# Co-housing in Amsterdam: analysis of practice and performance of architect-led collective private commissioning from a resident perspective.

**Master thesis**

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# Colophon

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# Preface

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This master thesis made me take a big leap into the study of collective and collaborative housing projects. Many thanks to my tutor Dr. Linda Carton for supporting me throughout the process of this thesis, and for challenging me to think critically about existing literature and linking theories. I realised that planning, in its most direct and applied form, is experienced when designing and building one's own living environment. The opportunity the individual possesses to shape its surroundings, should be celebrated.

I would like to thank everyone at Marc Koehler Architects for handing me the opportunity to enlarge my vision as a planner, and for letting me take a closer look to the game of urban development from different perspectives. The most valuable lesson I have learned during my internship is that you must stay true to your own convictions, but when it comes to creating spaces, do not be afraid of letting those using that space decide how you should create that space for them.

# Definitions

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**Co-housing**
The term co-housing (spelled with hyphen) is most commonly used throughout Western societies and within academic circles. It is the overarching term for all housing projects that entail a certain collaboration or cooperation throughout the initiation, design and build phase, or have some sort of communal living aspect. It is also referred to as collaborative housing initiatives. Co-housing consist of a wide spectrum, in which various forms of building and or living together reside.

**Cohousing**
Cohousing is a form of co-housing, and is predominantly used as a definition for projects where groups of people maintain, mostly intentionally, a communal way of living on a day-to-day basis. Shared chores, social activities or other structural social interactions that transcend traditional nuclear households are possible criteria for cohousing. When referred to cohousing, the perspective of the living arrangement and its impact on individual members is highlighted, and the focus is less on the process of initiation and development of such a project.

**Collective private commissioning**
Private commissioning (PC) is the practice of a future home-owner caring for the development of its future home, from acquiring a plot of land to design and completion. Collective private commissioning (or CPC) is the practice where a group (the collective) executes the development of their future homes: one project for multiple houses. Various structures exist since the organisation of the actors involved, depends on each project. When referred to CPC, the perspective is taken on how the group of individuals arranged the development scheme of their projects, or in short, how they build together, and the focus is less on how they eventually structure their living arrangement.

**Architect-led collective private commissioning**
This form of CPC has an architect involved that also functions (partly) as process manager. Often, the architect has already provided land(positions) and/or initial designs. Formation of the group occurs subsequently to these initial plans.

# Summary

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This research inquires a particular form of co-housing called architect-led collective private commissioning. Co-housing is not a new phenomenon, however a trend shows its practice is evolving and it is gaining more importance to a variety of the population in Western societies. Recently, more co-housing projects have been initiated in Amsterdam. Meanwhile, the housing market is overheating, which can be an incentive to use alternative means. Although much is already known about the large variety of co-housing in scientific literature, the resident's (end-user's) perspective is often underrepresented. Architect-led collective private commissioning projects generally have a conceptual design prior to the eventual users of the building join the project. In the theoretical framework, a distinction is made between 'cohousing' in its narrow definition, and 'co-housing' as umbrella term covering various 'co-building' and 'co-living' concepts.

Residents from three projects in Amsterdam have been interviewed. This research aims to find out two things in particular: one, how the practice of architect-led collective private commissioning manifests in the Dutch (and, in particular, the Amsterdam) context; and two, how and to what extent, the architect-led collective private commissioning process leads to the often praised qualities of co-housing, such as community development and better suiting housing designs and arrangements for the end-user.

The analysis shows that little shared spaces are realised within the projects, hence no co-living practices are recorded. However, the projects incorporate qualities deriving from co-building practices. Co-building here is represented in two ways. In one way, it is an interpretation of collaborative development with a professional (here, the architect). In another way, it produces the opportunity for individuals to bundle resources and attempt collective action (a group of residents). A prominent induced finding is the articulation of collaborative development (Open Building) in combination with architectural design: lofts of five metres in height. The height dimension added to the individual design freedom, attracting future residents with various motivations; and establishing customised unique houses. The group of residents is forged into a collective before the building phase. Collective decision-making is organised by a parliament structure. To relate to co-housing theory, a new definition is formulated: Superlofts co-building.

Even though these are not 'cohousing' projects in the narrow sense of the term (in the sense of 'households living together'), the process does result in increased social cohesion among residents; a community is sensed by the residents. According to the residents, co-building is an intense and stressful endeavour, here caused by unfamiliarity of the practice by all involved actors (municipality, builder, bank, architect, collective). For them, eventually, it resulted in highly satisfying living environments.

Results of this research contribute to empirically depict the state co-housing within our contemporary society and, eventually, review its quality and essence regarding our society. Conclusions are relevant to local and national policy-makers, which are, while regarding the effects of co-housing in general, encouraged to enhance the feasibility of collaborative practices such as the Superlofts co-building projects.

# Table of contents

SECTION FIVE

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# Section one

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# Introduction

*Within cities, forces on the housing markets are influencing people's behaviour. To some extent, it invokes people to find alternatives. Recently, more co-housing projects have been erected in Amsterdam. Co-housing finds itself in trends such as sharing economy, self-expression and alternative housing forms (Tummers, 2016). To find out what co-housing offers to the city, and more importantly, to its residents, the practice and performance must be assessed.*

# 1 Introduction and problem statement

**Dutch housing market: a qualitative mismatch**
The building sector has made a revival and developers are able to bare financial risks again to invest in real estate. In some cases, the scale of the developments looks similar to the practice of a decade ago; large projects with high risks and developers in charge. So far, the Dutch housing stock has been shaped by large development companies which resulted in homogeneous neighbourhoods. More than one-third of all dwellings are detached houses (Hulsman, 2017). Recently, real-estate broker website *Funda.nl* launched a prototype design of a typical Dutch row-house. This house contains the characteristics of what people see as their 'dream house' and was created by using big-data from their website users, displayed in figure 1.1 (Hulsman, 2017). This initiated a discussion about the large difference in what the Dutch housing market has to offer, and what home-buyers actually want. It implies a qualitative mismatch of the housing market. To create a more vital housing stock, participatory development practices can be significant contributors to achieve a more qualitative fit of dwellings and often create more dedicated owners with a larger sense of ownership, potentially fostering social cohesion in the neighbourhood (Van der Klundert, 2016).



*Figure 1.1 Design based on big data from real estate website. Source: Hulsman (2017)*

**'Co-housing' and 'cohousing'**
Co-housing initiatives are housing projects that entail participatory development and/or a form of 'living together' by a group of residents (Ache & Fedrowitz, 2012), and occur in many different forms across the globe. To make things more confusing, many terms are used for this phenomenon, sometimes interchangeably, for the same or almost similar practice. A well-known and well-used term is co-housing, however many others are used throughout policies and researches, for instance: participatory development practices, self-initiated clustered housing, collective housing projects, collective custom build, intentional communities, cohousing, collective client-controlled development, cooperative self-managed housing initiatives, collective private commissioning… and so on. Important factors of such initiatives are the collaborative manner of development among residents themselves, and between the collective of residents and the professional parties involved (Tummers, 2016).

While the term *'co-housing'* is used for many forms, the term that is regularly used for 'households living together' is *'cohousing'* (without hyphen), which focusses on the living arrangement. According to Vestbro (2010), cohousing practices are interpreted by three elements: collective, collaborative and communal. The collective element is predominantly represented by the shared services inhabitants create for themselves. These could be a shared gate or front door, common living rooms or a carpark. Collaboration of a project implies that there is a certain structure in which the (future) residents work together in order

to execute their project, from initiating and planning to continuously operating. Other scholars agree with Vestbro and acknowledge these two elements to be the essential definition of cohousing (Ache & Fedrowitz, 2012; Fromm, 2012, Krokfors, 2012; Tummers, 2016). However, Vestbro adds a third element by including the term 'communal' into his definition of cohousing, which emphasizes that it should include (to some extent) an absence of individual boundaries within the housing scheme and the appreciation, and common use, of shared spaces. In line with this definition, a project that does not entail a communal type of living, is not a form of cohousing.

Similar to co-housing, a broader term to define the phenomenon is given by Fromm (2012). From a different perspective, Fromm argues that there are many initiatives that include group-building practices within collective commissioned projects, without necessarily having inhabitants share their daily living space. She defines the phenomenon as 'collaborative housing initiatives' and underlines the increase of these projects across Europe, acknowledging the variation in types. In addition, she emphasizes the importance of these "…sister developments on the borders of cohousing" (p. 365) and adds that projects where the future residents have not been the instigators, or where shared spaces are not necessarily the direct or daily living space, are certainly worthwhile investigating and should be accredited as some sort of cohousing. Many of the praised social elements that relate to cohousing are present in these projects and are too valuable to ignore.

Throughout this research the term 'co-housing' is used, since co-housing is most-frequently used in English articles and books and functions as an umbrella term for a variety of housing initiatives occurring in the field of study. Consequently, 'cohousing' is regarded as the narrow conception, while 'co-housing' can be seen as the wide conception.

**Co-housing as a scattered conception**
Between this narrow and wide definition depicted above, many different forms exist which consequently leads to a variety of understandings among researches. The practice and outcome of such projects highly differs globally, and even locally. Some argue that cohousing is not per se based on any intentional community (McCamment & Durett, 1994), others argue it is intrinsically an intentional community and a modern version of a utopian commune (Sargisson, 2012), or argue, in a more nuanced way, that people often participate based on some ecological ideologies or shared lifestyles (Tummers, 2011). The positive effects of building and/or living together are frequently alleged (Fromm, 2012; Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016; Sargisson, 2012; Van der Klundert, 2016; Vestbro, 2010), but also some critical sounds circulate. Chiodelli (2015) is cautious with the optimistic views of his fellow scholars and argues that co-housing has much in common with gated communities. Additionally, through community self-selection, such projects are also highly contagious to induce an exclusionary pathway to enter a project, and on a larger scale, can lead to gentrification (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016).

However, since the demand for dwellings within urban areas is high, these cooperative methods can be regarded by some groups in a more pragmatic way. For them it is too difficult to buy or rent a dwelling in traditional markets because of a lack of financial or social resources (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016; Van der Klundert, 2016), that they see co-housing as mere opportunity to enter the housing market. This could imply that co-housing is being regarded as a practical alternative to regular housing schemes, which is in contrast to utopian, intentional efforts of rearranging lifestyles discussed before.

**Housing development by Collective Private Commissioning (CPC)**
Qu and Hasselaar (2011) define collective private commissioning as follows: '… a group of individuals [that] develop their neighbourhood by themselves. As future neighbours, these home-makers organise themselves into collectives and jointly acquire a plot of land, employ an architect and then, without adopting a developer as an intermediary, develop a residential complex that meets their personal housing specifications' (p. 22).

Similarly, the SEV (2010) gives the following definition: 'A collective of equal individuals obtains a plot of land and decides, collectively, the (professional) partners to commission private, and sometimes also public spaces, of their residential building (p. 5).

The above given definitions are formulated by Dutch authors, since this research is conducted in the Dutch context. CPC practices in The Netherlands are similar to the German *Baugruppen* (Van der Klundert, 2016; Zandvoort et al., 2013), and therefore both are comparable. Private commissioning (PC) is the practice of one initiating a (single) housing project, mainly for the same person as the initiator to reside in when finished. The practice of collective private commissioning (CPC) is related to PC, only there is a group of individuals consigning such a project. The focus of the collectiveness in such projects lies predominantly in the development phase. Whether communal living arrangements are initiated or not, is not implied by this definition. It is a form of development which belongs to the wider definition of co-housing. In contrast to the traditional development, CPC beholds an extensive amount of participation of the prospected home-owner or user, no matter if an individual, a group or a developer initiates the project (Expertteam Eigenbouw, 2014). In recent years these forms take an increasingly larger share of the housing development in The Netherlands (Bakker, 2012), and also notably in Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2017b).

**A special type of Collective Private Commissioning: 'Architect-led CPC'**
The field of co-housing initiatives is large. Tummers' (2016) effort to display an overview of what kinds of participation exists and to what extent the residents use their spaces collectively is useful to understand the diversity of these housing types (Figure 2.1, see page 23). This research focusses on CPC projects in The Netherlands (called CPO in Tummers' (2016) diagram). Among CPC projects, there are several niches that can be distinguished as is shown in figure 2.1. The focus lies on a specific form, namely collective private commissioning with an architect as the instigator and process leader. An architectural design is made and the group of future residents develops in time, via self-selection or through project-management, but predominantly after a concept design has been established by an architect. Often the architect designs the bare structure and mainly the façade, and individuals decide on their houses themselves. In recent years, several CPC projects in Amsterdam have been developed with an architect in charge. It are also these projects that receive much appreciation from the municipality and national media (Boer, 2017; Duurzaamgebouwd, 2016).

**1.2 Problem statement**

**1.2.1 Research aim**
Regarding the internationally upcoming trends of co-housing and the recent climate of the housing market in The Netherlands, and more specifically in Amsterdam, this thesis aims to discover the quality of co-housing. How and to what extent co-housing adds value to the living environment is worth researching giving the current revival of the application of co-housing. The demand of housing in Amsterdam is (extremely) high and the often open-minded attitude of the municipality towards alternative solutions for housing and co-housing initiatives imply the opportunity for such projects and the importance to investigate this phenomenon in this context. The results can help policy-makers to sustain future application or give insights into the disadvantages. Moreover, this research aims to contribute to the scientific debate on practice of co-housing by adding local and contextual examples, and relate these cases to existing literature on co-housing.

**1.2.2 Research question**
In line with the aim set for this research, the next question is formulated as a foundation to this thesis:

*How and to what extent are co-housing projects in Amsterdam, according to the residents, serving for the preconceived qualities as stated in contemporary literature on co-housing?*

First of all, several elements of this question require further clarification. This research aims to analyse how certain elements of selected cases lead to the qualities of co-housing within this context. Therefore, a 'how' question is posed to conduct a qualitative research in order to retrieve 'rich' information on the residents' perspectives. Also, a how question serves the research in finding causal ties between aspects that signify such qualities, and their origin.

The second type of questioning within the main question, to what extent, indicates a deductive research approach, as if there is a clear and objectively measurable extent to which the projects can entail these qualities. However, quality is a subjective term and can be interpreted in various ways. Therefore, a literature research on co-housing has been performed to find what is known so far on these types of housing, and provides a foundation of what is regarded as quality. This theoretical framework is used as a benchmark to evaluate the resident's perspectives of three projects in Amsterdam. One should be aware that the overview of features elaborated in the theory section is not exhaustive; however they are essential to give direction to this study by operationalising specific aspects and, simultaneously, helps to relate this research to former and future studies.

To demarcate the scope of this thesis, the cases used for this research have been of one particular form of co-housing, namely practices of 'architect-led collective private commissioning'. Three practical considerations determined the researcher to choose for this form of co-housing: available resources, available research time and context. The first and second reasons both derive mostly from the fact that this is a master thesis. On the side of the context consideration: Recently finished co-housing projects in Amsterdam were mostly built through this type of commissioning, and these projects have received much positive attention.

The focus on 'architect-led collective private commissioning' as a specific form of evolving co-housing practices in Amsterdam led to a reframing of the main question. To make more valid arguments based on the empirical data, the main question is reframed as follows:

*How and to what extent are architect-led collective private commissioning projects in Amsterdam, according to the residents, serving for the preconceived qualities as stated in contemporary theories on co-housing?*

### 1.2.3 Sub-questions
The following sub-questions are posed to research the co-housing qualities of architect-led collective private commissioning.

