2 Key theoretical components: housing associations and complex decision-making

§ 2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the two key theoretical components underpinning this research. Each component consists of various sub-components [see Table 2.1].

COMPONENT 1	COMPONENT 2
Housing associations and their role in neighbourhood regeneration	**Understanding complex decision-making**
The divergent contexts of housing associations:	The rise of the network society
· Political economy	Transformation from hierarchies and markets to hybrid coordination
· Welfare state regime	Network governance as an analytical framework
· Rental market typology	Different types of networks
Housing associations as hybrid social enterprises	Different rules and logics in the system world of agencies and the lifeworld of residents
The role of housing associations in neighbourhood regeneration	Decision-making: garbage cans, policy streams, and arenas

TABLE 2.1 Key Theoretical components

§ 2.2 Key component 1: The role of housing associations in neighbourhood regeneration

To understand the role of housing associations in neighbourhood regeneration we first have to understand their position within their respective welfare and housing systems. This section therefore first provides an overview of the welfare regimes and

housing systems in England and the Netherlands [§ 2.2.1]. This section continues by elaborating the characteristics of housing associations in both countries and highlighting their hybridity, combining state, market, and civil society values [§ 2.2.2]. A discussion of the role of housing associations in neighbourhood regeneration concludes this section.

§ 2.2.1 The divergent contexts of housing associations in England and the Netherlands

Housing associations in England and the Netherlands have largely similar tasks and housing management processes. However, they operate in very dissimilar societies. These contextual factors influence the resources and regulatory frameworks of social landlords and can affect decision-making processes. Frequently, ideal-type categories are used to compare and contrast countries. This section presents some of these typologies, but uses them as 'can openers' to start the exploration, rather than definitive descriptors of differences and similarities.

To start our exploration we have used Kemp and Kofner's (2010) framework that made the distinction between three levels of interrelated regimes and systems: the political economy, welfare regimes, and rental market housing systems [see Table 2.2 below]. In this section, we will introduce these tegimes and systems.

REGIME TYPE	THE NETHERLANDS	ENGLAND	REFERENCES
Political economy	Co-ordinated market economy (CME)	Liberal market economy (LME)	Hall and Soskice (2001)
Welfare state regime	Modern-Corporatist	Liberal	Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999); Hoekstra (2010)
Rental market typology	Unitary	Dualist	Kemeny (2006)

TABLE 2.2 Regime types in political economy, welfare and housing
Based on table in Kemp and Kofner, 2010, p: 380

1 Political economies

In their influential work *Varieties of Capitalism (VoC),* Hall & Soskice (2001) distinguish between liberal market economies (LMEs) and coordinated market economies (CMEs). Economies in Britain and most other Anglo-Saxon countries are classified as 'liberal', while the Netherlands is categorized as 'coordinated'. Coordination in LMEs takes place

through market competition rather than being mediated by collaboration between market firms and government agencies (also see Williamson, 1975; Kemp & Kofner, 2010). CMEs depend on non-competitive networked and collaborative relationships to coordinate their endeavours. It does not suffice to focus only on the formal institutional characteristics to understand the dynamics and outcomes of political economies. Understanding of multi-player interactions between participants and the formal and informal rules guiding these interactions is also essential (Hall & Soskice, 2001).

2 Welfare state regimes

Political economies shape social policies that underpin welfare state regimes. Virtually all LMEs are accompanied by 'liberal' welfare states, whose emphasis is on means-tested and low levels of benefits (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Not only is there a strong entanglement between political economies and welfare state regimes, there are also strong but complex relations between welfare regimes and housing systems (Boelhouwer & Van der Heijden, 1992; Van der Heijden, 2002; Kemeny, 1992, 2006). Housing is often referred to as the "wobbly pillar" of the welfare state (Torgersen, 1987, pp. 116-118; Malpass, 2005), because it is simultaneously seen as an individual market commodity needing healthy competition as well as a public good demanding state involvement (Bengtsson, 2001; Van der Schaar, 1987; Helderman, 2007; Lundqvist, 1992; Harloe, 1995; Kleinman, 1996). Because of its status as an economic and a social good, housing provision has an ambiguous position between state and market.

According to Esping-Andersen, one of the crucial dimensions in which modern welfare states differ from each other is the way in which state activities are linked to the role of the market and the family in the provision of welfare services. The other dimensions are 'decommodification', the extent to which a welfare regime promotes an acceptable standard of living independent of the market value of individuals, and 'stratification', the differences between groups of citizens which are supported by the welfare regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

The complex relations between housing and government policies do not align very well with Esping-Andersen's welfare regime theory. Housing hardly features in his study 'The Three worlds of welfare capitalism' (1990). This starkly contrasts with the active role of many governments in the provision of housing (Boelhouwer, 2003b). Hoekstra (2003) further developed Esping-Andersen's welfare regimes typology and tailored it to better fit the characteristics of housing systems. He classified the United Kingdom as a liberal welfare state, characterised by a dominant position of market parties. The Netherlands was labelled a 'modern-corporatist' welfare regime combining social-democratic and corporatist traits, wherein market and state actors have a prominent position in the provision of welfare services.

In both liberal and modern-corporatist welfare regimes, services are mainly provided based on individual means-tested needs. These regimes differ markedly from each other with regard to the perceived need for welfare services. Welfare services are provided by a wide array of state and market actors, and the role of the family is relatively limited. Not all institutions neatly fit within one of the three sectors (market, state, family); in virtually every country, institutions exist that combine market, state, and family characteristics.

A distinct characteristic of modern-corporatist welfare regimes is the more indirect style of governance (Hoekstra, 2010), adopting policy frameworks that allow local authorities and non-state providers of welfare services, such as housing associations, to operate with a certain degree of freedom. In this style of governance, central government, local authorities, and private actors develop policy jointly. Modern-corporatism resembles concepts such as 'third way politics' (Giddens, 1998), 'competitive corporatism' (Rhodes, 2001) and 'network governance' (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Hoekstra (2010, p. 166) placed 'modern corporatism' in the middle of an axis with liberalism, entailing few corporatist structures and little state interference, on one end. 'Labour-led corporatism' was positioned on the other end of the spectrum with much and direct state involvement.

