

THE AREA-BASED PLANNING PROCESS OF DUTCH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

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Abstract

Dutch housing associations are important actors in the field of urban planning. They are independent social enterprises, which take their own decisions on this stock. Many housing associations work with asset management plans to secure that their portfolio meets company goals and market demand. However, in practice decisions of housing associations are often not a direct result of these plans, but of incidents at the neighbourhood level, or of emerged opportunities. Next to that, housing associations nowadays do not only focus on the quality of their own housing stock, but also on the physical, economical and social quality of the whole neighbourhood, which implies cooperation with a wide variety of local actors. As a result housing associations in the Netherlands are increasingly employing an area-based approach towards asset management. In order to analyse the different ways housing associations implement this area-based approach, the concept of planning is used. Five planning types are identified (rational, incremental, collaborative, political and advocacy planning) and transformed into propositions that are tested in a survey among housing managers. From this survey a diffuse picture arises. Housing associations use different elements from different planning types. However, emphasis is on the elements of the rational and collaborative types.

Keywords: Housing, planning, the Netherlands, asset management

INTRODUCTION

Housing associations in The Netherlands are important actors in the field of urban planning. They own and manage nearly one third of the total Dutch housing stock and account for 49% (2009) of all newly developed housing (Centraal Fonds Volkshuisvesting, 2010). Next to that, as a consequence of the concentration of their stock in, often less affluent, areas, they play an important role in the upgrading of deprived neighbourhoods. This upgrading can take shape in numerous forms. It can consist of merely physical activities in the form of maintenance, renovation, demolition, new construction of dwellings and other real estate. It can also encompass socio-economic measures like improving schools, care and welfare arrangements. Traditionally housing associations were focussed on building and managing dwellings for low-income households. Nowadays they have taken up a wider role.

Since the 1990s housing associations developed into independent social enterprises that take their own decisions, with their stock as their main asset. How to manage these assets, how to take decisions on the stock, is an important issue within housing associations. Because decisions affect the people living in and around the stock, these decisions are also important for external actors.

There are two notions that make it relevant to look at these decisions on area level. First of all, this level is seen as the suitable level for the process to come to decisions. Secondly, more

related to the content side of planning, on this level a combination of physical, social and economical factors determine the quality of a neighbourhood.

In this paper the area-based planning process of Dutch housing associations will be elaborated using concepts of planning, of the social enterprise, and of urban renewal. Normative propositions are constructed which are used in a survey to provide an overview of the way Dutch housing associations in urban renewal areas make decisions on their asset management activities. First I will introduce the Dutch housing association sector, including the development into social enterprises and the urban renewal agenda. Next, the concepts of asset management and planning will be discussed. Finally, the results of a survey will be shown.

THE DUTCH HOUSING ASSOCIATION SECTOR

418 Housing associations own 32 percent (2.4 million dwellings) of the total Dutch housing stock, resulting in the largest market share of social housing in Europe (Centraal Fonds Volkshuisvesting, 2010). Since the introduction of the *Besluit Beheer Sociale-huursector* (decree on management of social rented sector) in 1993 and the abolition of structural government subsidies for new construction and renovation in 1995, housing associations operate relatively independently. Since then, they had to decide for themselves what to invest where and how to finance their investments. In practice, the sale of existing social housing is the main source of income which is used to finance urban renewal.

Housing associations operate in a system in which they are supervised on the basis of general ‘fields of performance’: accommodation of target groups; preservation of the quality of dwellings and their environment; consultation of tenants; securing financial continuity; and providing housing and care arrangements (Ministerie van VROM, 2005). To contribute to these ‘fields of performance’ the main asset of housing associations is their housing stock.

Housing associations are nowadays often regarded as social enterprises (e.g. Boelhouver, 1999, van Dijk et al., 2002, Marshall and Lovatt, 2004, Gruis, 2005, Pawson, 2006) and less as task-oriented agents of government. Social enterprises are private organisations operating on the market, pursuing social goals which are related to the general interest, producing goods and services and of which the financial surplus is (re)invested in the social goal (Toonen et al., 2003).

Although social enterprises have a hybrid position between the state, market and society, Dees (2001) has identified in his definition some shared characteristics. He states that:

- “Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector, by:
- Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value),
 - Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission,
 - Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning,
 - Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand, and
 - Exhibiting heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created.”