Question 1:
How are the contract forms of governance arranged and how are these experienced throughout the process of collective private commissioning by the residents?

An important aspect is the ability for residents to influence the projects outcome extensively; the co-design or co-development component of co-housing. Co-housing initiatives have a wide definition, therefore it is necessary to assess to what extent the control on the end-result reached for the residents. The question is formulated to pose the process of the researched cases into the larger field of researched co-housing. By measuring the amount of control by the residents, or moreover, their experience of the control in the process of the project, it is possible to state where architect-led CPC resides in the spectrum of self-built housing. Although architect-led CPC is defined in literature, specific recordings of the residents' experiences of control in the process are rarely found and the execution of each project may vary. Whether the recorded distribution of control is producing qualities in light of co-housing characteristics, is aimed to be answered by this question.

Furthermore, the preliminary theoretical study shows that the preconceived quality of co-housing is based on two major outcomes: customized housing designs suiting the residents' particular needs and wishes; and strengthening of the social cohesion internally, among residents, and externally, among the neighbourhood. Therefore, this research focusses on these two key-elements. The following evaluating sub-questions are formulated in order to find an answer to the main question:

Question 2:
What is the result of the co-housing projects and does it fit to the individual needs and wishes of the residents?

Having extensive control on the design of one's living space can be regarded as a desire, meanwhile it is a great responsibility demanding crucial decisions. Especially recording their experiences of interaction with both other group members and professional parties, prominently the architect, while pursuing their individual housing wishes, provides practical insights to relate to claimed qualities of co-housing and to discover causality.

Question 3:
To what extent is architect-led collective private commissioning serving for a strengthening of the social cohesion internally, and why?

This last question is specifically aimed at the social cohesion among the residents. It aims to assess to what extent there is a strong social cohesion among the members of the community. Purposely, external social cohesion is left out of this research since it requires methods beyond the chosen methodology of this thesis.

**1.3 Justification and relevance**

**1.3.1 Why architect-led collective private commissioning?**
Mainly, there are four reasons why architect-led CPC projects are chosen to research in this thesis. First, the currently increasing attention for co-housing in general fuels the need for further research, across the full scope of the field (Tummers, 2016; ENHR, 2018). Many forms erect within co-housing, where understanding of such social trends can benefit the application in current urban settings. Second, several projects have been initiated in Amsterdam, in a short period of time, fairly recently and also near each other or in similar urbanizing areas. While these projects have been responsible for crucial spatial development in urbanizing inner-city areas in uncertain times, the contemporary status of architect-led CPC has dropped according to municipal policies (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2017c). According to the available plans and policies of the municipality, no architect-led CPC project will erect in the near future. In-depth research contributes to a foundation to argue pro or against an architect-led CPC. Third, it is argued that this type of CPC serves a different and distinct group on the housing market (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016; Van der Klundert, 2016; Kompier et al., 2012), which gives reasons to inquire more on the motives on this group. In contrast to what is described on 'intentional communities' (by e.g. Sargisson, 2012) and communal living arrangements (predominantly Vestbro, 2010), the members of the selected cases have been gradually joining the group while the intention, and the necessity, was not in general to pursue a co-living arrangement. In addition, there were no specific prerequisites formulated. In other words, everyone willing to join, was able to do so. Since Dutch house-buyers often seek for flexibility in choice, but prefer to leave crucial decisions to professionals (Van der Klundert, 2016), a large amount of potential architect-led CPC members exists (at this moment) on the Dutch housing market, underlining the potential. Fourth and last, in contrast to 'traditional' CPC, this type skips several hordes for the collective of future residents by already having a concept design, and having a managing agent to assign and control for group members. In theory, this should bring more clarity and upfront consensus to the project (Kompier et al., 2012), which leads to less group discussions and more efficient time-management, asserting the feasibility of this type. A closer look to the practice of architect-led CPC provides the opportunity to investigate such assertions.

### 1.3.2 Scientific relevance

*International differences in definition and conception*
Internationally, there is a great amount of scholars researching the variety of co-housing. Evidence of the quality of co-housing is well described in scientific literature. For example, it can foster the involvement of the community (McCamant & Durrett, 1994; Vestbro, 2010), even on neighbourhood scale (Boelens & Visser, 2011; Fromm, 2012). Most recent writings are focussed on the issue of defining its practice, how to explain what is occurring and how we can compare this internationally. The scattered conception of the phenomenon and its definition, resulting from the different contexts in which the practice of co-housing/co-building take place, provide a potential misinterpretation of its qualities. Local institutions determine to a large extent the type of collaboration, participant's motivations and the result of the project (Fromm, 2012; Tummers, 2016). Therefore, it is essential to conduct in-depth research with respect to local conditions of the practice, in order to contribute to the existing literature. The spatial-economic context of a project contributes largely to its result, however the outset of a project is what makes projects comparable to previous and yet to be realised projects. Also, qualitative data-analyses are necessary to find core similarities between the practices in different regions. The more rich information is gathered on this nebulously defined phenomenon, the closer we get to a better understanding and application. This research stipulates a framework of qualities of co-housing in order to assess a specific form of co-housing, namely architect-led collective private commissioning projects. Since theories of the wider term co-housing are used to construct this framework, it is ought to contribute to the scientific literature and enhance comparability of co-housing projects internationally.

*Resident's perspective*
Moreover, as Tummers (2016) asserts, there is a lack of critical review of the performance of such projects, which adds to the gap of knowledge currently in scientific literature on co-housing. Much is known for instance of the aspects of day-to-day life in cohousing projects (Vestbro, 2010; Vestbro and Horelli, 2012), and causal links to those aspects, like shared intentions (Sargisson, 2012), or the physical result (Kompier et al., 2012; Williams, 2005). Literature specifically based on architect-led is often based on the structure of the project, or quantified data has been the foundation of research (Boelens & Visser, 2011). In scientific literature, a gap of in-depth inquiry of the resident's experience of architect-led CPC practices occurs. Literature on CPC has been slowly growing the last two decades. At the start of the millennium, self-built housing was highly desired by national governments and also several collective self-built initiatives were initiated (SEV, 2010). Among others, current research on CPC in The Netherlands include evaluation in a quantitative manner (Boelens & Visser, 2011; SEV. 2010), a process description through participated observation (De Haan, 2011), assessment based on aesthetic quality (Lindebergh, 2013), review of planning (policy) and housing systems (Tummers, 2011), extensive comparison with international cases (Fromm, 2012) and contextual barriers in the process (Bouma, 2013). This research aims to inquire whether co-housing like architect-led CPC in Amsterdam are just as appreciated by its residents as they are by an extensive group of academics in light of the broader definition co-housing, on specific defined aspects. As requested by some researchers, the resident's perspective on quality of such projects should be recorded (Tummers, 2016)."The experiences of dwellers as well as professionals that start to percolate into the housing and planning systems are a rich field for further analyses" (Tummers, 2011, p.174). To assess the quality of these alternative housing solutions, it thus makes sense to measure this at the source: the user.

### 1.4 Societal Relevance

*Social trends*
If one considers the trends of sharing economy and sustainable development, co-housing can be of growing importance to reach for a higher qualitative urban environment (Krokfors, 2012). "[Co-housing] fits in the societal trends of decentralisation, increased self-reliability and demand for participation and custom-made solutions" (Tummers, 2016: p.2024). In our society, the opportunities of sharing capital or other resources increasingly gets more important. A co-housing project lets participants benefit from

bundled capital or the opportunity to share elements of the living environment more easily. On the other hand, there is also the ongoing individualisation (Beck, 2002). Individuals are increasingly craving for self-expression and are eager to participate or, moreover, initiate projects themselves if the market or the public body is not sufficing their demands properly. Co-housing highly coincides with both trends which entail reasons to investigate such practices to further understand the societal interpretations. One could argue that by creating small housing collectives that collectively organise facilities, such as a gym, children's playground or garden areas, they no longer have the need to go outside their semi-private spaces. Furthermore, it has been recorded that co-housing often consist of a homogeneous type of population, which include like-minded people with often the same (middle to high) income (Boelens & Visser, 2011; Chiodelli, 2015). The possibility exists that other inhabitants of a neighbourhood containing many co-housing projects could be vulnerable to segregation and social exclusion when not having (full-time) access to those facilities. In this sense, these projects undermine their local community and their contribution to it. Theoretically, by facilitating amenities for themselves and excluding others, as happens in gated communities (also co-housing), they create their own small public welfare system. It is important to conduct research in the practice of co-housing in order to record the social effects on multiple scales.

*Changing policies*
Meanwhile, governmental bodies are struggling with making policies for co-housing projects, to streamline the process or to stimulate projects. According to Tummers (2016), this is because, at the moment, a dominant planning and development culture exists on sub-urban individual owned private dwellings. "Confronted with cooperative 'grass-root' housing initiatives, planning authorities need to review the urban development and planning processes, reposition stakeholders and formulate new criteria for land use (Droste and Knorr-Siedow, 2012; Fedrowitz and Galling, 2003; Kramer and Kuhn, 2009)" (Ibid: p.2024). Recently, the municipality of Amsterdam changed their policy on CPC projects, in order to deny professional parties access to this market as initiators. Solely the building groups of future residents themselves are accepted to initiate and manage CPC projects (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2016b). It is important to assess the practice in order to decide to what extent the policies result in a desired outcomes. Is the end-product of a CPC actually better for the user, neighbourhood and the housing stock? Also, it is perceived that CPCs, as a form of co-housing, are able to thrive in a certain place (Fromm, 2012). In Amsterdam, CPC projects find themselves often at the urban fringes, where new neighbourhoods and new social ties to the location and neighbouring areas are created. Is the use of CPC an extra impulse for the creation of these ties? And if so, is there a possibility to use such projects strategically to thrive new neighbourhoods? An effort to collect knowledge on such questions must be undertaken in order to interpret the practice of CPC in a field of contemporary trends and traditional housing schemes.

*Belgium and German examples of architect-led CPC*
Initiatives similar to CPC can be found in Belgium, where the tradition of self-built housing is more present (Kompier et al, 2012). Van Herck & De Meulder (2009) produced a manifesto for essential design prerequisites, based on collective self-built houses in Belgium. However, as Tummers (2016) stated, there is not yet enough research of the results and resident's experiences specifically on this particular type of collective housing to sustain their (Van Herck & De Meulder, 2009) claims. Particularly in the Dutch context. Therefore, an evaluation of such prerequisites can address its values for the local practice.

Also, in Germany there is a bigger culture of collective self-built housing, and therefore also more scientific, quantitative as well as qualitative, research conducted (Ache & Fedrowitz, 2012; Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016). Both in Belgium and Germany, the architect plays a prominent role in the project, often instigating, leading and controlling the building and design process. The necessity of a professional and engaged architect in a project is underlined by several authors (Tummers, 2016; Van Herck & De Meulder, 2009; Zandvoort, 2013). This method has been advocated in the Netherlands by some authors as examples for the Dutch market (Kompier et al., 2012; Zandvoort et al., 2013), but not yet researched extensively as it is in Germany (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016). The Dutch CPC projects emphasize more the autonomy of the group (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2016b), therefore architect-led CPC only occurred in small numbers. To understand the manifestation of these kind of CPC, which have been proven as good examples from

the neighbouring countries, in The Netherlands, a thorough investigation is needed to assess its qualities in the local context.

## 1.5 Context description

*Traditional Dutch planning practices*
Urban planning laws and regulation on land use and urban development have always been important affairs for governments in the Netherlands. Traditionally, different forms of public-private organisations have been responsible for urban expansion and the planning culture has often been described as exemplary for land development structures (Buitelaar & Bregman, 2016; Needham, 2014). Before the 2008 financial crisis, Dutch planning was characterised in large scale, integrative and end-state planning, described as active land policies (Needham, 2014). Governmental bodies often took a large share of the financial risk of such plans and actively endorsed developments. Accordingly, the Dutch home buyer had a passive role in housing and development. However, it is argued that such types of developments has not been part of the Dutch planning culture after 2008, and that a 'redefinition of the culture' is taking place, since governmental bodies, evidently, refrain from active land policies. This is mostly caused by the lack of financial resources of municipalities since the financial crisis (Buitelaar & Bregman, 2016).

Consequently, public bodies were forced to search for alternative methods to develop land. The counter-approach of active land policies by municipalities is defined by Buitelaar & Bregman (2016) as organic urban development. Alternatives to traditional Dutch planning can be found in practices such as collective private commissioning, where the municipality is taking a facilitating role. In contrast to before the crisis, the municipality is not able to negotiate in a private manner with private parties, which causes less possibilities to establish their goals effectively. The private parties invest and build, the municipality reacts to demands.

*Policy of the municipality of Amsterdam*
The municipality of Amsterdam plays a major role in the development of CPC projects. It provides the building plots in order to facilitate this niche sector, since it appears to be too difficult for these collectives to compete with other (traditional) developers in the market for various reasons. Therefore, over the last few years, the municipality has developed a selection process. It grants a plot of land to a building group by using a lottery system, complemented by a second round which decides which group is able to meet the (pre-stated) required competences at best. Furthermore, since October 2016, the municipality changed the policy on CPC and CC projects. It introduced a selection process that filter out projects led by professionals in the building sector, in order to protect the control and influence of the building group on their project (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2016b). This implies that actors as project managers, advisors and architects are no longer able to initiate CPC projects.

The municipality implies by its new policy that building groups themselves should have the lead in all decision-making processes and carry full responsibility for the project. It is understood that only the most dedicated and resolute groups withstand such a process of realising a residential building, which should result in the most tightened communities. Moreover, their total freedom to choose what to build, how and with whom, should accommodate the group's wishes and housing needs more adequately. On the other hand, this results in the groups also bearing all risks. Building permits, environmental laws, financial resources, group management and spatial design are just the tip of the iceberg one is condemned to deal with. For a layman with a dream to commission or live together in a community, it is not a matter of course to have the required experience.

*Figures*
Exact figures of the amount and types of co-housing, or more specifically, the CPC projects in Amsterdam are not available. In the field of co-housing, it often lacks quantitative data. However, since 2000 the

national government stated their ambitions to enhance the self-built housing stock and indeed more CPC projects have been initiated since the new millennium (Boelens & Visser, 2011). Moreover, there has been an increase of available building plots specifically for CPC in Amsterdam since 2011. There are five areas where multiple CPC projects have been initiated in recent years. These are Houthaven, Buiksloterham, Amstelkwartier, Zeeburgereiland and IJburg (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2016b; 2017a; 2017b). Other CPC projects, mostly transformation of unused buildings, are found throughout the city. Roughly, there have been 25 projects realised in the recent decade (own estimation). And with 10-25 households per project, approximately 440 units have been realised. The total housing development produced circa 3780 dwellings per year between 2012 and 2016 (OIS, 2017). Consequently, The CPC projects represent a small portion of the added housing stock in Amsterdam.