Recent developments suggest that the characteristics of the social housing models in the Netherlands and England are converging. Since 2008, the role of the state in the English social housing sector is moving away from direct state involvement, and, using Hoekstra' terminology, transforming from labour-led corporatism towards a modern corporatist model with more moderate and indirect state involvement. This development is underpinned by the 2008 Housing and Regeneration Act and driven by the establishment of the Homes and Communities Agency as a new regulator that same year, as well as the coming into power of a Conservative-led national coalition government in 2010. The abolition of social landlord inspections by the government's Audit Commission illustrates this development. These inspections have been replaced by a more co-regulatory approach that makes social housing organisations accountable for developing, monitoring, and reporting on housing quality standards (Mullins, 2010).

In the Netherlands, the social housing model, characterized by moderate and indirect state involvement, has moved somewhat in the direction of Hoekstra's 'labour-led corporatism'. Following reports of fraud and mismanagement in the social housing sector, and an enquiry by Parliament, the Dutch government introduced a strongly revised Housing Act in 2015. This act restricts the mandate of housing associations and strengthens the regulatory powers of the national government, as well as the influence of local authorities and tenant organisations on the strategies and actions of housing associations. Self-regulation remains an important element of the Dutch social housing sector.

3 Rental housing systems

Housing systems are composed of many subsystems and interacting parts, such as housing providers, consumers, and regulators, which may display complex system behaviour (Bourne, 1981; Priemus, 1983). Housing systems are affected by, and interact with, their context (Boelhouwer & Van der Heijden, 1992). The distinctions among housing systems and political economies and welfare regimes is therefore more conceptual than empirical.

Within housing systems, Kemeny (1995) identified two distinct rental typologies: 'dualist' and 'unitary'. He classified the English rental housing system as dualist, and the Dutch system as unitary. Dualist systems combine two distinct rental housing segments: an overall profit oriented housing market, and a cost-rental sector that is restricted to low-income households. The cost-rental sector in unitary systems, by contrast, is not reserved solely for low-income households. Kemeny suggests that both typologies have very distinct coordination mechanisms. Unitary systems aim for competition between commercial and social rental housing tenures, while the government tries to balance economic and social principles to mitigate the possible negative effects of free market forces, without distorting competition (Kemeny, 1995; Kemeny, Kersloot, & Thalmann, 2005). The dualist model has two distinct coordination mechanisms: free market competition in the profit-sector, and a hierarchical command-and-control government involvement in the cost rental sector.

The contextual political economy and welfare regime characteristics of the English housing system indicate a strong focus on market relations with—in theory—an important role for competition. However, recent research found very limited competition between various segments of the English rental market (Lennartz, 2013; also see Elsinga, Haffner, & Van der Heijden, 2009). In contrast, the context of housing associations in the Netherlands has more corporatist characteristics with a strong role for networked and collaborative relationships. These differences are demonstrated, for example, in the allocation of housing development grants. In England, competition is used to allocate affordable housing development grants to a limited number of actors that deliver the highest value for money (Housing Corporation, 2007; Mullins, 2010; HCA 2011b, 2011a, 2014). Funding mechanisms are also used to enforce the government's influence on the activities of housing associations. In a 2004 'Investment Partnering' reform, the Housing Corporation concentrated development funding on around 70 housing associations (of the 1.500 or so registered social landlords) that complied best with government expectations (Mullins & Pawson, 2010).

In the Netherlands, subsidies for affordable housing (and neighbourhood regeneration) have rarely been allocated based on competition. In the mid-1990s, the net value of all outstanding subsidies were paid out to housing associations as part of a 'grossing and

balancing operation' (in Dutch the 'Brutering'), cancelling out all government loans against current subsidy obligations. This operation strengthened the financial and operational autonomy of housing associations but at the same time increased the need for more collaborative relationships between social landlords and local and national governments. Consequently, the national government largely lost its ability to steer housing associations through investment subsidies. Local governments also saw their influence on the activities of housing associations largely diminished (Boelhouwer, 2002; Priemus and Dieleman, 1997; Van der Schaar, 2006). From an international perspective, this created a unique system. Nowhere else do the government, tenants, and other stakeholders have so little direct influence on housing associations. Nowhere else is the social rented sector so financially independent from the government (Dutch Parliament, 2014).

This autonomy to allocate resources can be regarded as a fundamental contrast between the Dutch and the English housing regimes. In the Netherlands, the government does not have this level of control. However, findings in chapter 5 suggest that financial supervision by the government-related Central Housing Fund is one of the few instruments to have any—but still moderate—influence on the behaviour of Dutch housing associations. The strong role of the government as housing regulator over the past decades has been a distinctive feature of the English housing associations that aligns with Kemeny's dualist rental system typology. The role of the governement changed considerably when regulation became more focused and less well-resourced following the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review.

Recent developments show a more nuanced picture, with stronger market mechanisms in the English social rental sector and more government regulation in the Netherlands (also see Czischke, 2014). The English social housing sector has become more market-oriented. Following the 2008 Housing and Regeneration Act, for-profit registered providers of social housing emerged. Private sector housing providers were already able to compete for social housing grants in a 2006 pilot set-up by the Housing Corporation (Mullins & Walker, 2009). The private sector is still a very small part of the affordable housing grant programme, and its involvement is dwindling. In 2014 private sector actors gave affordable rental housing development grants back to the government after investments in houses for sale became more profitable[5].

After the introduction of the Affordable Homes Programme in 2011 (HCA, 2011a), rent levels for low-income housing were set at up to 80% of market rents. In addition, developing landlords were expected to raise some of the existing rent to this level to cross-subsidize new developments and thereby reduce government capital funding per dwelling. This indicates a shift from a dualist social rented sector with strong direct government involvement towards a unitary system with less government funding and regulation.

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5   Article 'Private developers return cash for 2,600 affordable homes.' The Guardian, 28 August 2014.