Next to the increased autonomy and independence which led to the development of housing associations towards social enterprises, the increased focus on the neighbourhood is a major development among Dutch housing associations. In 1997, ‘liveability’ of the neighbourhood

was added as a field of performance to the BBSH. Since then, housing associations are also accountable for their activities to secure or improve the liveability of the neighbourhoods where their dwellings are located. This enabled as well as stimulated housing associations to develop activities that benefit the living conditions in the neighbourhood, to develop non-residential real estate and to maintain and improve the environment of their estates (Ministerie van VROM, 2005).

Area-based planning of housing associations should contribute to 'better' neighbourhoods. What constitutes a good neighbourhood depends on the specific characteristics and context of that neighbourhood. However, goals that are shared in most urban renewal neighbourhoods can be distinguished. For that purpose I use the main policy document of the national government on urban renewal: *Nota Stedelijke Vernieuwing* (Memorandum on Urban Renewal) (VROM, 1997).

According to this memorandum urban renewal encompasses 'policy that is centred on the attractiveness of areas as places to reside, to work, to run a business and to sojourn'. Goal is to create vigorous cities, being differentiated, varied, but not divided. One of the measures is *urban restructuring*: building new housing, selling rental housing and adapting existing housing to increase the quality of housing conditions. Goals are to stop spatial segregation, to ameliorate liveability and to retain and attract the well-to-do residents and businesses (VROM, 1997).

The memorandum states that the process of urban restructuring requires the joined effort of all stakeholders. The local authorities have the lead. Housing associations are seen as partners that act out of their social mission and out of financial self-interest (to prevent voids, poor lettability, and vandalism). Housing associations are expected to contribute to restructuring by the adaptation of their stock. They sign performance agreements with and are accountable to the local authorities. Urban renewal is focused on neighbourhoods. Different forms of policy come together in the neighbourhood, keeping the wider relationship with the city in mind (VROM, 1997).

This neighbourhood focus was strengthened by the 'action program urban restructuring'. 56 Neighbourhoods were assigned by the Housing Minister in 2003 that were in need of specific attention and extra investments and financial support. This was part of a more general government policy to stimulate urban regeneration. One of the main objectives of this policy was also to achieve a more comprehensive approach towards urban regeneration, including not only renewal of the housing stock, but including physical, social and economic measures in a balanced way. In practice, however, the emphasis remained on physical measures (e.g. Gruis et al., 2006).

Partly in reaction to this, in recent years several reports were issued on Dutch housing policy of which the most prominent are the advice reports of the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy "Vertrouwen in de buurt" [Confidence in the neighbourhood] (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, 2005) and the Council for the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment "Stad en Stijging" [City and Upward Mobility] (VROM-raad, 2006). In both reports the neighbourhood is seen as the place where the social and political confidence of residents can be regained. The reports plead for more attention for social regeneration of deprived areas, including measures for empowerment of socially disadvantaged people and to keep the upwardly mobile people attracted to their

neighbourhood as to retain them for the city. Both councils recognize a key role for housing associations.

In the end of 2007, the former Housing Minister Vogelaar has designated 40 neighbourhoods where extra funds have come available. Furthermore, policy is focussed explicitly on increasing socio-economic measures, in addition to physical renewal. Many housing associations have taken up a much broader task and have taken on new roles. They remain primarily responsible for the physical renewal of their housing stock, but also have begun to facilitate, finance and develop activities to stimulate safety, care, welfare, education and employment (e.g. Brandsen et al., 2006). Many of these activities are developed at neighbourhood level, in cooperation with the local government and other societal organisations, thus increasing the neighbourhood focus in housing associations' management.

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF SOCIAL LANDLORDS REGARDING THEIR HOUSING STOCK

Housing associations have to fulfil their objectives with their stock as their main asset. Many housing associations in The Netherlands work with asset management plans to secure that their portfolio meets company goals and market demand. However, in practice decisions of housing associations are often not a direct result of their strategic plans, but of incidents at the neighbourhood level, or of emerged opportunities.

Due to the reduction of government control and the abolishment of financial support housing associations have developed their own asset management strategies to fill in the gap in the housing associations' policies and to cope with financial risks (see e.g. Gruis and Nieboer, 2004a, Gruis and Nieboer, 2004b). Asset management is meant to secure that the housing portfolio meets the organisation's goals and market demand. It can be seen as 'the decisionmaking process of social landlords regarding their housing stock' (Gruis, 2005). This process results in (proposals for) physical and non-physical activities regarding the housing stock. Physical activities can for instance be maintenance, renovation, demolition and new building. Non-physical activities can for instance be adjusting the rent, changing the target group and hiring a caretaker. Physical activities (like the building of community centres) and non-physical activities (like organizing social events) that are not directly focused on the housing stock can influence asset management strategy, but is not considered as a part it.