# Section two

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# Literature study

*This section elaborates on contemporary literature of co-housing. This provides a theoretical framework to relate to when analysing the empiric data. The conception of co-housing is explored in chapter two which resulted in an overview of some key-definitions of co-housing in the current debate. In chapter three, the distribution of control and responsibilities during a co-housing projects is discussed, since this distribution is for a large extent decisive for the type of co-housing. Chapter four investigates the proclaimed qualities of co-housing in co-housing literature. This led to an overview of co-housing features that are essential for this research' operationalisation. Lastly, chapter five discusses literature on social cohesion and sense of community, which provides useful handles to research and assess a community from its member's perspective.*

# 2 The variety of co-housing

## 2.1 Juxtaposition of key conceptions

To cover a wide range of practices that contain advantages from its collectiveness or collaborative nature, the umbrella term 'co-housing' is used. This term allows scholars to research the phenomenon in a broad perspective, and to retrieve findings of similar value in different forms of housing. Collaboration occurs between users of a building while living there, or a project is designed and developed by co-operation between the developing party and the future residents, or a mix of public, market and individual parties collectively create a residential object. Many practises are defined within co-housing, from student dorm rooms to monasteries. Also, architect-led CPC being one of them. Several key-definitions that contribute to the total field of what is understood of co-housing are discussed below.

## 2.2 Cohousing

Cohousing is a form of co-housing. Most (recorded) cohousing projects are in Northern European countries, Canada and the USA (Chiodelli and Baglione, 2013). Denmark (Vestbro and Horelli, 2012) and Germany (Hamiduddin and Gallent, 2016) are leading in such housing arrangements while in Sweden, the United Kingdom (Brown et al., 2013), Belgium and The Netherlands also a number of projects are found. Southern European countries are not so familiar with the concept, since a few of these projects have been found in countries like Italy (Chiodelli and Baglione, 2013).

As described in chapter one, cohousing is a frequently used term when people build or live in a collective and/or collaborative manner. However, cohousing differs from other co-housing projects. The Swedish author Dick Urban Vestbro researched and wrote extensively on cohousing, and produced a definition of the term based on three aspects: collective, collaborative and communal housing (2010). Here, the collective aspect of housing refers to the collective organisation of services within the housing project. Collaborative housing represents the way in which the housing scheme arranges collaborations between residents, resulting in sharing or reliance upon each other. Lastly, the communal aspect of cohousing implies that the housing projects emphasizes the creation and fostering of a community, and suggesting a social connection to the other members. Living in a cohousing project means there should be intimate contact between residents on a day to day basis.

Yet having this explanation, a clear understanding of what cohousing actually is, or looks like, or how to recognise a cohousing project, is still not straightforward. Since Vestbro himself has lived in a cohousing project for many years, his image of a cohousing project can be tendentious. Other researches state that cohousing characteristics are based on participatory process, neighbourhood design, common facilities, self-management, absence of hierarchy and separate incomes (Meltzer, 2006). However, as George (2006) notices, such elements are not merely ascribed to the cohousing practices Meltzer and Vestbro refer to; other forms of communities could possess those just as well.

Hence, an ongoing discussion prevails. Cohousing often tends to have an emphasis on one of the three mentioned aspects. According to Vestbro (2010; Vestbro and Horelli, 2012), the discussions on cohousing projects often are based on two dimensions: the way in which the group of residents live and on the way the built environment of their living space is designed. Concluding on his understanding, a cohousing project must consist of spaces that are shared by the residents in their day-to-day life. Therefore "... the term 'cooperative housing' should be avoided in this context, since it often refers to the cooperative ownership of housing without common spaces or shared facilities" (Vestbro and Horelli, 2012: p. 1). This quote is explanatory for their perspective: co-building is not evidentially cohousing. To clarify, the term co-housing does incorporate co-building (Tummers, 2016).

*Design*
Obviously, there is no (in)formal regulation on how a cohousing design should look like, as the practice of cohousing is largely defined by the use and lifestyle of its residents. Based on the observations of Kompier et al. (2012) of several cases in Belgium and Germany, no clear regularities in design can be

assigned to cohousing projects, as they conclude that every project is too unique. However, two themes of collective design are repeatedly found in their cases. One is, make desired (luxurious) services or spaces that are too expansive for an individual, for instance a pool or sauna room, collective. And two, make spaces that are undesired to attach to the own living space, like guestrooms and event rooms, collective.

An effort to create a guideline for design for cohousing has been made by Williams (2005). His findings can help projects increase social interaction, or as Vestbro would name it, collaboration. For instance, Williams (2005) describes five design aspects of cohousing projects, based on his research in California: high density, good visibility on communal spaces, clustering of shared services, the inclusion of defensible or private spaces and car free environment (parking on the periphery of the communities).

*Intentional community*
The motivation to live in cohousing structures are not necessarily bound to just convictions of radical lifestyles (McCammant & Durrett, 1994). It should not be seen as a radical phenomenon, it can be done by various types of people and in different ways, which underlines the accessibility of its practice. Following up Vestbro, Sargisson (2012) concludes in her study on the motivations and intentions of cohousing residents as follows: 'Cohousing members have chosen to live in a community and share common goals. They are intentional communities' (p. 50). According to this paraphrase, it is essential, or even intrinsically of nature, that cohousing consists of a group of residents that have the intention of being part of the community, and this defines their motivation to be part of the project. According to both authors, these intentions result in a strong social cohesion and high social capital among residents.

## 2.3 Collective private commissioning and *Baugruppe*
First of all, collective private commissioning is not a term describing the living arrangement. CPC is more a building method rather than a lifestyle, however cohousing living arrangements can be provided by CPC. CPC projects can derive from motivations to 'build together' or to 'live together' (Krokfors, 2012; Tummers, 2011; Zandvoort et al., 2013), which is also the case for *Baugruppe* (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016). CPC is often looked upon as a building method, in which the building group functions as a developer, or as the actor commissioning the development. To what extent the group aspires to 'live together' and become an intentional community, as is described in cohousing theory, is predominantly decided by the group themselves. This results in a scattered outcome of CPC projects in The Netherlands (Zandvoort et al., 2013), and underlines a further aspect of distinction to define a project (Kompier et al., 2012).

*Baugruppe*
The German *Baugruppen* practices are very close to the Dutch CPC (Van der Klundert, 2016; Zandvoort et al., 2013). Germany is one of the countries where many of co-housing projects have been established; at the moment, there are more than 500 projects and are referred to as *Baugruppen* (Ache & Fedrowitz, 2012). A key factor to regulate such projects is the public control of land, which gives the municipality the control of land prices. Doing so, no speculative market exists for the highest bidder, but quality of design that was proposed is just as important (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016).

Some group formations are based on religious or ideological beliefs, others are formed by 'ordinary' middle-class citizens looking for practical solutions to share chores and costs. Particularly, the most essential element of German *Baugruppe* is the strong involvement of future residents in the design and planning phase, as well as having some form of community or communal space (Ache & Fedrowitz, 2012). Consequently, *Baugruppen* are not always cohousing projects, but can consist of certain cohousing elements.

Additionally, Hamiduddin & Gallent (2016) state that one should not mistake the now thriving *Baugruppen* for its 'ancestor' *Genossenschaften*. Regarding the previous paragraph(s), an important difference lies in the degree to which people share their everyday living space. This separation is implied by their remark: "A common house or centre – a critical social and physical focal point of co-housing (Sargisson, 2012) – can seldom be found [in *Baugruppen*], and the schemes rarely adopt the model of

mutual or cooperative ownership that characterises *Genossenschaften* projects. Although a group may intend to live together as neighbours, their goal is to do so as private owners of separate properties." (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016: p. 367-368). By giving this statement, the authors clarify that there is a crucial difference in motivation of the two projects. This distinction is also referred to as the difference between residents that are 'building together', and those 'living together' or 'serving a common idea' (Krokfors, 2012). However, empirical evidence (for *Baugruppe*) shows that the lack of intention to live together in a particular communal way does not result in less successful housing projects (Hamiduddin & Galent, 2016).

## 2.4 Overview of types

To a large extent, the instigator, the amount of participation/governance and eventually the way in which the building is designed and used by the group of residents define the type of collaborative housing initiative. Tummers' (2016) meta-study shows that involving future users in the design process will lead to more adequate architectural designs which entail a more promising fit for the inhabitants. To what extent this involvement reaches, depends heavily on the project. An overview from a planning perspective is given, measured by two axes: the initiator and the collectiveness (figure 2.1). The figure is a useful effort to compare the variety of projects in the differentiated field of housing development. The horizontal axis expresses the level of community intention and collective initiative, while the vertical axis shows the extent of community involvement. The box containing *Baugruppen, Habitat participatif and CPO*, represents the position in the diagram relevant to the research of this thesis.
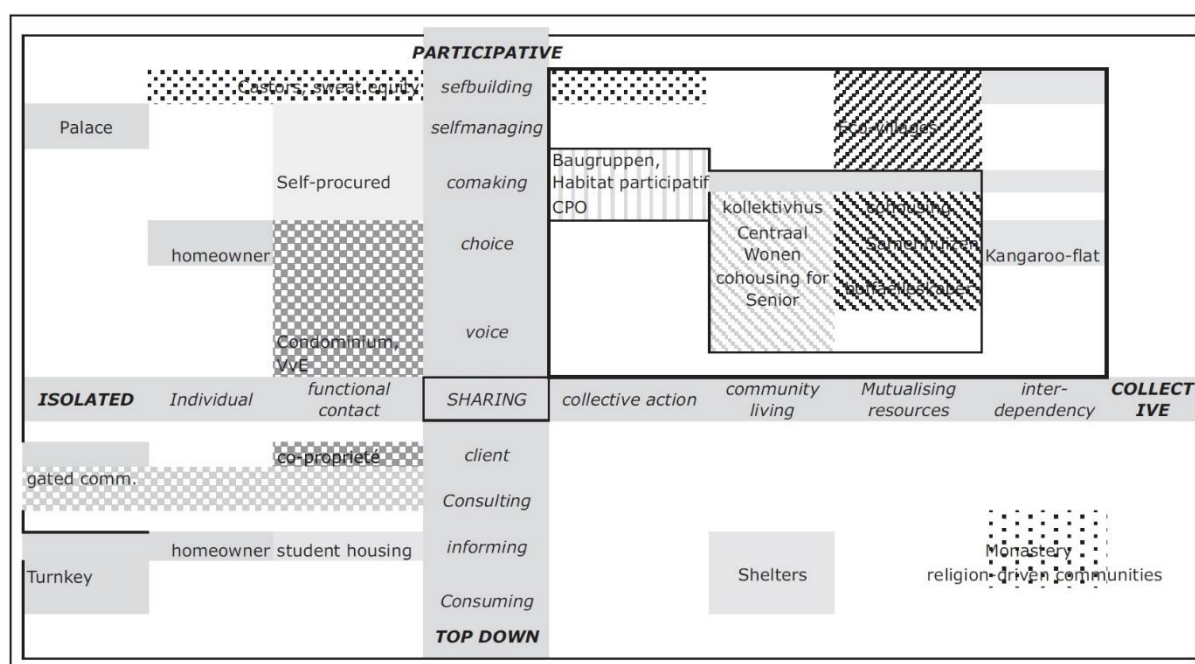


*Figure 2.1 Form of planning and physical outcome of co-housing. Source: Tummers (2016)*

## 2.5 Co-housing in The Netherlands

At the moment, co-housing projects in The Netherlands are predominantly collective private commissioned or co-commissioned, or somewhere in between. Cohousing initiatives, in line with Vestbro's (2010) definition, are often similar to *Centraal Wonen* and occur rarely (Qu & Hasselaar, 2011). Both CC and CPC are important types to consider for this thesis, since architect-led CPC shares characteristics of both.

*Collective private commissioning*
In The Netherlands, CPC is described as the practice of a group of people, united in some sort of cooperative model with the sole goal to establish a (predominantly residential) building for own use, frequently assisted or managed by professionals from the building sector (Visscher, 2012). A definition of CPC according to SEV (2010): 'A collective of equal private individuals that acquires a plot of land to build dwellings for (mostly) own residency, which is developed and designed by or in consultation with the group of individuals' (p. 7). The collective private commissioning projects in the Netherlands have various similarities with the principle of *Baugruppe*. The municipality of Amsterdam also uses the word *bouwgroepen* (building groups) when referring to collective private commissioning. The municipality describes a building group as follow: "A building group consists of a group of private individuals building together. Building together provides, besides a private dwelling, opportunities to realise facilities that for an individual household would otherwise not be financially accessible. For instance, a shared garden or rooftop terrace." (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.).

A collective instigates the project, and is responsible for financial risks. A board of the collective is in charge of the decision-making processes and represents the individual preferences of each member. In the last decade, some projects in Amsterdam have been initiated by a professional from the building sector, for instance an architect. This coined the term architect-led CPC (Kompier et al., 2012).

Boelens & Visser (2011) discuss the value of the CPC in their research on 10 years of (collective) private commissioning practice in The Netherlands. Their first remark relates to the slower speed of development, because of the group forming processes and collective decision making. Furthermore, CPC projects are in general not cheaper than traditionally developed dwellings. However, often through the use of higher quality materials, energy efficient techniques or the social setting of the housing block, the building often maintains a higher value over time; residents push to their financial limits to get a desired result. Parvin et al. (2011) argue that the entire process of the housing procurement by (collective) private commissioners, entail an aspect what is referred to as 'value architecture'. More value is created and retained because the self-builders aim to build for self-use, and probably make more vital decisions regarding the living phase during the building process. Besides financial value, other values such as utility value, a social status or feeling of belonging are created through the self-build process (Ibid., 2011). Concluding, Boelens & Visser (2011) state that self-build housing results in a very high satisfaction among residents, despite significantly more difficulties during the building process.

*Co-commissioning*
Co-commissioning can in some ways be seen as the hybrid version of private (collective) commissioning and traditional development (Luijten, 2010). On the one hand, the end-users are involved in the development process, giving them opportunities to influence the project and therefore creating a more desired end-product. On the other hand, it uses the experience of a professional that at the same time bares the risks and responsibilities, which he is used to, making the project more feasible. A theoretical principle of reasoning, for possibilities to distinguish between roles, responsibilities and risk baring, is found in literature in the concept of 'Open Building' (Habraken, 1961; Kendall, 2006). According to this Open Building concept for apartment development, the technical foundation of the bearing construction should be laid by a professional party, while the completion of the design and the programming should be created by the end-user. This type of commissioning brings along a particular amount of influence and participation of the future homeowner, while the professional developer decides on the distribution of control.

Kompier et al. (2012) elaborates extensively the different forms of cooperative commissioning between professional parties and collectives. They argue that co-commissioning is often instigated and managed by a smaller private party, that has tacit knowledge of the local demand and is able to use this to add desired features to a project. Smaller parties are more flexible to act quickly when sudden changes occur and are more able to sense the local market. The foremost difference of CC and genuine CPC is the actor initiating the project. The municipality of Amsterdam uses this difference to categorize private

commissioning in four different forms: private commissioning, small scale collective commissioning, large scale collective commissioning and co-commissioning (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.). It depends on the type of commissioning which kind of policy is applied. This is important, since the municipality has in many cases the ownership of the plots of land and assigns the plots according to a certain policy. The categories decides the opportunities of certain groups. At the moment, the municipality first uses a lottery system to decide which groups have a chance to win the tender, which is followed by a competition to obtain the plot of land (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2016b).