In contrast, the Netherlands, traditionally labelled as a unitary housing system, is developing dualist characteristics with stricter regulation of social landlord activities and the introduction of means-tested access to social housing in 2010 (Priemus & Gruis, 2011). Social housing in the Netherlands is becoming less unitary and more targeted at low-income households. This is a clear break from the hitherto broad mission and wide target group of Dutch housing associations. This could be related to a more profound development in the political economy of the country. The Netherlands appears to be moving towards a more liberal market economy and liberal welfare state regime, with stronger market mechanisms in the provision of welfare services such as health care, social care, and social housing. These crossovers of development paths in the Netherlands and England, on several dimensions and in a short time period, suggest that the added-value of typologies for political economies, welfare regimes, and rental housing systems is limited to a helpful conceptual reference point for a more in-depth exploration of developments; a more fine-grained exploration is necessary to capture similarities and differences.

Housing associations as hybrid social enterprises

Although there are significant differences between English and Dutch housing associations with respect to the timing, intensity, and direction of welfare state developments, many parallels can be drawn between the social origins of housing associations in the two countries (Mullins, 2000; Mullins & Murie, 2006; Mullins & Riseborough, 2000; Boelhouwer, 2002, 2007; Beekers, 2012; Gulliver, 2006; Priemus & Dieleman, 1997; Van der Schaar, 1987). In both countries, the first housing associations emerged in the nineteenth century as private initiatives undertaken by philanthropists, enlightened entrepreneurs, and other elite groups. The state only took a more prominent position in the aftermath of World War I, in order to reduce the housing shortage caused by lack of supplies, and after World War II to address the considerable war damage and to meet increasing demand for new housing due to the post-war baby boom. In the 1980s and 1990s, a more liberal approach took hold, whereby governments retreated from direct involvement in social housing provision.

Due to this shared development pattern, English and Dutch housing associations have inherited a hybrid mix of public sector, market, and civil society values, structures, purposes, and governance mechanisms (Czischke, Gruis, & Mullins, 2012; Mullins, Czischke, & Van Bortel, 2012; Czischke, 2014; Mullins & Pawson, 2010). Brandsen, Van de Donk, and Putter (2005) developed a framework to explore the hybrid position of organisations operating between state, market, and community. Housing associations act as third-sector organisations in the field bordering, and sometimes overlapping, the state, market, and community domains [see blue patch in Figure 2.1]. This third sector is hybrid and fuzzy, but so are the other sectors. Very few organisations in the market, state, and community sectors are close to their ideal

types. Many other organisations cannot be pin-pointed that easily due to problems of fragmentation, unclear boundaries, dynamics, and mixed-coordination mechanisms. Hybrid arrangements, such as New Public Management approaches (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992) and quasi-markets (Helderman, 2007), attempt to combine elements of market, state, and non-profit domains.
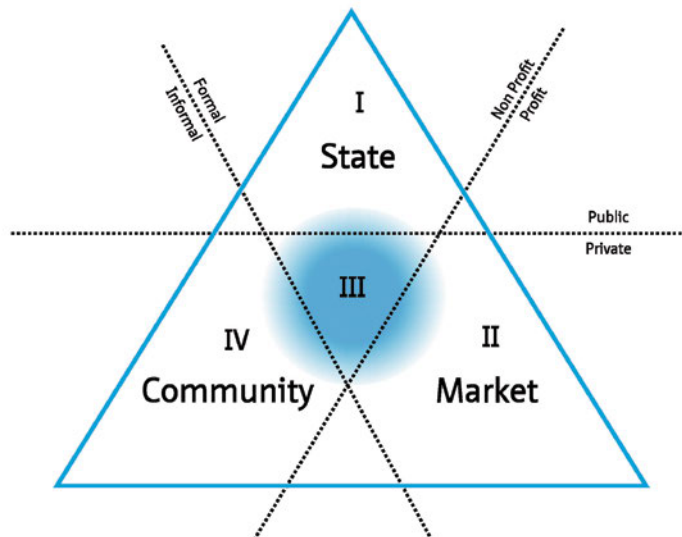

FIGURE 2.1 Hybridity in the third sector
Adapted by author from Brandsen et al. 2005, p: 752 (the blue mark in the centre represents the fuzzy working terrain of third sector organisations).

Not only is hybridity a clear trait in the development path of housing associations; it is also evidenced by the associations' broad and continuously evolving array of services. These activities are often on the edge of state, market, or community sectors. Housing associations adapt themselves to, and are influenced by, their context. They can be chameleon-like in their ability to present themselves as belonging to the private, the public, or the community sector (Brandsen, Van de Donk & Putters, 2005; Blessing, 2012). They can present themselves as private sector actors for funding purposes6, or as community organisations for contacts with residents. When accountability is at stake or when they provide non-housing services aimed at increasing the social or financial

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6   For example the AEDEX/IPD Netherlands Annual Social Housing Property Index ('AEDEX/IPD Corporatie Vastgoedindex'), used by Dutch housing associations, employs the vocabulary, methods, and standards used by private real estate companies to measure and benchmark the performance and risk of (social) real estate portfolios.

inclusion of their residents, they may present themselves as public sector actors (Mullins & Murie, 2006). Some organisations have embraced a social enterprise discourse to highlight their position between markets and communities. These organisations distance their activities from those of the government (Teasdale, 2012). In housing, this positioning has to a degree been promoted by governments who have embraced the opportunity to shift state expenditures for social housing off the public sector accounts and towards a stronger role for the private sector (Pawson & Mullins, 2010).

HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS IN ENGLAND AND THE NETHERLANDS: SIZE, SCALE AND CHARACTERISTICS

With a share of 32% of the total national housing stock, the Dutch social housing sector is the largest in Europe. England takes second position, with 20% of the stock. In most European countries, the social rented sector accounts for less than 10% of all housing (Whitehead & Scanlon, 2007). Council housing used to dominate the English rental market with a share of 29% of the total housing stock in 1981. This was before the Thatcher government introduced the 'Right to Buy', stock transfers to housing associations and restrictions of new housing construction by local governments. At that time, housing associations accounted for only 2% of the housing stock (Pawson & Mullins, 2010, p.31). Not only was social housing the largest section of the rental market, it also provided housing for a wide section of the population, including middle-class households.