Several models for determining asset management strategies have been developed since the 1990s (van Vliet, 1993, van den Broeke, 1998, Gruis and Nieboer, 2004b, Eskinasi, 2006, van Os, 2007). In general, these models have been derived from theories on and models for strategic business planning in which strategies for individual estates are derived from general portfolio objectives in a systematic, rationalized manner. According to Nieboer and Gruis (2004) all models have the same general outline of analysis, formulating provisional policy options, testing (ex ante evaluating) these options (option appraisal), and formulating definitive options. Many models follow a top-down approach, in which general strategies for the development of the portfolio are linked to investment strategies for the individual estates. The existing models can be seen as part of the rational-analytical paradigm of strategy formulation within organisations (Nieboer, 2007).

These models, however, have various drawbacks, some of which are linked to the fundamental drawbacks of strategic business planning and others to the specific context of social landlords. Nieboer (2009) states that investments of housing associations do only

partly result from systematic decision-making. He explains this by the difference in the level of abstraction between the portfolio policies and the investment choices and by the assumptions behind the process models (investment decisions follow from central policy, the housing association is one undivided actor, the housing association decides on its own) that are not applicable to housing associations.

In practice decisions of housing associations are often not a direct result of their plans, but of incidents at the neighbourhood level or of emerged opportunities (e.g. Nieboer, 2007). According to Straub (2002) a clear link between the strategic stock and the planned maintenance is lacking as well. The existing models for asset management can be seen as normative models. The models describe how strategic planning could be done, but not how strategic planning is actually done. The models put great emphasis on analysis and translation into policy. The strategic relationship between the asset management plans and the actual investments is, however, weak. Formal documented strategies do not reflect the actual strategies followed in practice (Nieboer, 2007). Gruis (2006) also notes that on paper many housing associations already transformed to dynamic enterprises that are customer- and society-driven, but that there is a discrepancy between policy formulation and policy implementation. Mintzberg et al. (1999) refer to this difference as the difference between the 'intended strategy' and the 'realized strategy'. The realized strategy is a combination of intended and emergent strategy.

There are specific circumstances that make it difficult for housing associations to incorporate effective top-down planning mechanisms. Gruis (2006) lists four properties of the housing association that make it difficult to plan top-down: the rigidity of the product (the house); the complexity of the environment; the functional organizational structure; and the vague border between supplier and buyer of the housing service.

Housing associations nowadays do not only focus on the quality of their own housing stock, but also on the physical, economical and social quality of the whole neighbourhood, which implies cooperation with a wide variety of local actors. As a result housing associations in the Netherlands are increasingly employing an area-based approach towards asset management, which takes into account the characteristics of areas and the other actors present in the area. Several authors have suggested that a neighbourhood-based asset management fits better with the practice and context of housing associations. Gruis (2006) and Van Os (2007) mention the following reasons for a neighbourhood-based approach:

- The neighbourhood is important for the living experience of people. It is the level on which residents identify themselves and on which outsiders form an image;
- The neighbourhood level is concrete enough to debate on and to plan on in cooperation with external parties;
- It is often the level on which partnerships with stakeholders and urban restructuring plans are made;
- The neighbourhood level is a suitable level for balancing costs and revenues and for planning in stages;
- Planning at neighbourhood level can contribute to internal cooperation. Representatives from the 'functional' departments within the organisation (such as the maintenance department, the real estate development department, treasury and the front-office) can work together on neighbourhood plans.
- Thinking about the portfolio, the quality of public and commercial services and social structures coincide on this level.

Next to these reasons, location is of great importance for housing associations as real estate owners. The quality of the surroundings of a property is an important determinant for the value and popularity of a dwelling. Secondly, the dwellings of housing associations are often concentrated in certain neighbourhoods, which give them a specific interest in the development of the neighbourhood quality.

In Dutch practice, there are already several housing associations where management decisions are not based on portfolio considerations, but on considerations on neighbourhood level. Activities originate from negotiations with different parties and are based on social problems, technical quality and future market position of estates in a specific neighbourhood (Nieboer, 2007).