**Conclusion**
This chapter shows the large variety of projects which all can be defined as co-housing. Many authors have researched co-housing from different perspectives and in different contexts, which leads a scattered conception of the phenomenon. The diagram in figure 2.1 is a result of this literature study and provides an overview of some key-definitions that are related to the phenomenon. One must understand the difference between building together and living together, but also that it is not one or the other, but often a bit of both. These terms are often used to describe the approach and focus of the author, more than it is decisive for the practice occurring in a case. For instance, a cohousing project is often also (to some extent) self-built. Regarding the diagram, both co-housing and collaborative housing initiatives are the umbrella terms, covering all other definitions, and are regarded as synonyms. Underneath are the types described by different authors, as a result of the perspective they derive from.
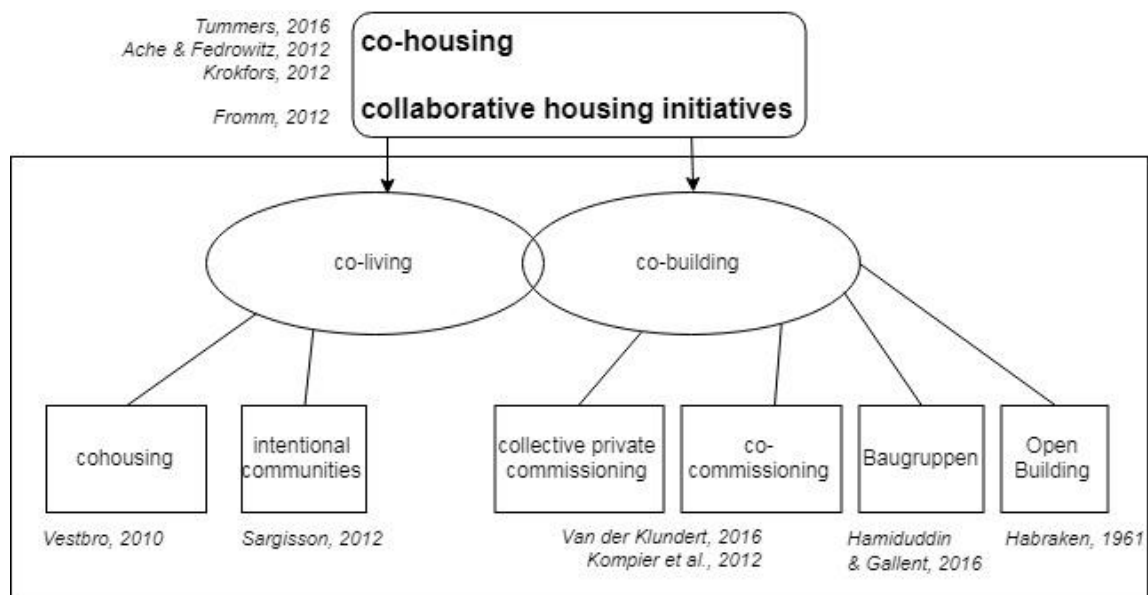


*Figure 2.2 Conceptual overview of co-housing theories*

It is important to realise what is meant by cohousing, and its relation to collective private commissioning. Both are within the field of co-housing. A CPC project can result in cohousing, but it is not always the case, since the intention is not often there to live in a communal way. However, collective decisions on the design of (private) spaces within the project does provide the possibilities to develop a stronger social cohesion, since collaboration is necessary. How these decisions are made and to what extent each individual is able to make decisions, for instance design, depends on each project. Chapter three continues investigating these types of control.

# 3 Distribution of control throughout building phase

So far, different types of co-housing initiatives have been discussed. In this part, the type of participation of the future residents in a project is discussed, since it decides for a great deal the nature of the project. Building upon some different types of co-housing discussed in the previous chapter, this part will elaborate further on the structure of these distinctions. Relating theories on participation and governance structures are discussed and explained by using a variety of co-housing examples.

### 3.1 Participation
Co-housing projects are rarely exactly the same, many factors influence a project. The characteristics of a project are for a large part based on which party initiates the project. Is it a municipality or non-profit organisation? Is it a group of friends trying to commission their apartment block themselves or is it a developer trying to establish a lucrative project? The outcome varies heavily, even per location (Boelens et al., 2010; Fromm, 2012; Tummers, 2016). Furthermore, the manner in which decisions are made in the project and how the participants eventually live, decides what kind of co-housing is being dealt with. Types of participation can differ in each stage of development, resulting in forms that include initiating together, building together and living together, or at least one of these three.

*Governance structures*
Within urban regions, social dynamics change continuously: demographics, households, communities, identities, leading to social diversity and social polarisation. Planners are required to anticipate on such changes regarding their practices, since changing social dynamics demand different measures. To enhance a more strategic way to act for planners, Healey (1997) discusses the way in which governance is distributed in urban planning and asserts that planning strategy-making should be in a more collaborative manner. This relates to a classic planning debate, bottom-up versus top-down. A mean to both arguments can be found in collaborative planning, in which institutional actors act in some sort of dialogue. A shift later recognised from *integrated urban development* into *organic urban development* (Buitelaar & Bregman, 2016), the former being blueprint planning, the latter being strategic planning. Collaboration between traditional actors, for instance municipality and developers, and end-users occurs during the co-housing development process. In light of new planning institutions, co-housing practices are able to act within the scope of organic urban development. However, several constrains are recognised regarding planning institutions, which reveals evidence of still traditional way of acting of (local) governmental bodies. Tummers (2011) concludes that such local planning cultures prevent such upcoming initiatives from fruition. In addition, parties as developers and administrators often remain hesitant to go off the beaten paths by undermining traditional planning cultures. New formal contracts and divisions of governance

| | Ladder of citizen participation | Dutch collaborative forms |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Degrees of participation* | Citizen Control | Self-built |
| | Delegated Power | Collective private commissioning |
| | Partnership | Co-commissioning |
| *Degrees of tokenism* | Placation | Consumer oriented development |
| | Consultation | Traditional development |
| | Informing | |
| *Nonparticipation* | Therapy | |
| | Manipulation | |

*Figure 2.3 Arnstein's ladder of participation in Dutch building context. Source: Boelens & Visser (2011)*

are required to utilise forms like co-housing to its full potential. Identifying governance structures is therefore an important aspect for this research. A different instigator implies also different forms of governance for the end-users, or in other words: degrees in participation. Therefore, Arnstein's (1969) 'ladder of citizens participation' can be linked to the co-housing commissioning and explain different degrees of participation in different projects. Boelens & Visser (2011) juxtapose forms of Dutch collaborative housing with Arnstein's ladder, as is displayed in figure 2.3. It should be considered however, that less participation does not lead to less successful co-housing (Tummers, 2016). The distribution of control can be seen as the way a project handles preventing a tragedy of the commons. It is argued that more participation is even less desired for all parties, since it leads to concessional solutions and slows down the building process (Boelens & Visser, 2010, Hofer, 2017).

This diagram is a useful conceptual overview to review different levels of control delegation and resident involvement predominately based on Arnstein's ladder of participation. Notably, the forms of collaboration in the second column describe the way in which a project is 'built together'. They do not say anything directly about the way residents 'live together', as described by Vestbro (2010), or if they can be called intentional communities, as described by Sargisson (2012) (see chapter two). The intention and realisation of creating a community can derive top-down or bottom-up, or somewhere in between.

*Ladder of influence*
Qu & Hasselaar (2011) translated the ladder of citizen participation, with regard to co-housing, to a different model (see figure 2.4). They use the terms 'voice' and 'choice' to express the way in which citizens are involved in the provision of their dwellings, and refer to it as the *Ladder of influence*. By using this name, a nuance is placed on the effect the involvement of citizens has.
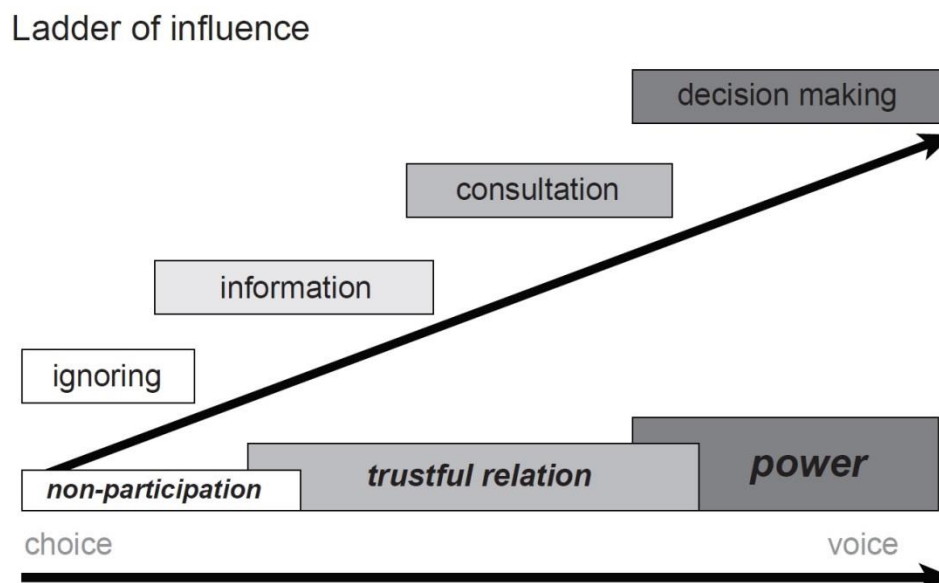


*Figure 2.4 Ladder of Influence: contract forms in development projects. Source: Qu & Hasselaar (2011)*

In addition, a critical note is given to the application of participative development processes: "There is also a potential threat of turning the collective and participatory projects into an aim, instead of the means to meet the changing demands and preferences of consumers. When participation becomes a generalised 'green' hobby, it may generate conflicts with social processes and cultural perceptions in different local communities" (Qu & Hasselaar, 2011: p. 181).

*Phasing the process*

Figure 2.5 gives a systematic overview of the different phases existing in the commission of a building. Every involved actor is represented by a colour. As is displayed in figure 2.5, Kompier et al. (2012) distinguishes five different phases: orientation, initiation, preparation, realisation, and maintenance. These are particularly useful to understand the stage of development. However, this diagram consist of development jargon. In the *architect as process lead* scheme of development, the individual and the collective (dark and light blue) make their entry at the end of initiation and beginning of plan preparation phase. The architect is the initiator, obtains a plot of land and coins the design before the future residents join the project. Consequently, when taking the resident's perspective into account, it is more evident to speak of three development phases: initiation phase, where future residents enter a project that already has been initiated; a (co-)design and build phase, where participants state their preferences and collectively make decisions on programme and design of their project to the extent this is possible; and a living phase, where social structures of interaction are maintained and required to sustain their former stated goals and intentions. Therefore, the next sections elaborate further on this division of phases. All phases relate to each other, but are able to independently influence the outcome of the process.
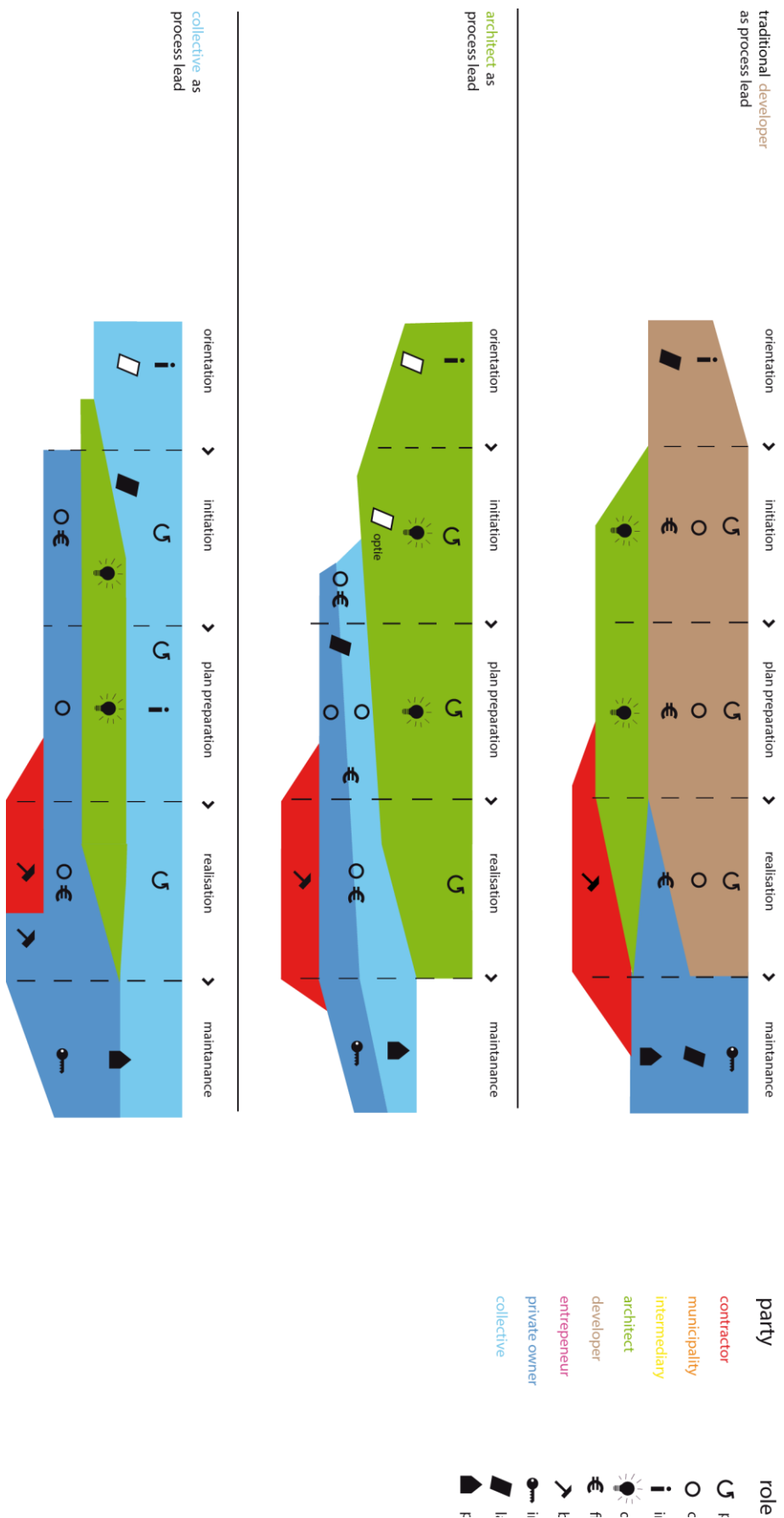
*Figure 2.5 Schematic overview types and phases of development. Source: Van der Klundert (2016)*

**3.2 Initiation: top-down or bottom-up**

Co-housing can derive from top-down as well as from bottom-up. Similar to the bigger discussion in planning regarding top-down versus bottom-up, both have winning and losing examples. The initiator of the project decides for a great deal what kind of project is realised (Tummers, 2016), since it can be of large influence to what extent future residents have the opportunity to realise their specific needs (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2016b), their motivations to participate and the community it can foster (Fromm, 2012).

*Top-down*
An example of top-down collaborative housing can be found in Italy, the Fondazione Housing Sociale recently started social housing initiatives based on collaborative and collective characteristics. The reason for public organisations to initiate such projects derives from a general conviction of the beneficial assets of collaborative initiatives. The belief in the positive externalities of these forms of housing is of such strength, that provision of such projects by for instance social housing corporations is made possible (FHS, 2017). Another example is Startblok Riekerhaven in Amsterdam. Backed-up by a local housing corporation, this project facilitates housing for a mix population of starters and former refugees (Startblok, 2017). The intention to create a community is seen as a goal and is pursued by the professional parties and facilitated in different ways. Communal living rooms and kitchens are available for every group of residents, and several events are hosted by the project managers.