In the Netherlands, almost all (2.2 million) social housing properties are managed by one single type of organisation, namely housing associations (Finance Ideas, 2014, p.11). Municipal housing, which historically played an important role in the Dutch social housing sector, has almost completely been absorbed by housing associations (Beekers, 2012; Van der Schaar, 1987). By comparison, England has a much wider array of public, private, third-sector, and community-led social housing providers. Roughly, the management of the social rental portfolio (4 million homes) in England can be split into four almost equal shares: local authority council housing; semi-independent Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs[7]), managing homes for local authorities; traditional housing associations; and stock transfer housing associations[8] (Pawson & Mullins, 2010).

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7   Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) are social landlords created as a result of stock transfers from council housing to an organisation that manages the stock on behalf of local authority owners.

8   Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) is a process that has seen 50% of council housing transfer to housing associations since 1988 (Pawson & Mullins, 2010).

As illustrated in the text box above there are large differences between the providers of social housing in England and the Netherlands. Decision-making processes between organisations can be hybrid, but so can the processes within organisations (March & Simon, 1958/1993). Organisational structures have become more flexible and permeable (Agranoff, 2007). Organisational boundaries can be blurred, and coordination mechanisms within organisations can be mixed. Many organisations are characterised by hybridity because of their need to balance social and economic objectives (Billis, 2010). This creates hybrid intra-organisational decision-making processes on top of the inter-organisational coordination mechanisms. The social housing sectors in both countries have strived to manage the diversity and intra-organisational hybridity by introducing codes of governance to provide guidance for decision-making and governance processes, and oversight of the conduct of CEOs and board members (Aedes/VTW, 2015; NHF, 2015). The umbrella organisation for English housing associations, the National Housing Federation (NHF), published its first edition of the *Code of Governance*. Around the same time, the predecessors of Aedes, the trade body for Dutch housing associations, presented their *Business Code Housing Associations* (Nationale Woningraad, 1996). These self-regulatory frameworks define common values and standards of practice and also contain mechanisms to ensure compliance. To accommodate for changing expectations and the shifting balances of power, codes of governance for housing associations are frequently updated.

The core characteristics of housing associations are summarised in Table 2.3 below.

GOAL	Housing associations provide housing to target groups that cannot afford full market rents, while balancing social and economic objectives. Profit is not an aim; social impact is.
STEERING	Housing associations are self-governing organisations, operating within a framework of government regulation, but without direct government control.
STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY	Beyond the core of a shared goal and steering concept, housing associations vary considerably in organisational structure, strategy, and the scope of the activities they undertake complementary to providing affordable rental housing.

TABLE 2.3 Core characteristics of housing associations

The role of housing associations in neighbourhood regeneration

Neighbourhood regeneration: from clearance to improvement

Neighbourhood regeneration entails a programme-based approach to reduce deprivation in areas characterised by decline (Carter, 2012). In many countries, neighbourhood regeneration originated after WWII, manifesting as the clearance and redevelopment of inner city areas to provide opportunities for new urban developments (Priemus & Metselaar, 1993). New neighbourhoods were built in green field areas to provide housing for the displaced inhabitants of the city centre. In many Northern and Western European countries these new properties were social housing for working class households (Wassenberg, 2010, p. 16). Housing associations and council housing departments played a prominent role in the development of these new neighbourhoods (Pawson & Mullins, 2010).

In the early 1970s, Dutch housing associations constituted an already large and mature sector, managing 41% of the total housing stock in 1975 (Boelhouwer, 1999). In England, social housing was still dominated by municipal council housing. Housing associations comprised a small sector, owning less than 1.6% of the housing stock in 1975 (Murie, 2008). The revival of English housing associations was strongly related to neighbourhood regeneration. The 1974 Housing Act envisaged a larger role for housing associations in housing construction and the improvement and conversion of older properties in challenged areas (Murie, 2008). Housing Action Areas (HAAs) were set up through the 1974 Housing Act as a response to top-down gentrification and clearance. New approaches embraced more bottom-up methods to tackle inner city decline. Selected areas attracted generous improvement grants aimed at encouraging residents to stay. Tenants' rights were guaranteed and, where private landlords failed to improve, councils could compulsorily purchase and renovate (Powers & Mumford, 1999). Through these initiatives, housing associations became more closely involved in urban regeneration partnerships with local authorities (Pawson & Mullins, 2010). The involvement of housing associations in small-scale neighbourhood renewal activities, as well as housing for special needs groups, complemented rather than competed with local authority housing provision, such as urban renewal activities (Mullins & Murie, 2006).

During the 1970s and 1980s, urban renewal in the Netherlands was mainly focused on pre-WW II districts. During the 1990s, the focus shifted from pre-WW II to post-war urban areas built between 1950 and 1970. The new priority areas often had large concentrations of housing owned by housing associations (Elsinga & Wassenberg, 2007). The creation of mixed-tenure neighbourhoods by replacing part of the social housing stock with owner-occupied housing and up-market rental dwellings in order to retain moderate-income households became the prominent policy paradigm (Priemus, 1997, 2004; VROM, 1997).

The emergence of integrated area-based approaches

During the clearance and redevelopment in the 1950s and 1960s, regeneration was primarily a top-down process with a strong emphasis on the physical elements of renewal and a prominent position for national and local governments. The social dimension of neighbourhood renewal remained underdeveloped, ambiguous, and implicit (Van der Schaar, 2006). Particularly after the 1973 oil crisis, the neighbourhood clearance and redevelopment approach came under pressure due to the growing focus on preservation and repair. A new focus on popular demand and social needs, including affordable housing, emerged (Priemus & Metselaar, 1993; Turkington, Van Kempen & Wassenberg, 2004; Vermeijden, 1996, 2001).

Although the improvement of the pre-WWII stock was mainly triggered by poor housing quality, the improvement of post-WWII housing was also driven by the ambition of addressing social and housing market problems. This strengthened the understanding, in the Netherlands, England, and other Western European countries, that sustained area-based and integrated interventions were needed, with involvement of public and market actors, to address the multiple forms of deprivation concentrated in some neighbourhoods (Cole & Nevin, 2004; Dabinett, Lawless, Rhodes, & Tyler, 2001; Musterd & Ostendorf, 2008; Mullins & Van Bortel, 2010; Priemus 2006; Rhodes, Tyler, & Brennan, 2003; Uitermark, 2003; VROM-Raad, 2006).