PLANNING BY HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

In order to analyse the different area-based approaches the concept of planning is used. Planning is concerned with ‘shaping futures in which better conditions for human life and planetary survival can be achieved’ (Hillier and Healy, 2008: xxiii). Planning is thus aimed at future improvement of the environment. This fits well with most asset management strategies of housing associations, which aim to improve the quality of the housing stock, and with the wider role they have taken in not only improving the housing stock itself but also contributing to the improvement of social and economic quality of neighbourhoods. In the past planning was primarily the task of the government, but nowadays also other actors engage in planning.

Planning has both a process side and a content side. As Healy (2006) notes: “The planning tradition [...] represents a continual effort to interrelate conceptions of the qualities and social dynamics of places with notions of the social processes of ‘shaping places’ through the articulation and implementation of policies” (Healey, 2006: 7). Planning can also be described as ‘an activity centrally concerned with the linkage between knowledge and organized action’ (Friedmann and Hudson, 1974: 2). Since the action is organized, we can see the organisation as another component of planning. An organisation can be seen as ‘a goal-directed entity that serves an explicit purpose’ (Anheier, 2005: 142). So planning can be deconstructed into the following general elements which I will use in describing the practice of housing associations: actors, activities, knowledge and purpose.

Next to these descriptive criteria, I will use evaluative criteria formulated by Hudson et al. (1979). They developed criteria “for comparison of different traditions’ strengths and weakness, along with their varying intentions and accomplishments”. They are “basic criteria that one might use for assessing the scope, character, and adequacy of the various planning traditions” (see Table 1).

Criteria	Characteristics and applications
Public interest	Explicit <i>theory of the public interest</i> , along with methods to articulate significant social problems, and pluralist interests in outcomes. May include principles of distributive justice, and procedures for dealing with conflict.
Human dimension	Attention to the <i>personal and spiritual domains</i> of policy imp acts, including intangible outcomes beyond functional-instrumental objectives -for example, psycho-social development, enhancement of dignity, and capacity for self-help.

Feasibility	<i>Ease of learning and applying</i> the theory. Implies the theory is practical to translate into policy implications, and adaptable to varying types of problems, scales of action and social settings.
Action potential	Provision for carrying ideas into practice, building on experience underway and identifying new lines of effective solutions to problems.
Substantive theory	<i>Descriptive and normative theory</i> of social problems and processes of social change. Predictive capacity based on informal judgments, not just trend extrapolation; ability to trace long range and indirect policy consequences; historical perspectives on opportunities and constraints on action.
Self-reflective	Capacity for laying analytical assumptions open to criticism and counter-proposals; provision for learning from those being planned for; capacity for depicting concrete experience in everyday language, as well as conceptual models using aggregate data.

Table 1. *Criteria for evaluating planning traditions (Hudson et al., 1979)*

PLANNING STYLES

Planning can be done in different ways, with various interpretations of the above criteria. Many authors have tried to classify these ways. The classification in this paper is based on classifications of Healey (2003), Hudson et al.(1979) and Innes et al. (2005) and encompasses the rational, incremental, collaborative, political and social movement style.

Rational planning

Within the rational planning approach (also called rational–technical, synoptic, rational comprehensive or technical-bureaucratic planning) planners try to formulate policy in a scientific way. “Planning is the application of scientific method –however crude- to policy-making” (Faludi, 1973). Important characteristic of rational planning is the distinction between ends and means. According to Davidoff and Reiner (1962) the formulation of values (ends) is the first step in the planning process. These values are delivered by the client and are the result of a political process. Second step is the identification of possible means to reach the ends. This is the rational-technical process, which includes the selection of the best means to reach the end. Last step is the effectuation of the goals through the application of the selected means. This approach offers “flexibility to address the particularity of decision circumstances while constraining corruption by clear accountability of actions to policy criteria” (Healey, 2006: 23).

Incremental planning

Incremental planning (also called successive limited comparisons) is planning where a plan is based on a limited number of alternatives. These alternatives originate out of the planner’s experience and consist of little steps to accomplish a part of the goal. By successive repetition of this process and adjustment to changing circumstances eventually the ends can be reached (Lindblom, 1959). This approach is characterised by Lindblom (1959):

- “Selection of value goals and empirical analysis of the needed action are not distinct from one another but are closely intertwined.
- Since means and ends are not distinct, means-end analysis is often inappropriate or limited.
- The test of a "good" policy is typically that various analysts find themselves directly agreeing on a policy (without their agreeing that it is the most appropriate means to an agreed objective).

- Analysis is drastically limited: Important possible outcomes, alternative potential policies and affected values are neglected.
- A succession of comparisons greatly reduces or eliminates reliance on theory.”