However, the downsides top-down initiated projects is the pitfall of giving more responsibility to the residents than is expected, which can result in highly undesired outcomes. This became clear during one of the experiments regarding co-commissioning in the Homeruskwartier in Almere, The Netherlands, where different developers offered the opportunity for future residents to participate in the development stage. It had turned out that potential buyers were only interested in the location in combination with a lower cost of developing, rather than being involved in the development process (Luijten, 2010). As a lesson from this experiment, it can be said that initiating co-commissioning projects top-down should be carefully considered, since the market can demand other forms. People expected more certainty and applied as if the commissioning was not their responsibility. In general, their main focus was the location and the possibility of buying a house, but residents were lacking inspiration, creativity and the will to commit to the style of commissioning and eventually to build their own future dwelling.

*Bottom up*
Co-housing can also derive from the future-homeowners themselves. Families, groups of friends or acquaintances that form a collective to provide housing for themselves for various reasons. Already implicated by its middle word (private), CPC is based on private incentives bundled in a collective body to get result. Resident's motivations can differ to initiate co-building projects from creating a place to communally live, or to merely make use of each other's resources to establish a place to live. No single result is implied by bottom-up co-housing.

In the last decades, the collaborative housing development in The Netherlands grew in various ways. In 2000, the central government already expected the private commissioning as well as the collective private commissioning sector to grow extensively, to one-third of the total housing production in 2005 (SEV, 2010). Although many experiments have taken place in various forms, the amount of collective private commissioned houses has never reached the aimed proportion. Nevertheless, an evaluation report from SEV (2010) concludes that these types of development in The Netherlands contain high potentials for a qualitative urban expansion, because of their social externalities or sustainability ambitions.

An example of a bottom-up project in Amsterdam is Vrijburcht. This is a self-initiated co-housing project (De Haan, 2010). The commissioning of development companies and regulation of the process also was governed by the collective itself, using democratic decision-making structures. This autonomous project resulted not only in housing, but also a restaurant, dockyard and theatre hall. However, since mostly

layman made decisions for a collective building, many concessions have been made and the building phase had a long duration.

As for municipal policy in Amsterdam, self-organised collectives are the prerequisite to take part in CPC tenders in the first place (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2016a). The strict separation of CC and CPC is based on the principle that CPC practices should be self-deployed. However, the qualities of collective housing initiatives are not limited to self-organised groups only, as argued by many scholars (among others: Fromm, 2012; Tummers, 2016; Hamiduddin & Garrent, 2016; Zandvoort et al., 2013).

### 3.3 Design and build phase: pre-set options or autonomous decision from residents

Private commissioning, in general, is associated by the freedom of designing the house according to the wishes of its commissioners. Limitations of its design are found by national housing laws and building regulations, surrounding environment, beauty commissions and, of course, finance. However, performing a collective private commission, all wishes from (all individuals of) the collective are ought to be represented in the project's design, which entails a larger and more complex process compared to private commissioning, and often slows down the progress or reduces the functionality of the end-result (Boelens & Visser, 2011). Tummers (2011) stresses that the leading party must possess the right competences to structure and guide the building process, which has not often been the case hitherto. Nevertheless, it is thought that this process of reaching consensus on design and program of the whole project by the collective, leads to stronger social ties between residents (Qu & Hasselaar, 2011).

A conceptual approach to deal with the individual values within a collective project can be found in 'skeleton and infill' or 'Open Building Concepts' (Habraken, 1961). This concept pleads for a radical separation between a bare structure, which contains the pure necessities of a building, and the infill of the user to that bare structure. This separation lets the end user participate in the design of the space it is entitled to, within the structure of the building. Theoretically, this results in a perfect fit between the user and the dwelling, since it is able to personalise the house completely (or, with regards to an institutional context, to a large extent). Furthermore, the Open Building Model also provides flexibility in time, which entails a greater sustainability of the dwelling (Kendall, 2006). Future users are able to change aspects of the house without having to demolish large elements. This makes the real estate more future proof and resilient to changing demands in time.

However, the Open Building concept has not been applied frequently and many institutional barriers refrain the concept to succeed in large numbers. In the Netherlands, several projects have been initiated, which resulted in co-commissioning developments. An example in the local context is the experimental project 'Solids', coined by the housing association Stadgenoot (Wallagh, 2013). The Solids-concept entails buildings without designated functions: the users of the building decide where in the building what function is housed. This resulted in a diverse building, with small businesses, a hotel and houses in all shapes and sizes scattered throughout the building. Remarkably, the houses are rented out, but the residents had to design and pay for their infill themselves.

As for Open Building, it is mostly a theoretical conviction rather than an applicable method. To what extent the developer should complete the building structure, and to what extent the future-resident should be entitled to control the design, is often context dependent. Therefore, there is not yet an out-ruling answer to the efficient distribution of this control.

### 3.4 Living phase: organisation of daily practices

As stated in chapter two, co-housing can have many forms, including the living phase. Often this relates to choices made by the initiator and during the design and building phase, but that is not always the case. Living arrangements vary from common use of kitchens and living rooms, to private detached houses.

How the living arrangement of a project is structured, depends on different aspects. The intention of the group from the start decides for a great deal the aim of the project. It has a great influence on choices made throughout the design and building phase. In addition, choices on design can be crucial in order to sustain a community (Williams, 2005). Environments where interaction is invoked through certain design elements, can increase the sustainability of the community. However, a tight community can also manifest in an environment that lacks those elements.

However, how people live together, interact, and feel connected in a certain way is only partly subordinate to the physical environment.

Inevitably, when people interact, in any sort of system, institutions will evolve. One could analyse this on many different scales in society: within city regions, certain labour sectors, a bookshop or a household. The process of self-built co-housing projects can be of influence on the setting of institutions during the living phase of these projects, since social contacts and encounters have already taken place between neighbours. These interactions are necessary to coordinate collective elements of the building. A certain culture can derive from this, or even particular lifestyles are formed.

In literature on the creation of social institutions, often referred to as socialisation processes, it is explained that there are differences in the types of 'rules' within a social system (Koppenjan & Groenewegen, 2005; Williamson, 1998). Some institutions are more prone to change than others, and the outset of the institutions often decide how such norms are able to change or sustain. To what extent these institutions are retained, implicates the amount of the 'sustainability of the community' (Hamiduddin, 2015). A definition of sustainability of community is as follows: 'the ability of society itself, or its manifestation as local community, to sustain and reproduce itself at an acceptable level of functioning' (Dempsey, 2009: p.293). The extent to which a collective of households is able to retain tight social interactions and control for the established institutions, says something about the state of the social cohesion in that community. In addition, when the composition of the group changes (when people move out and in) such prevailing institutions are determining the social behaviour of the new member, or moreover, can decide who will become the new member.

A co-housing living arrangement can be intensive, with set days of dining together and running a neighbourhood restaurant or other services (Vestbro & Horelli, 2012). However, it can also result in households happily residing in their private homes while sharing nothing more than a driveway or staircase (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016). Furthermore, a living arrangement is not determined to exist in the same manner forever. Institutions are possible to change. in Sweden, several cohousing (as in 'living together') projects have been transformed later on into separate individual houses (Vestbro & Horelli, 2012).

### 3.5 Concluding remarks

It is hard to state which form of participation is the role model, irrespectively to the context. It is desired when end-users are highly involved in the process for numerous of reasons. However, one should consider the limits of the performance of a collective, as Hofer (2017) poses it: 'Participation [in co-housing] as the unweighted sum of individual interests is destructive' (p.61). It is evident that professionals are professionals for a reason. A fruitful combination of expertise from professionals and participation from the end-users is what should be the goal of such housing initiatives. In conclusion, it can be argued that one should pursue as much as possible to fit the amount of participation to the aspiration of the end users, in order to come to a qualitative result.

# 4 Features of co-housing leading to quality

This chapter answers on the first sub-question: What are, according to existing literature, the qualities and inferiorities of co-housing? A literature review produced the following findings of co-housing. As is described, many features of such projects are praised in scientific literature, as well as in policies. However, also several critical remarks were found, which are not often considered by many authors. The results from the inquiry in this chapter functions as the foundation for the case evaluation of this research.

## 4.1 Spatial quality

Taking Dutch policymakers into account, the *Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu* (Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment) aims to serve for a safe and liveable environment for inhabitants and businesses (2012, p. 49). They include aspects such as safety to water hazards, conserving cultural heritage and special ecological environments. The key-definition that is used is 'environmental quality'. In this perspective, the quality of a place is addressed by the physical characteristics of a place, and how these are accommodating safety and desired environmental conservation.

Although spatial quality is often used to justify spatial interventions, or to sustain a chosen concept to develop a certain area, defining spatial quality can be done in many ways and is therefore multi-interpretative (Janssen-Jansen et al., 2009). From a narrow perspective, it could mean how a person visually experiences a certain place. The sense of an individual in that certain space at a certain time, is what determines the level of quality. Approaching it from a wider perspective, one could also encounter aspects that gauges the quality of living to be part of spatial quality. Even it is possible to incorporate economic values, like nearby facilities or topography of a place into the definition of quality, and assess the non-esthetic components of a space as well (Janssen-Jansen et al., 2009). In addition, Tröger & Eberle (2014) discuss what density of the built environment evokes in regard to the perceived quality of a space, since density does not only influence the social contact and control, also on how to get to a place and if amenities are reachable for someone. It is therefore important to define what kind of quality is assessed since what quality is, is highly subjective to a person's conception.

## 4.2 Features of co-housing

The next few paragraphs elaborate on the different aspects of co-housing, and if it can be regarded, according to scholars in the field, as a quality. It is clear that many of these qualities are embedded in the concepts of such projects, but some derive from unexpected side effects. Meanwhile, undesired by-products also occur, as other authors state in their research. The aim is to create a clear list of aspects, that can form as a basis to evaluate the quality of a collaborative housing initiative.

Within the field of co-housing, a rough division can be made between projects that are initiated based on motivations to 'live together', or to 'build together' (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016; Krokfors, 2012). As is described in chapter two, a discussion exists on the definitions of these terms. In the coming paragraphs the focus is not on this discussion, but is aimed at the collection of praised and criticised aspects of all forms of collaborative housing. Depending on the point of view of the researcher, these aspects are accredited often to one of these motivations. However, both types produce the same appreciated aspects in their own way (Tummers, 2016), and are found throughout the overview below.

### 4.2.1 Self-designed co-housing projects

*Aesthetic design*
In an urban environment, especially in the Dutch context, there are strict aesthetic rules posed by a municipal beauty commission, which aims to create coherence with the surrounding buildings. A new to be build building is for a large share determined by their vision of the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the architect has to work within legal framework of the *Bouwbesluit* (building regulations) and *Woningwet* (laws on housing), and the programme of the building is highly subjected to the zoning plan

(*Bestemmingsplan*). In light of the definition of spatial quality given above, a fair part of the quality is being controlled by legal regulations. Therefore, the design of the building is to a large extent restricted.

Furthermore, and in contrast to what many governmental parties cherish from this type of commissioning, end-users often are not as interested in the architectural diversity on a neighbourhood scale deriving from co-housing projects. Also, their satisfaction is not significantly higher than other 'regular' projects. Actually, in some cases, Boelens & Visser (2011) mention, residents are slightly less satisfied than average due to many impediments and concessions in the designing and developing process. According to Lloyd et al. (2015), a discussion prevails on the aesthetics of (collective) self-build projects, since too much freedom leads to a diverse and incoherent urban design. While this is cherished by some as adventurous and unique, others claim it decreases the spatial quality.

*Design for social interaction*
A generic design of co-housing is hard to formulate (Tummers, 2016). Nevertheless, there are certain elements of design that can be seen as key-elements for the improvement of social cohesion. From this perspective, these elements are viewed as valuable products of co-housing, and therefore interpreted as a quality. Williams (2005) formulates three aspects of collaborative housing design that have a key-role to a stronger social cohesion: proximity to buffer zones; good-quality, accessible, functional, diverse communal spaces with ample opportunity for surveillance; and private units (with restricted facilities). These aspects have been extracted from cohousing research, which, according to Williams (2005), are utmost relevant for social interaction design practices since "… it uses design (social contact design) and formal social structures (resident management and organization of communal activities, non-hierarchical structures and decision-making processes) to encourage social interaction in neighbourhoods"(p.196).

Density of the building is important to have fellow group members in physical proximity of each other, to (randomly) meet others in buffer zones. Yet, there is an undefined threshold to the density of a project, too much and residents may retreat from the social group, when a lack of social control is sensed by the individual. Design-wise, low- to medium high-rise buildings are more suited, since high-rise buildings may discourage residents using shared facilities such as communal gardens or roof terraces (Abu-Gazzeh, 1999). Furthermore, communal spaces are important. Firstly, the existence of communal areas are already excellent features derived from collaborative housing. Having them in a central position within the building and highly accessible, increases the frequency of usage. Having them visible from various angles enhances the sense of surveillance and security (McCammant and Durrett, 1994). Evidently, this leads to more valued spaces. Lastly, Williams (2005) mentions private units. When private spaces are smaller and contain less facilities, it can influence the social interaction among residents in a positive way (McCammant and Durrett, 1994), since they are more inclined to make use of the communal facilities. Whether this can be regarded as a quality for design, is actually not so straightforward. In fact, smaller units with minimum facilities are often seen as less attractive, lower financial value, and therefore less desired houses.

Nonetheless, there is one thing to consider regarding the previous claims. Namely, they give the impression that a direct relationship exists between the people (the resident) and the built environment (their co-housing project), which is called 'environmental determinism' (Carmona et al., 2003, in: Dempsey, 2009). At the moment, policies and work ethics of planners, architects and urban designers still imply this reasoning. However, human behaviour may be influenced by their physical environment, but how people interact in a certain place is not entirely causally related to the specifics of that place. Many other factors are of influence for social cohesion and interaction in communities (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Therefore, it is important to show reflexivity as a planner and a researcher regarding the possible effect the built environment has on interaction. A more suiting term follow would be 'environmental probabilism' (Carmona et al., 2003 in: Dempsey, 2009). The design of a physical environment can have probable influence on the social interaction of a community.

### 4.2.2 Self-built co-housing projects fostering a community

*Self-built co-housing*

Groups of individuals may bundle forces in order to fulfil their desire to create a collective living environment. These are engaged, hands-on groups of self-builders that initiate a self-build project (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016). Commissioning their own living space or even participating in the process of design and decision-making, allows the future residents the possibility to customise their houses according to their preferences and needs (Brown et al., 2013). A greater 'fit' can be achieved, matching supply and demand of housing directly. This is regarded as a desired outcome since it theoretically provides a higher satisfaction among residents. It also enhances the social cohesion significantly.

Besides the freedom and responsibility to care for floorplans and designs, self-initiated group-built housing projects requires intensive collaboration of all members in decision-making processes. When there is no professional party in the lead, choices are made by the future residents themselves. This process of collaboration and self-organisation results in tighter social connections among residents (Fedrowitz & Ache, 2012; Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016). Even when there is no ambition to pursue an intentional community (Sargisson, 2012), or communal way of living (Vestbro, 2010), strong relations grow over the process of deciding on communal spaces, new residents or design features. This is a remarkable assertion that argues that the process of designing and building the project, has significant influences on the experience of living in it. While stating that the process is responsible for the production of desirable social outcomes for the project, it refers to cohousing and simultaneously undermines the cohousing criteria.