The role of housing associations in neighbourhood regeneration became increasingly prominent in the 1990s. The Dutch government considered its involvement in urban renewal as a temporary operation to catch up on neglected housing maintenance and neighbourhood deprivation. It assumed that local actors would be able to mobilise the necessary resources for future regeneration initiatives (VROM, 1992). This coincided with a major deregulation operation (the 'Brutering') that provided Dutch housing associations with more operational and financial autonomy, as explained earlier in this chapter (Boelhouwer, 2003a). Housing associations were expected to fund the renewal of post-war neighbourhoods from their own resources, such as rental income and housing sales revenues (Ouwehand, 1997). The co-responsibility of housing associations for the quality of life in neighbourhoods was anchored through the inclusion of 'liveability' as a compulsory performance field in the 1997 revision of the Social Housing Management Order (Gruis, Nieboer, & Thomas, 2004).

Especially since New Labour came to power, in 1997, housing and neighbourhood regeneration policies in England have emphasised the importance of social inclusion, stakeholder consultation, "joined-up" government, and collaboration (Mullins & Murie, 2006, p. 135) in the delivery of housing policy and neighbourhood regeneration. In 2001 a *National Strategy Action Plan* for neighbourhood renewal (Cabinet Office, 2001) brought some coherence into the vast array of regeneration programmes. The strategy included the ambition that within 10 to 20 years no one

should be disadvantaged by where they lived. The Labour Government created two new government units: the Social Inclusion Unit and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. These units worked across national government departments, but also at the regional level through its neighbourhood renewal teams. At the local level, the emphasis was very much on harnessing all sectors, focussing existing services and resources explicitly on deprived areas, and giving local residents and community groups a central role in making better neighbourhoods (Pierson & Worley, 2005). Embedded in New Labour neighbourhood renewal policy was the assumption that local people and local organisations could and should mobilise their own resources to support neighbourhood renewal.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit introduced two flagship programs: the New Deal for Communities (NDC) and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (NMP). The NDC programme was launched in 1999 and ran through 2008 (CLG, 2010a, 2010b). In addition to these programs, a Housing Market Renewal (HMR) initiative was created that ran from 2002 until 2011. The origin of the HMR initiative is unusual when compared to many other area-based initiatives in the UK. These programs were often designed by the central government and passed on to local authorities and/or partnerships for local negotiation and delivery. Contrastingly, the HMR was the result of lobby activities by consortia of local authorities and housing associations in the Midlands and the North. Housing organisations commissioned research into the nature of changing housing demand and housing abandonment in order to make recommendations for regeneration (Nevin, Lee, Goodson, Murie, & Phillimore, 2001a, 2001b). This body of research provided a basis for the lobby activities that led to the HMR program (Murie, 2008).

The New Labour government's 2003 Sustainable Communities Action Program was also a key policy reference point. The plan dedicated substantial resources to address serious housing shortages in London and the South East, and the impact of housing abandonment in places in the North and Midlands (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003).

Housing associations as community investors

In both the Netherlands and England there were strong drivers for housing associations to take a leading role in improving the quality of life in vulnerable neighbourhoods. In the UK there was a growing public prejudice against social housing tenants, a declining satisfaction among residents, and a persistent perception that housing associations were competitive and complaining (Scase & Scales, 2003). This led to the launch of the national 'In Business for Neighbourhoods' alliance in 2003 by the National Housing Federation (NHF), the representative body for English housing associations (National Housing Federation, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2005). The need for a stronger

focus on vulnerable neighbourhoods was also the result of a growing concern with unemployment among social housing tenants leading up to the 2007 *Hills Report* (Hills, 2007). In Business for Neighbourhoods was primarily a rebranding exercise, but English housing associations did invest considerable resources of their own and leveraged more from partners into community investment activities, as confirmed by two neighbourhood audits (National Housing Federation, 2008; 2012).

Several years later, in 2007, Dutch housing associations also began to respond to external pressures to make better use of their asset-based equity and to deliver more socially relevant outcomes (SER, 2005; VROM-Raad, 2007). In a 2006 letter to parliament, the then Housing Minister Winsemius stated that housing associations "have a responsibility to the whole neighbourhood"[9]. In 2007 the government stated in its Coalition Agreement that a substantial financial contribution was expected from housing associations to fund the national neighbourhood regeneration program. That same year the minister responsible for housing and neighbourhoods presented the 'Empowered Neighbourhoods Program' (WWI, 2007). The focus of that program was mainly on addressing social and economic deprivation in vulnerable neighbourhoods. Housing associations had been active in physical restructuring and urban renewal for many decades, but the need to contribute to social activities and objectives of urban policies was rather new (Van Gent, Musterd, & Ostendorf, 2009; Boelhouwer, 2007).

In 2007, umbrella organisation Aedes revised its industry governance code to signpost the neighbourhood-focused mission of housing associations (Aedes, 2007; Aedes, 2011). That same year Aedes presented its '*Answer to Society*' manifesto (Aedes, 2007a), expressing the social housing sector's ambitions to channel substantial investments towards deprived neighbourhoods.

Community investments by housing associations refer to neighbourhood-focused physical and social activities complementary to investments in housing construction and refurbishment. Because of divergent definitions of community investments, inconsistent accounting practises, and large differences between the policies of individual housing organisations, it is hard to formulate generic conclusions on the nature of community investments[10]. However, based on available information, some tentative observations can be made on the differences between the community activities in the Netherlands and England.

