies and businesses were allowed to keep their office or workplace in the neighbourhood, and regional traffic running through the area was limited. Second, the concept of 'building for the neighbourhood' had a strong influence on the renewal. The project focused mainly on the present tenants of the neighbourhood. Nearly all of them were allowed to return to their neighbourhood, and even the rents had to remain on a similar level. This, of course, led to a renewed housing stock that was still predominantly small and cheap. Social mixing was, at that time, not yet regarded a solution to the problems.

The effects of the urban renewal were ambiguous. In the beginning, the residents were for the most part ill-fated about the successes of the renewal. The process of buying out the owners of the dwellings and renewing the housing stock was long-lasting and caused quite some nuisance. This, eventually, caused some residents to occupy the housing corporations office in order to gain support for their problems. On the long term, the renewal also had an unexpected effect; it enabled residents to (temporarily) move to a different neighbourhood, and especially the more affluent households often did not return to the Agniesebuurt. This caused a further concentration of deprivation. According to the residents, this was also caused by the nuisance of the restructuring (Projektgroep Stadsvernieuwing Agniesebuurt, 1979-198; Projektgroep Stadsvernieuwing Agniesebuurt, 1980).

Finally, even though the reputation of the neighbourhood was not very good before the restructuring, the process of demolishing and rebuilding deteriorated the image of the neighbourhood. First, the residents were afraid that the neighbourhood would become stigmatised through (media) attention for its bad conditions. Therefore, they demanded the meetings of the project-team to be inaccessible for the general public. They feared a negative representation of their neighbourhood. This fear was underlined by the housing corporations, who were worried about the lettability of their housing stock (even though Rotterdam had to deal with a large housing shortage!). Second, the residents condemned the grave condition in which the neighbourhood sank during the first years of the renewal. Demolished houses, sealed houses and a general disorder were considered harmful for the neighbourhood's reputation. In order to minimize the damage, residents enforced the project-team to invest in art-projects and public space. In conclusion, even in the earliest forms of urban renewal, territorial stigmatisation was feared by both the residents and the involved housing corporations. Albeit the archives show indications of stigmatisation, it is, however, unclear whether this has actually hampered the neighbourhood's development. One last important remark, nonetheless: the Agniesebuurt is still on the current list of the nation's most deprived and problematic neighbourhoods.

The second case-study is related to the Dutch 'Big Cities Policy' of the early nineteen-nineties. The neighbourhood which received the most extensive funding was the Bijlmermeer in the Southeast of Amsterdam. Because of the magnitude of the renewal project this area, a vast amount of quantitative data about the physical, socio-economic and social conditions in the neighbourhood is available. I also conducted interviews in order to acquire more depth.

The Bijlmermeer is in several aspects an exceptional neighbourhood. First, it is divergent in its sheer size; at the start of the renewal it harboured up to 40.000 inhabitants (Terpstra, Kleuver, & Soomeren, 2010). Second, it was built nearby Amsterdam in the post-war area as a whole new residential area. It was the first full-scale high-rise neighbourhood. In the nineteen-seventies, the Bijlmermeer was regarded as a new, utopian city for the modern citizen. The former mayor of Amsterdam, Van Hall, described the Bijlmermeer in 1964 with the following words: "So far, a nicer and more modern city of this scale has never been developed and built anywhere in this world. The opportunity is here: a project for the most comfortable place to live one can think of!" (KEI kenniscentrum stedelijke vernieuwing, 2011, translation YW). The high-rises facilitated both a high population density and a green environment, and for that time, the quality of housing was above average. In short, the dwellings matched the requirements of the wealthy, modern middle class (KEI kenniscentrum stedelijke vernieuwing, 2011).

Even though the Bijlmermeer was regarded as the city of the future, its peak did not last long. The middle class residents in Amsterdam preferred to move towards a family home

in nearby cities like Lelystad, Purmerend and Almere. Others were deterred by the massive scale and the neighbourhood's anonymous design. This fear was intensified by articles discussing high-rise related disorders such as flatneurosis. Moreover, only few years after the first buildings were completed the nuisances in the neighbourhood amplified, especially regarding drugs related troubles. Many of the original residents rapidly moved towards other areas; leaving many flats unoccupied. Eventually, the population of the Bijlmermeer changed towards a concentration of deprived young residents, and after the Surinamese declaration of independence, often young Surinamese men. Some facilities were never finished, and mismanagement of the buildings led to vandalism and litter. Soon, the modern utopia transformed in a nearly unliveable dystopia: 'the Dutch ghetto' (KEI kenniscentrum stedelijke vernieuwing, 2011; Helleman & Wassenberg, 2004).