However, it is questioned how long these ties sustain, for instance when people move in and out and the group of residents changes. The social connections forged during the design and building phase get lost and it is questionable if new (selected) members get along in the same manner (Lloyd et al., 2015). Besides enduring the design and building process together, aspects of design as described by Williams (2005) seem essential in order to sustain a close community in the maintaining or living phase. In case a project includes little or poor shared spaces, the risk of losing the social ties created in the building phase is substantial. Yet, when strong institutions are established among the group of residents and the turn-over of residents occurs gradually, adapting processes of socialisation, or normalisation, may take place and consequently support the community.

*Non self-built*

Not always are co-housing completely self-build. Participants are then brought together by a professional and generally do not know the other members in advance (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016). It is then expected that the stronger social ties deriving from the design and building process, as described above, are not present. However, such projects must thrive from other aspects, based on the 'living together' factor. Co-housing lacking of self-built principles are still valuable to the field. Housing market structures and institutions differ from (inter)national to local scales. For instance, in Germany more than 60 percent of the housing stock is established through self-built initiatives, while this is in The Netherlands less than 15 percent, and in England even less than 10 percent (Lloyd et al., 2015). Such institutions formulate the demand on the housing market and in general influences what is regarded as a quality. The Homerus Kwartier case in Almere (see chapter 3) shows that too much responsibility and control for residents can be undesirable. Firstly, because they can be unexperienced and/or have no ambitions to endeavour such intense processes building their house, a turn-key dwelling is preferred. Secondly, because self-build (in The Netherlands) is often dedicated to a specific population group (Lloyd et al., 2015). Generally, this group already has good access to housing markets, and possibly establish a homogenous population in large scale self-built neighbourhoods (Ibid).

A self-built collaborative housing initiative enhances the social connection between residents significantly. However, the self-built principle is not in every context a desired or viable method to produce housing.

### 4.2.3 Sustainability and shared resources and facilities

Another praised asset is the fact that CPC projects generally entail some sort of sustainability ambition. It is often that these building groups aim to implement energy efficient techniques, use PV panels, contribute to the biodiversity of its surroundings and share spaces. This, on itself, is already a virtue of the concept. Moreover, it is even thought that particularly these ambitions are also enhancing social cohesion in these projects, and are sometimes the reason individuals participate in CPC projects in the first place (Boelens & Visser, 2011). Furthermore, self-builders ought to invest in the use of high quality materials and act from an end-user's perspective. They often reduce on-going running costs and invest in greener energy provisions. In this way, co-housing can be seen as a form of sustainable development (Brown et al., 2013).

The possibility to create shared facilities is regarded as a quality of co-housing in various ways. It provides possible cost reduction (Boelens & Visser, 2011). Also, it gives opportunities to foster social cohesion in the long run through collective maintenance in the living phase, and enhances social interactions (Williams, 2005). Shared facilities can be a nice addition of luxury to the building, such as a swimming pool, garden area, guest room, office space, garage etc. Even a shared investment is possible, in the case when a commercial function is realised such as a café or childcare centre. On the other hand, sharing resources can also be the base reason to initiate the collaboration in the first place. A pragmatic approach to obtain a house in a specific location or city, by sharing financial resources and risks to get a plot of land to build on. In this sense, the land itself is a shared facility. Bundling social capital to arrange a team of developers or designers, sharing intellectual capital when members of the group arrange legal arrangements, or invest sweat equity by arranging group meetings. These examples are related to the building phase.

The existence of a community, in any way or form, provides different amenities closer to home than it would be when residents are housed by their nuclear families. It offers opportunities to connect more easily with other people when in need of something: a babysitter, a lawnmower, a person to talk to or even social healthcare. However, the fact that these connections can exist in other (traditional) housing types should not be undermined. What can be argued, is the motivation and the intention to have this tight connection from the start of a housing project. This is an intentional reorganisation of the everyday lifestyle, or as Vestbro & Horelli (2012) formulate it, it is practiced to "overcome isolation and look for sustainable lifestyles" (p. 320). This can be explanatory why many elderly (Scandinavian) women are interested in such housing schemes (Sansted, 2009; Sangregorio, 2012), for them such a housing arrangement increase social contacts and healthcare. Regarding the living phase of co-housing, when having a community, such informal services are more likely to take place (Vestbro, 2010). For example, people share tools or devices. It enhances social capital of individuals.

Moreover, it is argued that collaborative housing is able to decrease problems occurring in modern urban societies, such as alienation, social isolation and a more sustainable lifestyle (Meltzer, 2010). The value of social cohesion in general is delineated by Forrest and Kearns (2001): "social cohesion can emphasise the need for a shared sense of morality and common purpose; aspects of social control and social order; the threat to social solidarity of income and wealth inequalities between people, groups and places; the level of social interaction within communities or families; and a sense of belonging to place" (p. 2128).

These are all various ways of collaboration that foster three main qualities: cost-reduction or accessibility (Boelens & Visser, 2011), social cohesion among group members (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016; Tummers, 2016; Vestbro, 2010), and lower impact on natural resources (Meltzer, 2010).

### 4.2.4 Costs and finance

Currently, a debate prevails on the assertion whether co-housing projects are financially more interesting or not. Collaborative housing is not, by definition, cheaper. It thus however offers generally better value for money (Boelens & Visser, 2011). Housing units in co-housing can be relatively cheaper, when they are self-initiated, or if in another way the traditional developer is surpassed. Economies of scale can be

exploited to some extent, but do not weigh up against large scale traditional development. Institutionalised developers also possess the experience required to achieve efficient development projects, but are known for receiving large interest rates on their projects (Brown et al., 2013). On the other hand, inexperienced self-builders are prone to make less efficient choices during the design and building phase, resulting in higher overall costs. In addition, self-builders often desire to create extra facilities which increases the price even more. However, as stated above, the value of property also rises, making collaborative housing projects relatively cheaper.

Increasingly, collaborative housing is seen in a more pragmatic nature. As Hamiduddin & Gallent (2016) conclude from their study, more and more 'normal' families participate in cohousing projects in order to access the housing market. Prices of private rental dwellings might be too expansive, private commissioning of a house is not possible due to a lack of available plots or other traditional forms of housing are not feasible. Additionally, co-housing structures offer also more lucrative ways of living, which also implies of a pragmatic choice to participate in such projects. On a side note, the generally appreciated practical qualities of co-housing increasingly attracts opportunities for planners to incorporate such housing schemes in planning agendas (Ache & Fedrowitz, 2012). However, this should not be an aim on itself. Co-housing should rather remain to exists as "… means to meet the changing demands and preferences of consumers" (Qu & Hasselaar, 2011: p. 181).

It depends on the spatial-economic context if finance is an issue or not (Brown et al., 2013). Often, self-built co-housing require personal capital to cover for initial costs. When a mortgage is needed to develop the project, it is often a struggle for residents. In The Netherlands, banks are reluctant and see higher risks of failure. Very few banks are willing to participate in collaborative projects (Lloyd et al., 2015), decreasing the accessibility of the housing type, and pushing the phenomenon more towards a niche. However, when a collective does find the required finances and succeed in building a co-housing project, the revenues that otherwise would have been accredited to the developer, now remains at the end-users. In other words, there is no institutional developer profiting from creating dwellings.

In addition, it must be mentioned the assertion that co-housing are apart from any speculative logic (Ruiu, 2014), is not always true according to Chiodelli (2015). Co-housing can be initiated or backed-up by a professional party, such as a developer or an architect. Such projects are very likely to have a developer involved aiming to make a profit, in some sort of way. It is also possible that group members join and use some of their capital to privately invest in a collaborative housing initiative. Whether this is a good or a bad thing, depends partly on the market context of the project. In a market where there is not an established self-building culture, it might be beneficial for the success of the project to have a professional party involved.

### 4.2.5 Impact on surrounding social environment

*Potential exclusion of surroundings*
In contrast to many authors, Chiodelli (2015) prefers to use a different term for certain initiatives occurring along the lines of collaborative housing. He argues that gated communities and co-housing projects can be defined under the same denominator, namely private residential communities. He bases his arguments on the fact that many characteristics are shared by both forms of living, such as communitarian multifunctional services and self-organisation. With regard to the comparison of gated communities and cohousing projects formulated by Ruiu (2014), Chiodelli highlights some nuances of the often positive connotation of co-housing. For instance, common spaces within co-housing projects ought to be in general just as privately used or controlled as they are in gated communities, therefore they withhold a certain amount of access for the neighbouring residents which is often not considered by advocates of such projects.

Also, a strong social cohesion is both the source and the product of several negative outcomes concerning co-housing projects. While strong ties among one community is positive for those within, it can conflict

with other groups 'outside' the community, excluding or marginalising other groups on a higher scale. By first addressing the positive impact of social cohesion among residents, Forrest and Kearns (2001) explain it is essential to understand the importance of scale. A strong social cohesion is not seldom based on differentiation towards others, either by being negatively marginalised or by the sense of disaffiliation through social class, race or age (Ibid). For co-housing in an urban setting, this could imply a 'we' and 'the others' on a neighbourhood scale. To what extent social cohesion is seen as a virtue, should be relativized regarding it's spatial scale.

*Homogenous population*
Consequently, co-housing usually attracts a homogeneous population which can lead to social exclusion of surrounding neighbours. The homogeneity of the group is enhanced in two ways: self-selection and gentrification (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016). Mostly in self-organised and initiated groups, people with similar demographics and characteristics are chosen to enter the group. Aspiring participants require the right social capital to get involved. Gentrification occurs throughout the process. In addition, to participate in group self-build projects, financial capital is required to initiate the project, and bare some flexibility during the process to endure unexpected costs. Therefore, the authors argue that collective self-built projects will continue to be a niche, and not feasible for everyone. Moreover, one should be cautious when considering such projects into (sustainable) development policies, since the outcome can affect the social equality for inhabitants in general. A key-characteristic of co-housing is its grass-root nature, while gated communities often are products of top-down schemes (Ruiu, 2014). This constantly fuels the discussion and challenges planning bodies (Tummers, 2016). Consequently, regarding architect-led collective private commissioning, the question arises to what extent it is seen as top-down or bottom-up.

Others argue a different view regarding co-housing: 'Co-housing differs from 'gated communities' in that it is more outreaching to its environment (Vestbro, 2010; De Haan, 2011). Its primary aim is interaction, whereas gated communities show a need for protection (Poldervaart et al., 2001; Cowan and Marsh, 2004)' (Tummers, 2011: p. 161). Here, the assertion is specifically made to undermine the fact that gated communities and cohousing are one and the same phenomenon. Following this reasoning, gated communities are a form of co-housing, solely based on the need for protection. Though, it is possible such initiatives encompass positive aspects such as a strong social cohesion and shared facilities.

Conformingly, numeral cases are recorded where external people make use of the amenities or services provided by a co-housing initiative. Fromm's (2012) findings contain evidence of different forms of collaborative housing structures having positive effects on the neighbourhood, but may be not able to solve social problems completely. They can mix low and high-income groups with each other, creating mixed social environments. At the same time, internal activities from these residents such as giving workshops or volunteering could become accessible for other residents of the same neighbourhood. The entry of such a collaborative housing group is often accompanied by either a new building, or the revitalization of an existing building, having a positive effect on the neighbourhood's appearing, when a formerly unused site is redeveloped.

However, Tummers (2011) mentions the possibility of values not being internalized by the 'outsiders', which may result in showing less care for the shared space. Meanwhile, certain facilities cannot be realised without the presence of a surrounding neighbourhood, for instance theatres, cafes and restaurants, childcare centres or other small businesses. When such features are included, interaction with residents from the neighbourhood is evident, which is a positive asset directly related to the housing project (Fromm, 2012).

This critical perspective of a possible gated communities is essential to balance all other praising characteristics of co-housing, in order to create a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Also to analyse the considerations of policy makers when setting regulations for collaborative housing. Although it can enhance external social contacts in various ways, there is a two-fold possibility of social exclusion. Firstly, throughout the process of group building and selecting members, secondly through

fictively privatizing open accessible areas by shared norms and values, or by not creating such open areas at all, and only share facilities with group members. A paradox operating on different scales seems to appear giving the statement of social cohesion: a strong social cohesion amongst residents, provides a high chance of socially excluding external neighbours.

**Summary of features**

This chapter provided an overview of key features of co-housing. Some features can have positive and negative consequences, depending on one's scientific perspective or the scale one is analysing. Also, some aspects of co-housing are required to enable other features, or they derive from a combination of aspects. It is not directly clear whether a feature is regarded as a quality. This tenuousness increases the difficulty to assess co-housing projects in general. In an effort to summarise the previous chapter, figure 2.6 and 2.7 divide co-housing features leading to quality.

It is possible to assign causal relations to the qualities in an effort to apply structure to the overview, which is delineated in figure 2.6. The features of co-housing can either result in positive outcomes (qualities) or negative outcomes (inferiorities). Again, to whom these are positive or negative, depends. Roughly two major factors concerning the development of the project are of influence to many of the found positive features.

| *Positive outcomes* | *Negative outcomes* |
|---|---|
| **Through collectively self-built** | |
| High appreciation of living arrangement | Concessions on architecture |
| Lower building costs | Requires private equity |
| Higher quality of materials | Social exclusion |
| Increased sense of community | |
| **Through key-elements in design** | |
| Communal amenities | Decreases privacy |
| Increased social cohesion | Potential gated community |

*Figure 2.6. Division of co-housing features based on causality*

The first factor is based on the engagement of the residents, to what extent they can influence the result and are responsible for decisions during the process. In short, residents' control when designing and building their future homes. This relates to the self-built aspect of co-housing. Influence in group decisions, or self-deployment of the project are expected to result in many qualities given to co-housing for different reasons. Predominantly the freedom to design private units and collective areas, and establishing social ties among future residents prior to their tenure. However, to what extent this influence reaches and still fosters desired houses, differs per project, and depends on the intention of the individual participants. For instance, a highly satisfied group of people can reside in a project that contains little co-housing qualities. Additionally, several negative outcomes derive from collective self-built projects, such as unavailable to those with no private capital (to cover first costs), and consequently, resulting exclusion of certain population groups.

The second dimension serving for quality is based on the structural design of the co-housing project. When it entails certain design elements, the project is more inclined to foster a strong social cohesion. Social cohesion is forged through a collective commissioning process, but significant design elements are essential in order to remain these social ties.

Furthermore, a separation between introvert and extravert qualities is made. This is necessary regarding the perspective the researcher takes to research the project, and to relate the feature to a quality. For example, a homogenous population within a co-housing project is internally desirable and may show

positive social outcomes to members of that project, but can be experienced as excluding behaviour by outsiders (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). In the next chapter this will be discussed more thoroughly.

| *Internal* | *External* |
|---|---|
| Increased social cohesion<br>Like-minded population<br>High appreciation of living environment<br>Communal amenities<br>Lower building costs | Impulse to surroundings<br>Potential external exclusion<br>Higher quality housing stock |

*Figure 2.7 Overview of qualities divided in two perspectives*

In this thesis, a demarcation has been made to study the co-housing practices from a residents perspective. Therefore, the external outcomes of co-housing projects, for instance the potential external exclusion or the potential impulse for the neighbourhood, are left aside initially, as these effects are hard to judge from the perspective of the residents of the co-housing project. And it is the residents that make up the main subject and source of information in this research study. Nevertheless, the research study does keep an open attitude towards the respondents' stories of how they perceive the quality of living, including their perceptions on a neighbourhood scale. But because it is assumed that residents are not best positioned to get a thorough understanding of external effects of co-housing projects on a neighbourhood scale, this aspect is not incorporated in the initial core focus-elements of the conceptual model.