Collaborative planning

The concept of collaborative planning (also called communicative planning) assumes a pluralistic society where local conflicts arise between people from different cultural communities. These conflicts can be dealt with through collaboration by recognizing ‘the potential cultural dimensions of differences’ and by creating ‘an additional “layer” of cultural formation’ (Healey, 2006: 64).

Collaborative planning can be characterized with the following concepts:

- integrative place making: interrelation of economic, social, and environmental relationships;
- collaboration in policymaking: emphasis on collaboration in strategy development, and a mingling of formal politics with pressure groups, citizens groups, business lobbies, and environmental groups.
- inclusive stakeholder involvement: to generate both mutual learning and even consensus building before people come to 'fix' their positions.
- use of 'local' knowledge; the mixture of knowledge built up through practical experience and the frames of reference people use to filter and give meaning to that experience.
- building 'relational' resources: a rich social infrastructure of positive relationships between governance, citizens, and companies (Healey, 1998).

Political planning

Within the political planning approach (also called ‘manipulative politics’, ‘political influence’) a leader works on a one-on-one basis with people which he offers benefits in exchange of support for his agenda. This approach depends on personal loyalty, reciprocity, behind-the-scene deals, promises and rewards (Innes and Gruber, 2005). It refers to relations of power in everyday life as well as to ‘deliberate efforts to gain influence and exercise power in the public realm [...] beyond the household and the firm’ (Healey, 2006).

Social Movement

Planning based on the social movement (also called advocacy planning) is characterized by defending the interests of the weak against the strong (Hudson et al., 1979). It originates from groups of people who feel excluded and/or unrepresented. Typical instruments of the social movement are demonstrations, media-attention and instigating legal action (Innes and Gruber, 2005). A social movement planner develops an alternative vision (compare the alternatives in the rational style) that support the interests of the excluded groups. He uses arguments that serve their interests and that cast doubt on the contested plans (Davidoff, 1965). The goal is ‘to convert people to support this vision and to make their collective voice powerful enough to force a response’ (Innes and Gruber, 2005).

In table 2 the different planning styles are summarized using the general elements of planning.

	Actors	Activities	Knowledge	Purpose
Rational	Specialists (and client)	Analysing	Scientific/objective	Optimal solution
Incremental	Experienced planner	Adapting/adjusting	Experience	Satisfying/agreed upon solution
Collaborative	Stakeholders	Deliberating	Local	reach a consensus

Political	Leader (and constituency)	Negotiating	Strategic/selective	have support of all powerful players by serving their interests.
Social Movement	Unrepresented (and 'lawyer')	Demonstrating, opposing	Legal/logical Arguments	'to convert people to support their vision and to make their collective voice powerful enough to force a response'

Table 2. Summary of planning styles

SURVEY

These planning types and their elements are transformed into propositions that are tested in a survey among housing managers working in priority neighbourhoods (see Appendix for the propositions) in order to get a general picture of how housing associations plan their area-based asset management in practice. The survey was restricted to these neighbourhoods because in these areas we expect to find the most complex problems resulting in an area-based process. 34 Surveys out of a potential 51 (in some neighbourhoods more than one housing association is active) were returned of which one was not useful because it was evident that it was not filled out seriously.

The survey was divided into three parts. In the first part, respondents were asked if they completely agreed, agreed more than disagreed, disagreed more than agreed or disagreed with propositions concerning the general process resulting in (proposed) activities concerning the housing stock. In the second part respondents were asked to indicate if the proposition was (almost) never, sometimes, often or (almost) always applicable to the (proposed) activities in their area in the last four years. In the third part respondents had to place elements relating the planning styles in order of importance.

Expectations

Although no housing association is the same, housing associations working in priority neighbourhoods do have some shared characteristics. They all have the same legal status and function in the same regulatory framework. They can all be considered social enterprises, working on the renewal of problematic areas. Out of these shared characteristics expectations regarding their planning style were derived.

If we relate the concept of the social enterprise to the elements of the planning styles, we expect that the planning style of a social enterprise has elements of the rational style. First of all, ends and means within a social enterprise are separated. The ends relate to the mission to create and sustain social value. The opportunities to serve that mission can be seen as the means. Secondly, the relentless pursuit of these opportunities can be seen as the rational emphasis on analysis (think of the O in the SWOT analysis). Thirdly, the process of innovation fits well with the rational style. The continuous adaptation and learning fits with the incremental style and the heightened sense of accountability fits well with the collaborative style. Political and social movement styles are expected to occur less frequent. When we look at the general urban renewal agenda, a combination of collaborative and rational planning elements are expected. The joined effort, the agreements with and the accountability to the local authority, and the connection with wider urban and national policy fit with the collaborative style. The housing market analysis and the denomination of explicit goals fit with the rational style.