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9   Letter to Parliament, TK 2006-2007, 30128, No 12

10   UK literature often uses the term 'community investments' where 'community expenses' would be more appropriate.

The National Housing Federation published two audits (National Housing Federation, 2008; 2012) to provide a clearer picture of the neighbourhood activities of English housing associations. The 2008 audit found that 40% of community investments by housing associations was paid for by other resources, such as local governments and charitable, voluntary, and faith organisations. In the 2012 audit, covering a period after the global financial crisis, this investment had dropped to 30%. Community investments comprised initiatives on a wide range of terrains, such as jobs, training, education, skills, well-being, community safety, cohesion, poverty, social exclusion, and environment. In addition to out-of-pocket expenses reported in the audits, English housing associations also delivered in-kind contributions to neighbourhoods in the form of administrative, managerial, and technical support and advice as well as facilities such as free accommodation, transport, and supplies.

Social landlords in the Netherlands hardly ever use resources from other organisations to fund their community investments. Their activities have traditionally been more focussed on physical activities, such as improving the quality, upkeep, and safety of semi-public areas, burglary and fire prevention, and maintenance of neighbourhood facilities (Centraal Fonds Volkshuisvesting, 2007, 2013). While English housing associations demonstrate a stronger focus on people-related social investments, their Dutch counterparts undertake fewer activities focussed on jobs, training, education, and skills directly themselves. When they undertake social activities, there is a stronger connection with basic landlord services, such as preventing evictions, rent-arrears, and anti-social behaviour. Dutch housing associations also provide 'social real estate' and facilities management for partners that deliver health services, social care, and other services.

§ 2.3 **Key component 2: Understanding decision-making in the public domain**

§ 2.3.1 **The rise of the network society**

Societal developments, especially the emergence of the 'network society' have profoundly altered the state's role in decision-making in the public domain. Information and communication technologies have fragmented social, economic, and political infrastructures into a network of interdependent decentralised 'nodes'. Consequently, decision-making has shifted from vertical bureaucratic to horizontal cooperation, and from government to governance (Van Dijk, 1999; Castells, 1996; Frissen, 2002; Rhodes, 1997).

The network society has increased the complexity of societal challenges, including the 'wicked' problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973) of interrelated social, economic, and physical deprivation that neighbourhood regeneration is expected to address. Public and private actors addressing these problems are increasingly interdependent due to the fragmentation of resources such as funding, expertise, land, democratic legitimation, and links with local communities (Kokx & Van Kempen, 2009). The resulting complexity involving multiple actors and issues frequently leads to deadlock, low-quality outcomes, and ambiguous democratic anchorage of decision-making processes (Simon, 1955; Lindblom, 1959, 1965; Rhodes & MacKechnie, 2003; Rhodes, 2006, Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004; Sørensen & Torfing, 2007). These developments have consequences for the ways in which decisions are both made *and* studied (Teisman, 2005). This section briefly discusses the following elements that are needed to explore and understand neighbourhood regeneration decision-making:

1. transformation from state hierarchies and markets to hybrid coordination mechanisms;
2. network governance as an analytical framework;
3. decision-making in networks: 'garbage can' decision-making, policy streams, and decision-making arenas;
4. different types of networks;
5. different rules and logics in system world of agencies and the lifeworld of residents. Each of these elements will be discussed more elaborately in other chapters in this thesis.

§ 2.3.2 **Transformation from hierarchies and markets to hybrid coordination**

With the emergence of the network society, the delivery of housing policies and neighbourhood renewal was transformed. Bureaucratic procedures were replaced by multi-actor decision-making 'games' in collaborative governance networks where the government no longer was the dominant actor (Swyngedouw, 2005). These new modes of decision-making and public service delivery involve interdependent state, private, non-profit, and community actors (Bengtsson, 2001; Priemus, 2004). There is, however, disagreement among scholars about the power distribution and resulting coordination mechanisms in these networks (see Davis, 2011).

Are markets, hierarchies, and network mechanisms mutually exclusive [see Table 2.4 below], or can these forms of coordination be combined or blended into hybrids forms of decision-making? Williamson saw distinct boundaries between market mechanisms and government hierarchies (Williamson, 1975). Powell argued that the dichotomy between markets and hierarchies blinds us to the role played by reciprocity and collaboration

as alternative governance mechanisms (Powell, 1991). He advocated a continuum of coordination mechanisms. Others contend that hierarchies, markets, and networks can be separated conceptually, but that in reality these mechanisms are found in various interwoven forms and combinations (Swyngedouw, 2005; Jessop, 2002; Bradach & Eccles, 1989). In a similar vein, Brandsen et al. (2005) state that in a network society, borders between market, state, civil society, and community actors are blurred; within hierarchical structures, one can see forms of network coordination or market competition (Buitelaar, Mertens, Needham, & De Kam, 2006; Koffijberg, 2005). Koppenjan and Klijn (2004) contended that interdependent networks are replacing other forms of coordination.

	THE HIERARCHICAL MODEL	THE MARKET MODEL	THE NETWORK MODEL
Focus	Central ruler	Multi-actor setting	Interactions among actors
Characterization of relations	Hierarchical	Autonomous	Interdependent
Policy Process	Neutral implementation of ex-ante formulated policy	Self-governance on basis of discrete decisions and mutual adjustment	Interactive process in which information, goals, and resources are exchanged
Successful governance	Attainment of public goals as part of formal policy	Attainment of individual goals by actors	Attainment of mutual goals by collective action
Causes of failure	Ambiguous goals, lack of information and control	Rigid policies, lack of discretionary freedom and resources	Lack of incentives for collective action, existing blockades
Recommendations for governance	Coordination and central-ization	Deregulation, decentrali-sation, privatization	Management of policy networks: improving conditions under which actors interact

TABLE 2.4 State, market and network coordination mechanisms
Source: Klijn and Koppenjan (2007, p. 172). Adopted from Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan (1997, p. 10)

These shifts in governance do not necessarily lead to a reduction of state power, but could indicate a shift from formal to informal techniques of government steering (De Bruijn & Ten Heuvelhof, 1991; Swyngedouw, 2005), such as steering in the "shadow of hierarchy" (Scharpf, 1993, pp. 145-147; Koffijberg, 2005). This notion is closely related to Foucault's concept of 'governmentality', i.e. the techniques and strategies by which a society is made governable (Foucault, 1980; Kokx & Van Kempen, 2009). Rhodes claims that interdependent networks of state and non-state actors weaken the hierarchical powers of the government in urban regeneration processes (Rhodes, 1997). Davies, on the other hand, insists that the state is still dominant because these networks have asymmetrical power relations that still favour the state (Davies, 2002, 2011). Similarly, Jones and Evans (2006) conclude that many fail to see the state-centeredness in many network arrangements.