Concluding, when talking about the most evident qualities of co-housing from a resident perspective, the features summed up in figure 2.8 are regarded.

| |
|---|
| Increased social cohesion<br>Like-minded population<br>High appreciation of living environment<br>Communal amenities<br>Lower building costs |

*Figure 2.8 Features of co-housing leading to quality*

# 5 Social cohesion and Sense of Community

As stated in previous paragraphs, co-housing is often affiliated with an increase of social cohesion or the development of a community. But what is social cohesion? And for whom? To what extent reaches the community? Answers to these questions are often found evident for scholars, as well as for laymen, and the premise is often that social cohesion is obviously a good thing. However, social cohesion is a nebulous term and can be interpreted in several ways.

## 5.1 Social cohesion

When, for instance, policies are created to stimulate social cohesion among certain groups, (governmental) parties are often obliged to operationalise their meaning of social cohesion, which is not always found to be easy. Often the term is (purposely) used in a vague manner, but just so that it is implied that everybody should know what is meant. It is used more or less to describe the concept of 'good interactions between people' or 'a social cement in a society', or at least something as 'a cohesive society that hangs together'.

Social cohesion is found on many scales, which implies that what is meant with the term, depends on one's intention to define. Regarding a co-housing community, one can refer to social cohesion within the community or within the neighbourhood. A multi-level perspective should be entailed when elaborating social cohesion. Moreover, often a paradoxical relation exists between scales, for example social cohesion on neighbourhood level and on city level (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). A socially cohesive neighbourhood where common values are shared, where tight social connections exist, where there is social solidarity and equal wealth distribution, where people are, as a community, attached to the place and identify themselves with that place, can conflict with another community of such kind next to it. Highly cohesive groups are likely to identify through differentiation; 'we' and 'them'. Therefore, it is essential to understand the effect a tight community can have on the greater urban fabric. "It is unclear in theory and policy if there is a point at which social cohesion can become too strong, and manifest itself as an inward-looking, closed or divided community (Cantle, 2001; Mann, 1970)" (Dempsey, 2009: p. 322). This is related to the issue of interpreting the measured social cohesion of a particular group; who is to say or convict? To construct any assertion, context is of utmost necessity. Nonetheless, it is important to consider these outcomes, for instance when policies are formed in an effort to increase cohesion among (certain) communities.

Thus, it is necessary to be more specific regarding social cohesion. The term social cohesion is therefore used for a specific community. In other words, how socially cohesive is a certain community? Dempsey's article (2009) provides a useful overview of studies on social cohesion and its composition. Social cohesion is constructed out of several dimensions. For sake of this research, only the most applicable is discussed extensively and a few others are briefly mentioned to show a comprehend understanding. An essential part is the sustainability of a community, also called 'trust and reciprocity'(Ibid: p. 323). For a community to 'reproduce itself' and remain to exist, members require a level of mutual interaction. Consequently, the quality and quantity of interaction are important indicators of a cohesion, which can be found in manifested and latent attempts of activities and organisation. These show hints of 'social capital', a term that surfaced by Robert Putnam at the beginning of the millennium. In addition, the perception of members of certain communities construct important elements of a cohesion. Essence of a community only derives from those whom perceive the cohesion within a community, which makes this subjective element important for community assessment. This is called 'sense of community' (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). This term is not about appointing factors of a community and explain or describe a community through objectified elements or quantified data, but about how such elements are sensed by members of a community.

Figure 2.9 shows a simplified (and incomplete) conceptual overview of social cohesion, deriving from literature of Dempsey (2009), Kearns & Forrest (2000), McMillan & Chavis (1986) and McMillan (1996), in order to establish context to the large conception of social cohesion.
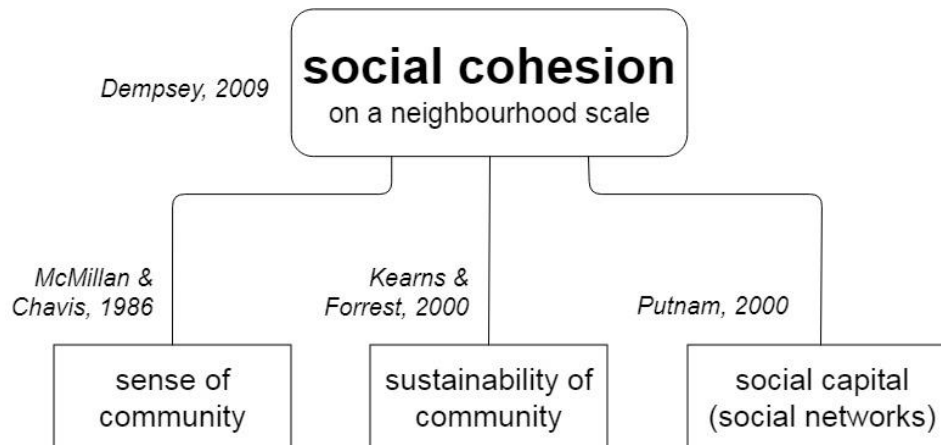
*Figure 2.9 Conceptual overview of social cohesion theories*

**5.2 Theory of Sense of Community**

Since the focus of this research is the resident's perspective, social cohesion is approached on its perception by the community member. Therefore, the sense of community is explained in detail. McMillan and Chavis (1986) and McMillan (1996) elaborate extensively on the neighbourhood scale community, although they do not define its scale in detail. Their research relate to the resident's perspective, consequently they use the term 'sense of community'. Their definition is as follows: "Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan, 1996; in McMillan and Chavis, 1986: p. 9). Numerous of former researches are referred to and their methods of operationalisation are explained. The authors filtered out a theoretical overview of how a sense of community is constructed (see figure 2.10).



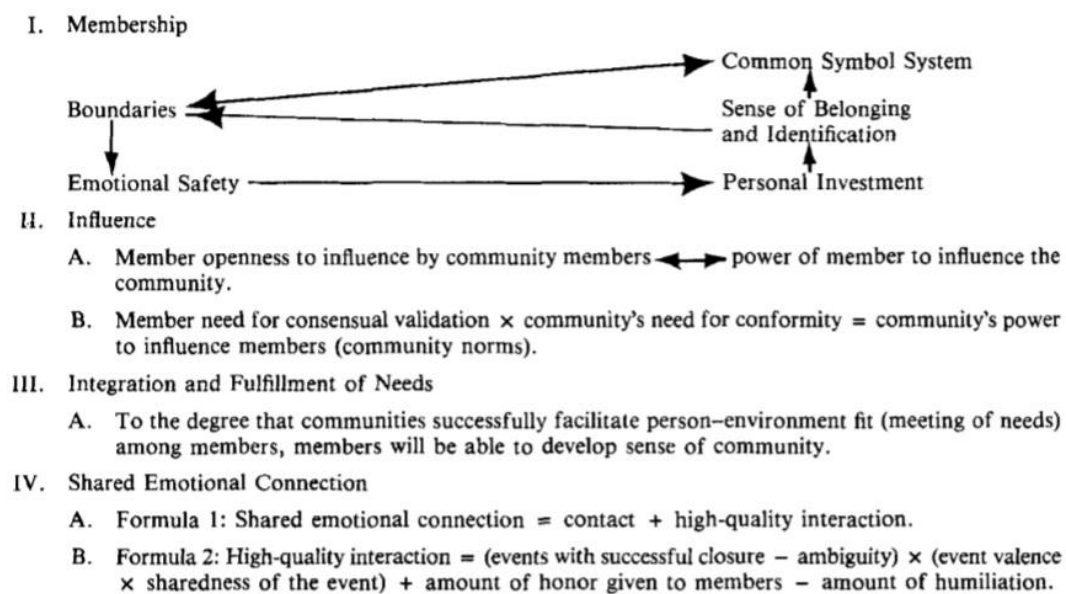*Elements of Sense of Community and Their Hypothesized Relationships*

I. Membership

Common Symbol System

Boundaries

Sense of Belonging and Identification

Emotional Safety — Personal Investment

II. Influence

   A. Member openness to influence by community members ◄—► power of member to influence the community.

   B. Member need for consensual validation × community's need for conformity = community's power to influence members (community norms).

III. Integration and Fulfillment of Needs

   A. To the degree that communities successfully facilitate person–environment fit (meeting of needs) among members, members will be able to develop sense of community.

IV. Shared Emotional Connection

   A. Formula 1: Shared emotional connection = contact + high-quality interaction.

   B. Formula 2: High-quality interaction = (events with successful closure – ambiguity) × (event valence × sharedness of the event) + amount of honor given to members – amount of humiliation.

*Figure 2.10 Deconstructing Sense of Community. Source: McMillan & Chavis (1986)*

*Membership*
Membership consists of five attributes. Boundaries, emotional safety, personal investment, sense of belonging/identification and a common symbol system. The relational connections are visualised by the arrows in figure 2.10 and describe how each attribute influences the others, and in total make up the definition of how 'being a member of the community' is sensed. The boundaries sensed by a member compose the core of the membership; who is in, who is not. Such boundaries provide emotional safety and are reproduced through identification and affiliation with the community. Emotional safety also means that members are able to say what the genuinely feel or think within the community; it is okay to express emotions to others. Personal investment comprise aspects of dedication; paying dues to the community (McMillan, 1996). It is required to deploy stronger identification with the community, for instance (shared) ownership in a co-housing project. A common symbol system is essential when defining one's community in light of others', the tools to communicate 'we' and 'them'. Such symbols can be very subtle, from reiterative rituals to style of clothing.

*Influence and socialisation*
In a community, influence works in two directions: the ability for a member to influence the community, and the community being able to influence its members. Both derive from the tendency for conformity and consensual validation. In general, members are more attracted to communities in which they sense the option to influence, to have their say. But also, in which they can affiliate with others. Reversely, a community is more welcoming to members that show leniency towards conformity. The fact that a group pressures on the individual to conform, and the urge of the member to fit in, result in a transactional process of uniformity, and eventually, resulting in group norms. This links to socialisation and normalisation of values (Koppenjan & Groenewegen, 2005; Williamson, 1998). However, one member's personal differentiation (in its role) in the community is not undermined, since the group's norms are the 'glue' of the cohesion.

*Integration and Fulfilment of Needs*
McMillan and Chavis (1986) explain that the experience of integration and fulfilment of needs relates to reinforcement of needs and values. Consequently, "... it is obvious that for any group to maintain a positive sense of togetherness, the individual-group association must be rewarding for its members" (Ibid, p. 12). Both 'status' and 'competence' are important factors to feel (continuously) integrated, since persons are attracted to others that possess skills that are beneficial or most rewarding for one's personal needs. A cohesive group with a sense of community searches a way to fit in members in which they meet their own needs, while meeting those of other members. Accordingly, a tight network of rewarding relations regarding everyone's needs results in a sense of community. People trusting each other, members openly expressing their needs and culminating transactions with mutual benefits leads to the development of a 'trading history', which increases possibilities further rewarding interactions.

*Shared Emotional Connection*
A shared emotional connection derives from the frequency members interact, and the quality of their interaction. The quality is defined as: the more positive the experience of interaction is, the greater the bond between members (Cook, 1970; in McMillan and Chavis, 1986). Shared experiences through (historic) events invigorates emotional connections, especially occasions of shared crises. Such dramatic historic events become part of the community's story, and therefore an element of identification (McMillan, 1996). Both frequency and quality of interactions, which are mentioned here, are also found in the design principles of co-housing (Williams, 2005). Moreover, what defines emotional connection is the subjective value one experiences from the sense of the community. For example, through honour or humiliation from peers, through a spiritual connection or shared history and events (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

**5.3  In addition to Sense of Community**
The attributes described above make up a theoretical approach for researching a sense of community. According to McMillan's (1996) review of the posed theory, the four dimensions also function chronologically. Membership is essential for a sense of community, in analogy it is the 'spark' that facilitates the rest. In order to sustain this sense of community, a structure of authority is required. This can be a clear infrastructure that serves demands both of the individual members and the community to express their influence. Mutual trust is therefore key. Other required conditions for Influence, in order to

create a sense of community, are: "... 1) order, 2) decision-making capacity (i.e., authority), 3) authority based on principle rather than person, and 4) group norms that allow members and authority to influence each other reciprocally, then that community has trust that evolves into justice" (McMillan, 1996: p. 320).

In addition to Integration and Fulfilment of Needs, the importance of similarities between people is underlined as these similarities are often the reason for people to embark in a community. Likeminded members in a community are more open to be influenced by the community and vice versa. Feeling less ashamed to express one self, an intimate social economy is constructed, which offers opportunities to trade. McMillan (1996) argues that not only the fact that likeminded members of a community probably fulfil each other's needs more accordingly, also the intimate relations that are often implied (through trust etcetera), lead to an enhanced trading environment. In short, a higher sense of community arises when members bond in the community based on their (large amount of) similarities. For co-housing, this relates to arguments made by (among others) Chiodelli (2015) and Hamiduddin and Galent (2016), regarding community development occurs predominantly through self-selection, which leads to homogenous communities and the probability of exclusion of marginalised groups.

### 5.4 concluding remarks

The theories described above allow the researcher to analyse a co-housing project in light of the resident's experience. Social cohesion is a term used to define how social structures in a community are organised. Spatial scale is important for the definition of social cohesion, and a paradoxical relation exists for the outcome of social cohesion between different (urban) scales.

Through the members themselves, the condition in which their community currently resides can be assessed, by investigating their sense of community. This allows to analyse causal relations of community development. What the community is, is self-defined through its members, their interpretation defines the sense of the community. A bundle of recordings of sense of community will delineate the community as it is generally experienced, which in turn can be explanatory for deviating individual experiences. What a resident experiences as important for their conception of a specific community, is expected to differ for each individual and should be considered. When aggregating data, for instance through quantitative research, this factor is often undermined (McMillan and Chavis, 1986), consequently producing unreliable data. Through qualitative empiric research, such variations in valuation can be considered during data analysis.

To conclude, identifying the sense of community of a resident provides, implicitly, insights in the existence of a cohesive community, and, explicitly, how that resident values that community. These four dimensions (figure 2.11) are the indicators to recognise and assess a resident's experience and valuation.

| *Dimension* |
| --- |
| Membership |
| Influence |
| Integration and Fulfilment of Needs |
| Shard Emotional Connection |

*Figure 2.11 Dimensions of recognising Sense of Community*

# 6 Conceptual framework

To analyse co-housing projects, in this case architect-led collective private commissioning, an overview of variables is posed. These variables derive from previous literature research. One must be aware that this overview is in no way an exhaustive list of aspects to assess co-housing projects. However, it provides a bridge between the literature research and empirical research and therefore gives structure to this thesis. The resident's perspective is researched in a qualitative manner. That means that apart from investigating solely if the qualities of co-housing are represented in the result, also why and how these elements are represented is researched. It intends to investigate other reasons, possibly contextual, causal to the result in order to retrieve new knowledge on its practice. In addition, it assesses how the process, including the results, are experienced and valued by the residents.