The renewal of the Bijlmermeer emerged (unsuccessfully) only twenty years after the completion of the first buildings. It accelerated, however, in 1992, when an El Al plane crashed into one of the buildings, killing at least forty-three people and destroying over two hundred houses. At the start of the project three main goals were formulated: improving the housing situation of the Bijlmermeer (increasing the demand for houses and improving the resident's satisfaction), increasing the labour market participation of the population and reinforcing the urban life in the Bijlmermeer by attracting businesses and cultural facilities. Many high-rises were demolished and replaced by more expensive low-rises and detached houses. This was a successful strategy: the average house value increased dramatically. Moreover, the number of relocations decreased as well. Increasing the neighbourhood's socio-economic status, however, remained more or less unsuccessful. Deprivation, unemployment and poverty persisted (DSP-groep, 1994-2010).

Yet, even though the living conditions in the neighbourhood improved in some aspects, the reputation of the neighbourhood remained tainted by years of stigmatisation. Newspaper did not address the renewed Bijlmermeer in a more positive way: on the contrary, their tone only changed in a more negative way (DSP-groep, 1994-2010). According to the interviewees, this was the result of an interaction between two developments. On the one side, the Bijlmermeer was traditionally regarded as the nation's (only) ghetto, due to both the mainly black population and the troubles regarding liveability. On the other side, the continuous emphasis that was placed on the renewal of the Bijlmermeer may also have served as a confirmation of the neighbourhood's deplorable state. However, in contrary to the Agniesebuurt, the Bijlmermeer had been a stigmatised area from long before the renewal was initiated. Therefore, the stigmatisation was probably more a result of the deprivation within the area than of the continuous 'official stigmatisation' through renewal programmes.

In the last few years of the nineteenth century, area based interventions were considered one of the most important instruments of the government's emancipatory task. This fitted the spirit of these years perfectly; an age in which integration, fear of ghettoization and the challenging integration of ethnic minorities increasingly dominated the public and political debates. The expansion of the neighbourhood policies is therefore related to the emergence of the populist right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn and publications like Scheffer's *The multicultural drama* (2000).

One of the neighbourhoods that have been subject to renewal projects in these years was Leiden-Noord, a neighbourhood in de medium-sized city of Leiden. Leiden-Noord was built both in the pre-war era and in the post war area, leading to different kinds of dwellings in distinct districts. The area was suffered from several problems, such as a bad reputation, a

concentration of unemployed individuals, low-income households and migrants. Moreover, it had a dense population and green areas were scarce. Even though the neighbourhood was originally a working class area, one of the interviewees stated that over the last years, the situation had become more problematic. Due to the small-sized dwellings, the neighbourhood increasingly attracted those who had the least to spend in the entire city, leading to a neighbourhood that was generally deprived of resources. Every resident of Leiden subsequently knew that Leiden-Noord was more or less the most unfavourable area of residence for anyone who was socio-economically just slightly above the underclass. The area is highly segregated; one of the interviewees even argued that it consists of several ethnic 'enclaves' that do not mix at all. The native Dutch groups are highly prejudiced about the immigrant groups, while the migrant enclaves are much more traditional than the Dutch residents. Despite this segregation, however, the social cohesion in the neighbourhood was strong.

The reconstruction plans consisted, similar to the 'Big City Policies' in the Bijlmermeer, of a physical, socio-economic and social component. The most important strategy was achieving a mixed population by attracting more middle- and upper-class residents by means of demolition and the construction of luxury homes. The establishment of the more upper-class district of New Leyden, in which residents were given the opportunity to design their own house, was one of the main projects in this component. However, this did not lead to a higher valuation of the neighbourhood. In contrast, the average house value declined, compared to the rest of the city. The socio-economic situation in the neighbourhood did not improve either. According one of the interviewees, the inflow of more affluent households did not have an effect, as they are concentrated within one part of the area. Likewise, an interviewed policy maker was critical: projects that were established in order to strengthen the local economy did not have any effect. Only on the social level, the interviewees and data show positive effects: programmes in order to promote integration and mutual interactions increased the resident's involvement in the neighbourhood.

However, did the renewal projects in the deprived neighbourhood of Leiden-Noord also impact its already vulnerable reputation? All interviewees reacted to this question in a subdued way. They argued that the reputation has always been bad; the selection of Leiden-Noord as a renewal area was therefore generally accepted and regarded as necessary by the local residents. No real stigmatisation seems therefore have taken place. The interviewed resident even considers the reputation of Leiden-Noord now even slightly better. In this case, the neighbourhood was already considered a 'bad area', making any renewal projects welcomed rather than despised and feared.