These actors mainly comment on developments in the 1990s and early 2000s from a UK perspective, with a strong role of the state in funding and regulating social housing and neighbourhood renewal. However, Koffijberg (2005) also found a strong role for the Dutch national government in shaping housing policies by using network steering instruments. Koffijberg found that the department responsible for housing used a variety of strategic actions to influence policy developments and the behaviour of actors. Some actions had a classic hierarchical character, but network steering instruments were numerically in the majority. Chapter 5 discusses these steering instruments in more detail.

Market competition and state hierarchies are features of liberal and coordinated market economies, but Hall and Soskice (2001) stress the variation found in the character of corporate structures and government hierarchies across different types of economies and the presence of coordination problems even within hierarchical settings.

Considering market, state, and society as separate domains is not very realistic or productive. To the extent that these coordination mechanisms already can be identified in empirical reality as distinct separate domains, they are each other's precondition: modern societies are not able to flourish without a market, no market operates without government, and no government can exercise authority without societal involvement and support (WRR, 2012).

This research intended to explore and understand how decision-making processes in neighbourhood regeneration work in practice, not how they *should* evolve. The research perspective used should therefore be able to accommodate for the existence of market, state, network *and* mixed coordination mechanisms in decision-making processes, and the possibility of either centralised hierarchical power or more distributed networked power.

§ 2.3.3   **Network governance as an analytical framework**
. . . .

Theorists in political science, public management, economics, and organisational sociology have developed a still-growing body of network theory to increase our understanding of organisational and institutional dynamics. There is a growing critique of traditional decision-making approaches, assuming that actors make rational choices based on perfect information. Simon's (1955) ideas about 'bounded rationality' and 'satisficing'-oriented processes of policy development and Lindblom's (1959) proposition of a science of 'muddling through' have made it clear that traditional rational approaches to policy-making are unrealistic and at odds with day-to-day

decision-making practices (Klijn, 2008). Contrastingly, the network approach connects with real-life decision-making processes by taking account of the complexity and uncertainties involved in contemporary governance (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004).

Since the 1990s, considerable research efforts have been made to conceptualize complex systems and network governance (Rhodes, 1997; Scharpf, 1993, 1997; De Bruijn & Ten Heuvelhof 1991, 2000; Blackman, 2001; Chapman, 2002; Kickert, Klijn, & Koppenjan, 1997; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004; Teisman, 1998, 2005; Rhodes, 2006; Sørenson & Torfing, 2007, 2009). There is a growing body of knowledge applying network governance theory to the domain of social housing and neighbourhood regeneration, in the form of research reports (e.g. Van Bortel & Elsinga, M. (2005), Haffner, & Elsinga (2007, 2009), PhD dissertations, (e.g. Klijn, 1996; Koffijberg, 2005), special issues in academic journals (Mullins & Rhodes 2007, Van Bortel, Mullins & Rhodes, 2009), and conference papers (e.g. Van Bortel, Van Bueren, Van Eeten, Elsinga & Kerpershoek, 2007). Building on this, governance network approaches will be used to construct the analytical framework for this research [see section 1.2 Conceptual framework and research questions]. The characteristics of governance networks are discussed in more detail in chapters 3, 5 and 6).

§ 2.3.4 Different types of networks

The previous sections discussed the rise of networks in modern society. Actors in these networks can have divergent goals and resources. To increase our understanding of decision-making in these networks, we need to know more about the different types of networks that exist, and the different types and strengths of relationships that are required to make these arrangements work. Brown and Keast (2003) and Keast, Mandell, and Brown (2007) identified three main network typologies, i.e. cooperative, coordinative, and collaborative networks, ranging from loose to strong relational connections [see Table 2.5]. The different network types represent different purposes and different structural characteristics, and require different levels of trust and time to develop.

COOPERATIVE[1]	COORDINATIVE	COLLABORATIVE
LOW TRUST — UNSTABLE RELATIONS	**MEDIUM TRUST — BASED ON PRIOR RELATIONS**	**HIGH TRUST — STABLE RELATIONS**
Infrequent communication flows	Structured communication flows	Thick communication flows
Known information sharing	'Project' related and directed information sharing	Tactical information sharing
Adjusting actions	Joint projects, joint funding, joint policy	Systems change
Independent/autonomous goals	Semi-independent goals	Dense interdependent relations and goals
Power remains with organisation	Power remains with organisations	Shared power
Resources — remain own	Shared resources around project	Pooled, collective resources
Commitment and accountability to own agency	Commitment and accountability to own agency and also to project	Commitment and accountability to the network first
Relational time frame requirement — short term	Relational time frame medium term — often based on prior projects	Relational time frame requirement — long term 3-5 years

TABLE 2.5 Network typologies

Source: Brown & Keast 2003; Keast et al., 2007
[1] The term 'cooperative' is used by Brown and Keast. Feedback from native English speakers highlighted that 'cooperative' can be understood as a stronger form of collaboration than is intended here.

Cooperative networks are primarily focused on short-term activities and mutual adjustment to ensure that the goals of individual organisations are met. There is relatively little trust between actors, and their relationships are often unstable. Decision-making power remains within the individual organisations and does not extend to mutual decision-making. In coordinative networks, the relationship between actors is more mature and structural. Previous interactions have strengthened the level of trust between actors. Interactions take place in joint projects with pooled resources and shared goals. As in cooperative networks, decision-making power remains within the respective organisations. Individuals have a shared commitment, partly to their own organisation, and partly to the projects they carry out together with others. Relations between actors in collaborative networks are even more long lasting and built on trust between actors. A distinctive feature of collaborative networks is 'systems change', and organisational boundaries become more opaque due to semi-permanent collaborative organisation structures. The goals of the organisations become more intertwined, as do their financial resources and their decision-making powers. Also, the commitments and allegiances of individuals become more ambiguous —shifting more towards the network rather than their own organisation.