Results

The survey shows that housing associations use different elements from different planning styles. However, emphasis is (as expected) on the elements of the rational and collaborative styles. Activities often result from planning based on elements of these styles. Elements of the social movement style and the political style are reported to be used least. In between are elements of the incremental style.

When we take a look at the different elements of the planning process, it seems that the actors that are most involved in the planning process are the stakeholders (including the housing association) and the policy advisors. Often the process consists of activities such as the balancing of alternative means to reach the formulated goals and the adaptation to changing circumstances. Proposed activities regarding the housing stock are often based on objective, local and/or personal knowledge. Often consensus on the (proposed) activities is reached and often the (proposed) activities take the wishes and interests of all stakeholders into account. Often there is a clear relationship between the (proposed) activities and the goals that are formulated for the area.

When asked to place different elements in order of importance, collaborative elements are considered as most important, incremental elements (except for staff carrying out the work) are ranked second most important. Remarkably, the rational elements on average are ranked second lowest (except for the (policy) advisor) (see table 3). So it seems that in practice rational elements are often used to formulate (proposed) activities, but that they are not recognized as being of top importance.

	Actors	Knowledge	Activities	Concepts
1	Stakeholders (C)	Local knowledge (C)	Consulting / collaborating (C)	Consensus (C)
2	Management (P)	Personal experience/ common sense (I)	Piecemeal adjusting activities/plans to changing circumstances (I)	Experience (I)
3	(Policy) advisors (R)	Strategic/selective information (P)	Exchanging means/interests/positions and deal making (negotiating) (P)	(collective) Action (S)
4	Special interest groups (S)	Scientific/objective (R)	Analysing/Researching (R)	Ratio (R)
5	Staff carrying out the work (I)	Logic/legal arguments (S)	Agitating against other plans / developing alternative plans (S)	Power(P)

Table 3. Elements of planning in order of importance

A possible explanation is that the rational style is seen as a 'basic' style, which is taught at school and is omnipresent. The other styles can be seen as departing from or reacting on this basic style (see also Hudson et al., 1979). In many planning processes rational elements are used; for instance explicit goals are set, alternatives means are compared, or a thorough quantitative analysis is made. However, these rational elements are combined with other elements that are distinguishing the process and are more visible. These elements are defining the perception of the planning process, and not the 'basic' rational elements.

Most housing associations in this study often act as a social enterprise. Four out of five of the characteristics of the social enterprise are subscribed by most of the respondents. On the proposition that activities are innovative or based on innovations, most respondents indicate that this is only sometimes true. An explanation might be that the nature of innovation requires a small share of activities (if all activities were innovative, how innovative are these activities?).

In general, activities of most housing associations in the survey contribute to the urban renewal goals of the government. The goals to attract businesses and to serve the business interest of the housing association are an exception; activities contribute less frequent to these goals. This can be explained by the core mission of the housing association, which is to provide affordable housing on a non-profit basis. Also in urban renewal areas emphasis is on housing and not on attracting businesses to neighbourhoods. Because of the non-profit status of housing associations the contribution of activities to the business interest is not necessary. Most respondents agree on the propositions derived from the evaluative criteria of the planning process, except for the feasibility criterion. Most respondents do not think the process is easy. This shows the need for a better understanding of the process.

DISCUSSION

The survey's focus is on the actual and proposed activities of the last four years. However, because the respondents are employees of the housing associations, results are possibly biased. Responses reflect the perceived reality of the respondent. Especially with the propositions concerning the criteria to assess the planning process, this bias can be expected. With the other propositions we tried to avoid bias by not asking their opinion on an abstract proposition but by relating these propositions to the actual situation in the actual neighbourhoods the respondent works in. In this way respondents were forced to look back at real situations.

Also, the propositions and expectations are based on normative concepts on how planning should be done. In reality the picture might be quite different. Political elements are for instance often not that overt and may not be written down as a formal, designed planning style. The social movement style can be seen as a style that is employed in reaction to the failure of other styles to acknowledge the interests of all stakeholders and as a consequence is not likely to be formally promoted as the preferred style. The incremental style can be seen as a reaction to the flaws of the rational style. Moreover, the urban renewal agenda reflects the politically desirable situation, and can be different from the societal and scientifically desirable situation. This agenda is based on assumptions that can be contested (e.g. Kleinhans, 2005). It is possible that this normative preference for certain styles has influenced the answers of the respondents.