The final case is, again, located in Amsterdam. The Neighbourhood of Bos en Lommer was one of the neighbourhoods in the so-called '40-neighbourhoods policy'. It was selected in 2007 as one of the forty most deprived neighbourhoods in the nation, and in the 2008 ranking of 'worst neighbourhoods' one of its districts turned out to be the number one. Obviously, the position in the ranking lead to major publicity, transforming Bos en Lommer from a more or less normal urban area into one of the most discussed areas in the Netherlands.

Similar to Leiden-Noord, Bos en Lommer is a neighbourhood consisting of both post-war and pre-war districts. It is located in the West of Amsterdam and divided by a large motorway. The district on the far west, the so-called Kolenkitbuurt, is the most disadvantaged. Even though the living conditions in the area became more and more problematic during the nineteen-nineties, one of the interviewees argued that it took very

long before the policy makers acknowledged the challenging position of the neighbourhood. He blames the legislators' obsession with the Bijlmermeer, the second case-study, for this. Only after riots in a nearby area, the policy makers focused their attention to the suburbs in Western Amsterdam. These riots were, according to one interviewee, a big shock for everyone; no one expected the problems to be this intense. Furthermore, most of the harms were related to the neighbourhood's socio-economic status. The area harbours many low-income, single parent families, uneducated individuals, young adults and children, and migrants. However, also the dwellings were generally in a bad physical state, and many residents lived isolated lives; interaction between residents was considered rare (KEI kenniscentrum stedelijke vernieuwing, 2011; Dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling Amsterdam, 2009).

Again, the effects of the renewal are ambiguous. Eventually, the average value of the houses did rise, but right after the publication of the neighbourhood ranking, the housing value in Bos en Lommer decreased. This could be interpreted as one of the effects of the publication of the shortlist. Moreover, the percentage of deprived families did not decrease after the renewal, but the figures actually show a rise in poverty. However, this might be related to the economic crisis starting from 2009, which disproportionally affected vulnerable households. Besides, the interviewees both acknowledges that socio-economic successes are hard to measure, as Bos en Lommer is regarded a 'social escalator area', characterised by an inflow of deprived residents that eventually become upwardly mobile and subsequently leave the area. This leads subsequently to a lower social cohesion, although the figures show an above average rise of involvement in the neighbourhood (Bicknese & Slot, 2010). One special strategy is 'enforcing' citizen's engagement by designing new high-rise blocks in which different groups are stimulated to 'bump into eachother' and to work together (Hartman, 2010).

Even though the effects of the renewal are, up to now, moderately positive, one may wonder whether the overwhelming attention for the neighbourhood's deplored condition has left some indelible scars. In fact, the reputation of Bos en Lommer has, according to one of the interviews, was generally good up until the nineteen-nineties. Before, the inner-city neighbourhoods were much more stigmatised than the newer, suburban areas outside the ring road motorway that divided the city centre from its surrounding neighbourhoods. The neat, working class area of Bos en Lommer, subsequently, had a better image in these years than many other regions. This changed in the mid-eighties, when the city centre became more popular and gentrified. After the riots of 1998, finally, the reputation of the growth districts in the West of Amsterdam was fixed at a negative point. However, when one district in Bos en Lommer was selected as the most deprived neighbourhood of the Netherlands, this considered a shock for both residents and public administrators. Some of the civil servants actually reported a rise in average income and some emerging gentrification. One of the interviewees argued that the neighbourhood was in an upward spiral; the stigmatisation of the shortlist was therefore considered unjust and harmful. This is confirmed by the small decline of average housing value in 2007, the year of the publication, and in a citizen's survey, many deplored the stigmatised reputation of the area after the negative publicity. Finally, one respondent even argued that unoccupied office buildings, that were to be rented by either an art academy or the Stedelijk Museum, were unable to find a new tenant after the fuss about the shortlist. In Bos en Lommer, all in all, the categorisation as a 'bad neighbourhood' did indeed have harmful effects on the area and its residents.

5 | CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

In this paper, I have examined the pitfalls of area based interventions in the form of neighbourhood policies. The general aim of these policies is improving the living condition of individuals and households residing in deprived areas, and a number of studies emphasised the successful outcomes of these strategies (Van Beckhoven en Van Kempen, 2002; Van Bergeijk et al. 2008; Kleinhans 2005; Wittebrood & Van Dijk 2007; Van Dam 2010). However, all these studies have overlooked one potential downside of area based interventions: the selection, categorisation and stigmatisation of a specific area creates vulnerability, and may also reinforce vulnerability in the most deprived areas. Once policy makers label a neighbourhood as 'bad' and 'deprived', the neighbourhood can turn into a deviant place; a place that cannot be trusted. This idea can also be internalized by the inhabitants, causing further deterioration of the situation, and by others, leading to avoidance of the neighbourhood by middle-class households, further concentration of deprivation, and falling investments. Consequently, the area becomes a subject of symbolic violence, as it becomes (unintentionally) territorial stigmatised, criminalised and excluded by power structures (Wacquant, 2007; Bourdieu, 1977; Goffman 1963; Becker, 1963).