Housing associations in the Netherlands have more resources and regulatory autonomy than their English counterparts. The Dutch political economy is based on non-competitive collaborative relations (Hall & Soskice, 2001), and its welfare regime

has strong corporatist traits. Therefore, it is likely that one can find more collaborative characteristics in Dutch neighbourhood regeneration networks. In contrast, more cooperative/coordinative characteristics are expected in English regeneration networks because of the more competitive arrangements in that country, as well as the stronger dependence of English housing associations on government resources. In other words, housing associations in the Dutch local regeneration networks already have most of their required resources and adequate regulatory freedom, yet need strong collaborative relations with other actors to allocate these resources, while their English counterparts (i.e. housing associations and local authorities) need to cooperate in order to acquire the financial resources from their national government in the first place. These partnerships can be regarded as 'externally mandated' (Rees et al, 2012). The national government still has important hierarchical power over these partnerships, and this may reduce the ability of partnership members to determine activities and outcomes. (Muir & Mullins, 2015).

<h3>§ 2.3.5   Different rules and logics in the system world of agencies and the lifeworld of residents</h3>

During the fieldwork period of this research, national governments in the Netherlands and the UK introduced new policy paradigms that have influenced the role of the government and citizens in the provision of welfare services and neighbourhood regeneration. In 2009, David Cameron introduced the 'Big Society' agenda. Several years later, in 2013, the Dutch government presented its 'Participation Society' agenda ('Participatiesamenleving'). Although the aim of both initiatives is very similar, namely reducing the role of the government and increasing the role of citizens, the approach towards achieving these aims is very different (Verhoeven & Tonkens, 2013). These differences are discussed in more detail in chapter 8. The introduction of these new policy paradigms led to a greater emphasis on the collaborative co-production of public services and neighbourhood regeneration initiatives between citizens and neighbourhood regeneration professionals.

The network governance perspective used to analyse fieldwork data provided sufficient insight into the causes of the rather cumbersome interactions between residents and local community representatives on the one hand, and the housing associations and local authorities, on the other. The publication by Van den Brink, Van Hulst, De Graaf, & Van der Pennen (2012) on the role of exemplary practitioners in neighbourhood regeneration introduced me to Habermas's concepts of 'system' and 'lifeworld' (1987). The system is the formal and rational dimension covering organisational forms, rules, laws, procedures, and hierarchies. It can arise in many societal domains such as economics, politics, education, housing, science, government, healthcare, welfare,

and justice. In contrast, the lifeworld is the domain of personal relations between family members, friends, neighbours, and members of local, faith, or other informal communities. The lifeworld is a world of informal communications, storytelling, personal values, experiences and emotions, but also a domain of social inequalities and conflicts. Habermas's concept helped me to better understand the interactions between organisations and residents. This concept is further elaborated and applied in chapter 8 (also see Van der Pennen & Van Bortel, 2015).

§ 2.3.6   **Decision-making: garbage cans, policy streams, and arenas**

Decision-making processes rarely evolve chronologically, nor do they have an established logic (Simon, 1955). In networks, where there is no set hierarchy of objectives and values, problem solving is often characterized by 'organised anarchy' (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). In these situations, problem formulation, solution design, and decision-making develop independently from each other. Cohen et al. describe these processes as streams of problems, solutions, participants, and choice-moments. They label these choice-moments as 'garbage cans' in which participants 'drop' often unrelated problems and solutions. Garbage can decision-making often does not solve the problems at hand, but the ambiguous situations in which decision-making occurs in practice cannot easily be eliminated. Acknowledging the existence of the garbage can phenomenon helps us to understand this core characteristic of decision-making, and can inform the design of processes to accommodate for its existence and, to some extent, manage it (Cohen et al., 1972).

Whilst Cohen et al. (1972) focused on university decision-making, Kingdon (1984) applied the stream model to public decision-making processes. He distinguished three streams: problems, solutions, and political events. For decision-making to take place, the streams need to be coupled in order to create a 'policy window' and an opportunity for decision-making. The coupling of these streams does not come about naturally. Actors, in search of solutions for their problems or support for their solutions, must create these couplings themselves. Kingdon called these actors 'policy entrepreneurs'.

Decision-making in housing systems has many of the characteristics of an open 'garbage can' (Helderman, 2007, viii). According to Koppenjan and Klijn (2004,), the garbage can may be regarded as a policy arena. The policy arena consists of activated parts of governance networks that include multiple interdependent actors that interact while pursuing their own objectives and applying their own logics in a particular instance of time and space.

Interactions between actors in these arenas are guided by formal and informal rules. The rules describe, among others, what actors are permitted to do and which actors can participate in which games. While formal rules deal with the authority of actors and the legal institutional characteristics of interactions, informal rules address social practices and values (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). According to Giddens (1984), rules are formed, sustained, and modified by human interactions. The basis of Giddens' concept of duality lies in the relationship between agency and structure. All human interaction (agency) is performed within the context of a pre-existing social structure, which is governed by a set of rules. Consequently, all human action is at least partly predetermined based on the varying contextual rules under which it occurs.

§ 2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have introduced two key components to help us understand the role of housing associations in neighbourhood regeneration, and the complex and networked nature of decision-making. It can be concluded from the literature presented in the first component that housing associations have played an increasingly important role in neighbourhood regeneration. Housing associations in England and the Netherlands share many organisational characteristics and largely similar hybrid third-sector values. They have similar business processes, but work in different contexts, with relations to state, market, and community that are constantly evolving.

Because of its place-based nature, neighbourhood regeneration takes place in rather exceptional governance networks. Actors are more or less locked into the regeneration network. They are compelled to collaborate in order to solve housing and other area-based problems. The second component presented the elements needed to understand decision-making process: it discussed the transformation from hierarchies and markets to hybrid coordination mechanisms in the context of an emerging network society. Different components of network governance as an analytical framework were presented, such as various types of networks, different rules and logics in the system world of agencies and the lifeworld of residents, and finally concepts to unravel decision-making processes such as garbage can decision-making, policy streams, and arenas .

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