Furthermore, the survey gives a general overview of the use of planning styles. It does not describe the specific local context in which the different planning styles are used. For instance the different characteristics of the dwellings, of the stakeholders, and of the organisation are not taken into account.

Therefore, these findings will be further explored in a multiple case study. In this case study the planning practice of housing associations for a neighbourhood will be studied more in-

depth, taking into account the local context and the type of activity. Document research and interviews with internal and external people involved in the planning process will provide a better understanding of the process and of the strengths and weaknesses of the elements of planning applied in different situations.

CONCLUSION

Housing associations, being private actors with public tasks, have become more important in the production of places, especially in urban renewal areas where they own a large share of the housing stock. They have taken up a wider role in these areas, which made their asset management strategies become more complex. With this growing complexity a pure rational approach does not seem to be sufficient. From literature it was expected that, next to rational elements, elements from other planning styles, especially from collaborative planning, play a role.

The survey confirms this expectation. It shows that, in general, rational elements of planning still play an important role in decision-making on activities regarding the housing stock in regeneration areas, but that these rational elements are combined with elements from other styles, of which the most important is the collaborative one.

Raising awareness within housing associations on the different ways to plan their activities regarding the housing stock can help them to improve their performance in urban renewal. Next to raising awareness a better understanding of the pros and cons of the styles and of when and how to apply the different styles is necessary.

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APPENDIX

<i>Proposition</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>disagree more than agree</i>	<i>agree more than disagree</i>	<i>agree</i>
The execution of the process to come to (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock is easy (<i>feasibility</i>)	9 (27%)	17 (52%)	5 (15%)	2 (6%)
The process to come to (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock leads to actions (<i>Action potential</i>)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	15 (45%)	17 (52%)
The process to come to (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock, is adapted to the specific substance of the area problems (<i>Substantive theory</i>)	1 (3%)	2 (6%)	10 (30%)	20 (61%)
The process to come to (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock includes explicit methods to deal with pluralist interests (<i>Public interest</i>)	0 (0%)	10 (30%)	15 (45%)	8 (24%)
The process to come to (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock has room for internal and external reflection, criticism and counter –proposals (<i>Self-reflective</i>)	1 (3%)	3 (9%)	17 (52%)	12 (36%)
<i>Social Enterprise</i>	<i>(almost) never</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>(almost) always</i>
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area are delivering outputs for the society which are not (exclusively) focused on the business goals of the housing association.	1 (3%)	7 (21%)	17 (52%)	8 (24%)
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area are the result of a relentless pursuit of new opportunities to create social value.	3 (9%)	10 (30%)	13 (39%)	7 (21%)
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area are innovative or based on innovative ideas.	3 (9%)	19 (58%)	9 (27%)	2 (6%)
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area are financed by a mix of own and external means.	2 (6%)	11 (33%)	13 (39%)	7 (21%)
Account is given for the outcomes of the (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area to the stakeholders of these activities.	0 (0%)	4 (12%)	16 (48%)	13 (39%)
<i>Urban Renewal</i>				
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area take the context of the city and its surroundings into account	0 (0%)	3 (9%)	20 (61%)	10 (30%)
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area are connected with the other social, economical and/or physical activities in the area.	0 (0%)	3 (9%)	12 (36%)	18 (55%)
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area are connected with national policy that displays itself in the area.	5 (15%)	11 (33%)	11 (33%)	6 (18%)
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area attract well-to-do residents	0 (0%)	14 (42%)	16 (48%)	3 (9%)
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area prevent spatial segregation	1 (3%)	13 (39%)	15 (45%)	4 (12%)
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area contribute to the goals, performance and activities of the ‘area action plan’.	1 (3%)	4 (12%)	14 (42%)	14 (42%)
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area contribute to the vigour of the city	0 (0%)	6 (18%)	9 (27%)	18 (55%)
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area contribute to the quality of the living and	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	15 (45%)	16 (48%)