   This mechanism of labelling and stigmatisation through selection and categorisation has never been studied in the Netherlands. The final chapter gives a limited summary of four neighbourhoods which have been selected as a 'renewal area' over the last few decades. The effects of categorising an area as a 'problem neighbourhood' in order to improve the local living conditions seem to be ambiguous. In some cases, the renewal had some positive effects, even though some worried about the stigmatising effects of categorisation. Leiden-Noord, was clearly not stigmatised by being selected as a renewal area. The former working-class neighbourhood had been considered Leiden's 'worst neighbourhood' for decades. Even though most of the projects did not seem to have significant effects (the figures and interviewees only consider the social projects to be successful), the renewal projects did not harm the neighbourhood's reputation. It only served as an affirmation of something that was considered 'common sense'. Most residents, therefore, rather welcomed than feared the area based interventions. In the Bijlmermeer, the situation was more or less similar, even though the living conditions were far worse than in Leiden-Noord. This large-scale neighbourhood had been the Netherlands' most discussed dystopia for quite some years. The intensive renewal had some positive effects: most of the unwanted high-rises were demolished and replaced by much popular, more expensive family-dwellings. Consequently, residents were less inclined to move, leading to an improved social cohesion. However, the reputation of the neighbourhood did not change; it remained one of the most stigmatised areas in the Netherlands. It is yet unsure whether this is caused by the renewal, or rather a continuation of its population and the grave situation of the nineteen-eighties. Apparently, when a neighbourhood is overall regarded as the most deprived of the city or even nation, assigning them as one of the 'problematic neighbourhoods' is often accompanied with approval of residents and other actors. However, when this is not the case, the situation can be different.

   The Agniesebuurt in Rotterdam went through intensive restructuring in nineteen-seventies. Even though the quality of the buildings was improved, the process also had some unwanted effects: on the short term, it affected the neighbourhood's reputation both by negative publicity and by the nuisance caused by the renewal. Up to today, the

neighbourhood remained one of the Dutch 'problematic neighbourhoods'. The final case-study, Bos en Lommer, was affected the most by being selected as a 'problematic neighbourhood'. By the publication of the ranking of Dutch neighbourhood, the Bos en Lommer district the Kolenkitbuurt was publicly pilloried as the 'worst place' in the Netherlands. Obviously, despite the good intentions, this resulted in serious stigmatisation. Most residents and policy makers experienced an upward spiral in the years before the implementation of the policy, leading to a feeling of betrayal when the Kolenkitbuurt was selected as the number one problematic area in the Netherlands. It led to a decrease in real-estate value, criticism of citizens and a decrease in investments.

In these two cases, the successes of the projects were hampered by stigmatisation. Instead of clearly improving the living conditions in the neighbourhoods, selecting and assigning certain areas as 'problem areas' that have to be enhanced or contributed to the development of a stigma. In these cases, the dangers of labelling were actually confirmed by the field, because the Agniesebuurt and Bos en Lommer were not universally considered the city's most deprived neighbourhood. A new label was developed, spread and eventually internalized by the 'official affirmation' of the policy, damaging both the neighbourhood and its residents through the means of symbolic violence.

In conclusion, Becker's labelling theory, Goffman's notion of stigmatisation and Wacquant's focus on territorial stigmatisation provide a new toolbox for analysing extensive neighbourhood policies like the Dutch '40-neighbourhoods policy'. Where most studies only emphasize the positive effects on housing, the socio-economic status of the residents and the social projects, they neglected to examine the effects of the idea of categorising a neighbourhood itself. In this paper, I applied these tools in order analyse the neighbourhood policies from a different angle. In some neighbourhoods, under specific conditions, the reputation of the areas was indeed harmed. In these cases, some stigmatisation occurred, which hampered the neighbourhood's potential. However, this only occurred in neighbourhoods that were not considered the city's worst areas. This leads to the following question: if designating a neighbourhood in order to improve its conditions leads to stigmatisation, is it justifiable to pursue a neighbourhood policy? On the basis of my research, I would argue that intervening in deprived neighbourhood is indeed a viable strategy in reducing urban inequalities and deprivation. However, one should be careful with drafting shortlists of 'bad neighbourhoods' and do justice to the neighbourhood's structure, image and public sphere. Especially when a neighbourhood is *not* subjectively considered a problematic area, even though the objective data demonstrates the contrary, one should be very careful in designating the specific neighbourhood as a 'problematic place', as it will be especially prone to territorial stigmatisation.

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