working environment.					
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area ameliorate liveability.	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	12 (36%)	19 (58%)	
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area attract business activity	3 (9%)	19 (58%)	10 (30%)	1 (3%)	
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area serve the business/economical interests of the housing association	1 (3%)	19 (58%)	10 (30%)	3 (9%)	
<i>Rational planning</i>					
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area are the result of a process in which alternative means to reach the formulated goals are balanced against each other.	0 (0%)	8 (24%)	21 (64%)	4 (12%)	
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area are influenced by the analyses of policy advisors.	1 (3%)	8 (24%)	16 (48%)	8 (24%)	
There is a clear relationship between de (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area and the goals that are formulated for this area.	0 (0%)	3 (9%)	15 (45%)	15 (45%)	
(proposed) Activities regarding the housing stock in the area are based on objective knowledge.	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	21 (64%)	11 (33%)	
<i>Incremental planning</i>					
In the decision-making on (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area ends and means are intertwined.	4 12%	17 52%	11 33%	1 3%	
(proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area are based on the personal knowledge and experience of the professional concerned	1 3%	8 24%	19 58%	5 15%	
(proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area are the result of a repeating process of little steps in the right direction	0 0%	15 45%	17 52%	1 3%	
(proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area are adapted to changed circumstances	0 0%	11 33%	18 55%	4 12%	
<i>Collaborative planning</i>					
(proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area are collaboratively planned by the housing association and its stakeholders	0 0%	6 18%	17 52%	10 30%	
(proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area are based on practical knowledge about the situation of the local community	0 0%	3 9%	20 61%	10 30%	
There is consensus on the (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area by all parties	0 0%	9 27%	19 58%	5 15%	
(proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area take the wishes and interests of all stakeholders into account	0 0%	4 12%	22 67%	7 21%	
<i>Political planning</i>					
Power is of overriding importance within the decision-making of the (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area	8 24%	16 48%	6 18%	3 9%	
(proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area are established top-down.	5 15%	15 45%	11 33%	2 6%	
(proposed) activities regarding the housing stock are the result of a negotiating process in which an exchange of means and interests of different persons, parties or departments takes place	2 6%	13 39%	15 45%	3 9%	
Knowledge is used selectively/strategically to legitimize (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area	3 9%	15 45%	12 36%	3 9%	
<i>Social Movement</i>					

(proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area are being influenced by internal and/or external groups which are not being represented in the formal planning process	9	27%	14	42%	7	21%	3	9%
Alternative plans from outside the formal planning process are influencing the (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area	6	18%	17	52%	7	21%	3	9%
(proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area are being influenced through opposition of internal and/or external parties outside the normal planning process. For example via the media, lawsuits, demonstration, strike, whistle-blowers	14	42%	17	52%	2	6%	0	0%
Substantive arguments which support the interest of a group influence the (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area. The group can for example be a Group of residents, the project development department, a local environmentalist group or a school board	0	0%	15	45%	14	42%	4	12%

<i>In the process of coming to (proposed) activities regarding the housing stock in the area, the following actors are decisive (order)</i>	1		2		3		4		5	
(policy) advisors	2	6%	8	25%	9	28%	6	19%	7	22%
staff	6	19%	3	9%	1	3%	8	25%	14	44%
management	11	34%	6	19%	5	16%	7	22%	3	9%
stakeholders	11	34%	9	28%	7	22%	3	9%	2	6%
special interest groups	2	6%	6	19%	10	31%	8	25%	6	19%
<i>Rank the following types of information</i>										
scientific/objective	1	3%	5	15%	7	21%	12	36%	8	24%
personal experience/common sense	3	9%	14	42%	9	27%	5	15%	2	6%
strategic/selective information	6	18%	6	18%	8	24%	5	15%	8	24%
local knowledge	21	64%	5	15%	2	6%	1	3%	4	12%
logic/legal arguments	2	6%	3	9%	7	21%	10	30%	11	33%
<i>Rank the following concepts</i>										
Ratio	2	6%	8	26%	6	19%	11	35%	4	13%
Experience	7	23%	11	35%	7	23%	5	16%	1	3%
Power	3	10%	3	10%	1	3%	5	16%	19	61%
Consensus	14	44%	6	19%	7	22%	2	6%	3	9%
(collective) Action	6	19%	4	13%	10	31%	8	25%	4	13%
<i>Rank the following activities</i>										
Analysing/Researching	4	12%	6	18%	9	27%	9	27%	5	15%
Piecemeal adjusting activities/plans to changing circumstances	3	9%	14	42%	6	18%	9	27%	1	3%
Exchanging means/interests/positions and deal making (negotiating)	3	9%	7	21%	15	45%	7	21%	1	3%
Consulting and collaborating with other parties.	21	64%	5	15%	2	6%	3	9%	2	6%
Agitating against other plans / developing alternative plans.	2	6%	1	3%	1	3%	5	15%	24	73%