## 6.1 description

The conceptual framework in figure 2.12 contains the four main concepts in this research, deriving from the inquired theories. Although each concept fulfils a value on itself, the composition of them together creates the synergy this thesis aspires to produce. The spatial allocation of the concepts within the figure resembles the relation to each other in this research. Nevertheless, all concepts are intertwined in some way.

The backbone of this research is consists of the chronological phasing of the development of co-housing projects. Three phases of development are distinguished: initiation, design and build, and living phase. Derived from a conceptual overview of the building process by Kompier et al. (2012), each phase contains features on its own that indicate co-housing qualities or are explanatory for the type of co-housing. In other words, the type of co-housing can be explained by what happened by whom in which phase.

The manner in which contracts are formed, also called the distribution of governance and responsibility, is mostly decided before or during the Initiation phase. These contracts were in practice mostly during the Design and Build phase. Collaboration between individuals, the collective and other actors that has been shaped, is understood through theories on participation and co-development (Arnstein, 1969; Qu & Hasselaar, 2011).

To assess the quality of the co-housing produced by the architect-led CPC in Amsterdam, the list of most applicable and probable features is mentioned in the figure. The green balloon in the figure is positioned in such a manner that it is aligned with the Living phase, since these qualities are measured from a resident's perspective. The bundle literature leading towards this concept in this research, is used to measure in this stage of co-housing.

In line with the previous concept, the Sense of Community is also measured in the current situation, and is therefore also position aligned with the Living phase. However, it is expected that the Sense of Community is rooted in the first two phases. The theory of McMillan & Chavis (1986) is used as an assessment of the community sensed by the residents in the current stage of co-housing.
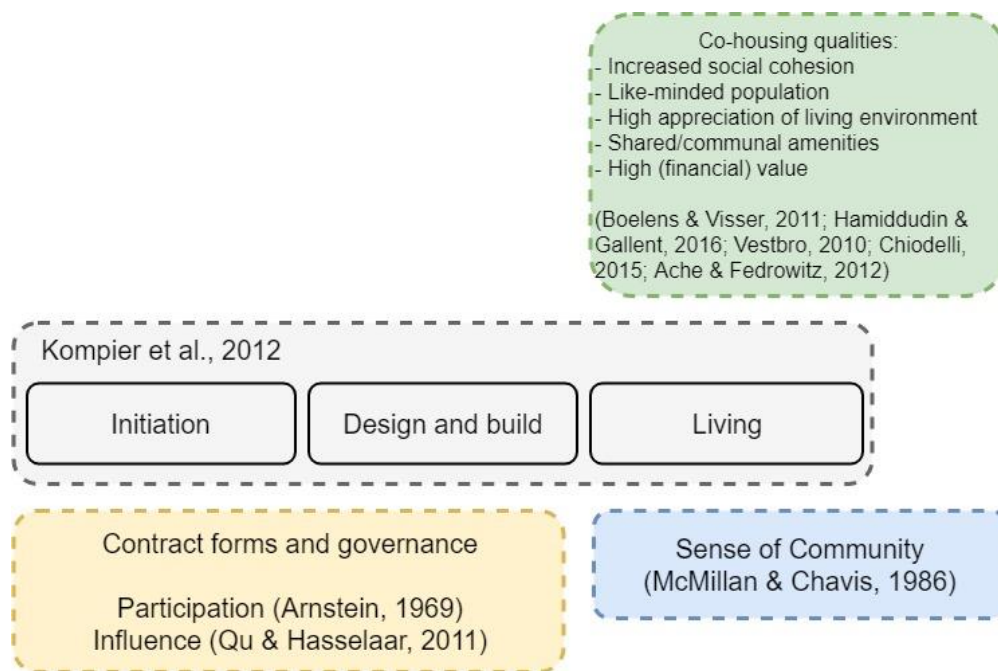
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*Figure 2.12 Conceptual model of co-housing research*

# Section three
_____
# Methodology

_In section three, the methodological choices made in this research are explained. A brief outset of the used methods is followed by several paragraphs discussing the consequences of the choices made. Lastly, a description of the cases in which the respondents have been retrieved is given to comprehend to the overall context of this research._

# 7 Research design

### 7.1.1 Research approach

When choosing a research approach, many factors can be of influence. The posed research problem and its corresponding questions are of most importance (Flick, 2014), since these imply the aim of the research. The aim of this research consists of two things: to discover whether architect-led CPC meets the presumed qualities of co-housing according to the residents and with regard to current literature, and to assess and understand how these features have been developed. Qualitative data is required to find out why certain qualities are included. Also, how the process has been experienced by the residents in the light of co-housing theories, why it is experienced in that way and how the result of the project is defined, according to the residents' experiences. Data has been collected from several cases in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. This data is retrieved through semi-structured interviews. The analysis of this research uses concepts found in existing literature. The literature study also delivered focus points for the item-list used during interviews. However, this does not implicate that this research entails a deductive goal. The design had been chosen to retrieve induction of knowledge: to find out how the residents experienced the process and value the result. It searches for *theory-related material* in the retrieved data, in order to relate to the scientific debate (Ryan & Bernard, 2003. In: Bryman, 2008: p.555).

A quantitative research approach is more suiting when generalisability is pursued, if for example a manifold of cases are chosen and/or a large N is studied. However, this would require a survey study, consisting of closed questions and prompted answers (Bryman, 2008: 206-208). This would leave no room for other (not expected) key-elements of the comprehensive participation, design and building process of collective private commissioning. Moreover, it would neglect the fact that terms as 'control', 'social cohesion' and a 'fitting design' can be interpreted in various ways, and have different meaning and value to every individual. It is essential for such open terms to retrieve data on how residents construct their opinions of their experiences in order to conclude on the research problem.

In addition, regarding the use of qualitative data, Silverman (1993; in Bryman, 2008: 373) underlines that qualitative data can be used to test certain theories found before or during the course of the research process, however the typical sequence of steps of qualitative research is constructed to induce knowledge. In general, as mentioned above, this research is set out to collect new data and specific knowledge on residents' perspectives of architect-led CPC project members, while making use of theories already found in literature.

### 7.1.2 A cross-sectional research design

Bryman (2008: 53-54) argues that there is a thin line between qualitative cross-sectional design and a case study design, and it is possible to have both features in the same research design. In situations where the prime focus of the research is not the setting, but a phenomenon that just happens to be within a place (it cannot happen nowhere), it is preferable to state that cross-sectional research is conducted instead of a case study. However, the effects that can be of influence because of a specific place should be acknowledged. Reversely, a case study is focused on a thorough description of a certain case and elucidates a certain phenomenon in that particular setting. It therefore focusses on the environment in which the phenomenon takes place. Both approaches seem similar and are sometimes hard to distinguish from each other. This research tends towards a cross-sectional design, since the practice of architect-led collective private commissioning is its prime focus. Several cases are chosen to research this phenomenon. However, referring to the literature research, the context is of great importance and often even explanatory for the results (Tummers, 2016).

## 7.2 Data-collection and analysis

### 7.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Data collection has been performed using semi-structured interviews. In total, 15 interviews have been conducted among 18 residents. An item-list (see appendix II) derived from initial literature research, and had been slightly refined after the first view interviews were conducted (see fieldnotes in appendix IV). Flick (2014: p.218) suggest that three types of questions are useful: open questions, theory-driven questions and confrontational questions. By using such a question strategy, implicit knowledge of the respondents is made more explicit, while avoiding infiltrating its subjective understanding. Open questions prompted the respondent to share their understanding they have in immediate response. This forced them to construct narratives of their experience before and during the building phase. Such self-constructed narratives provides rich information at the source of the unit of analysis: the respondent. This method complements the initial research aim of recording resident's perspective.

In Addition, theory-driven and confrontational questions structured the respondents experiences into translatable language and respectively checks their argument by confronting them with alternatives (Ibid: p.222). This strategy is used to retrieve new insights deriving from the residents perspective of co-housing, since this is underrepresented in current scientific literature. Meanwhile, it allows the researcher to affect the respondents understanding as little as possible, while maintaining structure to previous literature and the research itself (Flick, 2014: p. 264-265). For instance, question six: Could you tell me how the building process went? The most prominent memory will occur first in their narrative that follows. Thereafter, more direct questions are asked: who was in charge? (question 7). And later, when their emotion regarding such a manner became clear, follow-up questions are asked, such as: why did you feel you needed more consultation?

The item-list (see appendix II) had been constructed in sections accordingly to the three phases of the development process. However, respondents have been let free to tell their story in any order they felt necessary. This enhanced the interview's open character, by letting them bring up topics throughout the interview, which happened frequently. This prompted the researcher to anticipate on the story of the respondent, and to go along the flow of the interview. The demarcation of phases within the interviews enhanced the overall structure.

*Additional 'quick scan' survey*
At the start of the interview, respondents filled in a short survey (appendix III). This survey has been used to introduce the respondent to the topics to be discussed by inciting them to critically think about the development of their CPC project. Closed and extreme questions have been posed, in combination with a ranking question with the opportunity put in own answers. Also two rating questions were posed, for instance to score their overall project. During the interview, the interviewer was able to refer to their filled in answers when discussing related topics, which provided material to construct confrontational questions (as in Flick, 2014: p. 218). Ultimately, this resulted in a small source of quantified data to consider during data analysis.

However, it must be admitted that the survey may be of influence to the openness of the answer when asked about their motivations to join their project, since several suggestions were posed. A steering effect by question framing may occur, but this is expected only to steer towards the topics related to this research, and not their answers. The small survey had been included since it turned out that respondents found difficulty articulating their motivation. By giving them suggestions (derived from the literature research) that they had to rank, the result had been more comparable answers while they still had the opportunity to give own input.

### 7.2.2 Sampling

All residents in current projects have been contacted by email and those available and hospitable in participating in this research have been selected as respondents. The possibility to attract only those

respondents that are enthusiastic about their project, is regarded just as probable as to attract those being unsatisfied with it. As turned out, both were interested in sharing their thoughts and evaluate their projects eagerly. In addition, for several respondents it was necessary to, repeatedly, ask for their time and cooperation.

Initially, respondents had been randomly selected, to retrieve an image as objective as possible. Later, respondents were chosen according to the project they reside, to establish an equal distribution of respondents over the cases. An overview of respondents and their project is displayed in figure 3.1.

| respondent | project | Date of interview |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | HH4 | 25-7-2017 |
| 2 | HH1-2 | 27-7-2017 |
| 3 | HH4 | 8-8-2017 |
| 4 | HH1-2 | 7-9-2017 |
| 5 | HH1-2 | 28-9-2017 |
| 6 | HH1-2 | 12-10-2017 |
| 7 | HH4 | 12-10-2017 |
| 8 | BSH | 19-10-2017 |
| 9 | HH1-2 | 6-11-2017 |
| 10 | BSH | 7-11-2017 |
| 11 | HH1-2 | 20-11-2017 |
| 12 | BSH | 3-12-2017 |
| 13 | BSH | 8-12-2017 |
| 14 | HH1-2 | 19-12-2017 |
| 15 | HH4 | 16-1-2018 |

*Figure 3.1 Overview of respondents*

Seven respondents are interviewed from HH1-2, and four each from HH4 and BSH. One respondent is under the age of 30, eight are aged between 30 and 40, four are aged between 40-60 and two respondents are over 60 years old.

**7.2.3 Data presentation and analysis**
Each chapter of the data presentation elaborates on topics related to one of the three phases. Throughout each chapter, the method of presenting data focusses on explicit topics generated during the interviews. In contrast to focus on each story as a single case, quotes of explanatory value are presented to explain how such topics derive from the respondents. This emphasises the focus on the experiences in general of the building method, rather than emphasising personal circumstances. Personal circumstances may be explanatory for certain outcomes, however this is not the focus of this research.

The aim of the analysis is to distinguish themes that relate to the research questions. Therefore, a thematic analysis is performed. "Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data." (Braun & Clarke, 2006: p. 5). As Braun & Clarke (2006) argue, a thematic analysis is a research method that is well-suited to be complementing to other approaches, such as is pursued in this research. The interview questions consisted of narrative elements. The transcripts of the partly-narrative interviews were coded, and these in turn were assigned to constructed themes. A theme entails a patterned response or meaning in some level, within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006: p. 82).

### 7.2.4 Coding

A Computer Assisted Qualitative Data-Analysis System (CAQDAS) was used to order and analyse the interview transcripts. The aim of the analysis was to order the data into themes. Data had been assigned to a theme to find "… repeated patterns of meaning"(Braun & Clarke, 2006: p. 86). Coding the transcripts had been performed in two steps: *initial coding* and *focused coding* (Bryman, 2008: p. 569). Meanwhile, the data analysis had been performed according to Braun & Clarke's (2006) guidelines. The first two interviews had been coded extensively, the initial coding list can be found in appendix V. Analysis on these transcripts induced understanding of the respondent's perspective on their project. This step underlines the open and inductive character of this research. This led to several changes in the item-list and research questions (see the field notes in appendix IV). In addition, this first analysis compelled to perform a second literature study. Subsequently, groups of codes were able to be formed according to the phase (initiation phase, design and build phase, living phase) the quote related to. Also, codes were sorted on what was implied, whether the quotes had objective or subjective message. The final code list can be found in appendix VI, and the major themes deducted are displayed in figure 3.3. This led to the separation of knowledge on 'what happened' and 'how it was experienced what happened'. Both epistemologies have been entailed to answer to the twofold aim of this research implied by the research questions.

Furthermore, predominantly focused coding had been applied to the rest of the interviews, narrowing down the 'richness' of the codes to retrieve more focussed knowledge based on the themes. Hence, a more *theoretical thematic analysis* (Braun & Clarke, 2006: p.84) is performed, using theory-related data from the interviews (Ryan & Bernard, 2003. In: Bryman, 2008: p.555). However, awareness for new arguments or unique situations had been maintained during this second phase of coding, in respect to the openness of the data.

### 7.2.5 Ontology and epistemology

By using semi-structured interviews, the qualitative nature of the research signifies the analysed data to be of a subjective matter (experiences communicated by residents themselves), embracing the constructivist ontology. This ontology asserts that no 'rigid' social order exists 'out there', but is made up in the situation by the people (the respondents) themselves. The alleged truth in the data collected derives from the conception and responses of the residents; there is no objective truth of what has been experienced. Hence, one must be aware that when such subjective data is used as research material, it is difficult to prove if this data is valid to what actually happened. This is inevitable using this design for the research question, as only respondents themselves can tell how they experienced the process best. And how they valuated it.

Consequently, a potential weakness of this research method lies in the fact that the 'objective' elements (facts, what happened, who was responsible, what had been decided, etcetera), actually require an empirical realism epistemology to secure its validation optimally. While making use of respondents narratives, the possibility exists that such facts are exaggerated by emotion. Therefore, this method is called *naïve realism* (Bryman, 2008: p. 14). Given that multiple respondents are interviewed, a more comprehend image of the 'facts' is retrieved and outliers are spotted. However, this research aims to research the residents' perspectives. And the purpose of the retrieved data is not focussed on what is completely true and what is due to emotional exaggeration, but is focussed on why for instance these exaggerations are made by respondents, and what role it plays in the construction of their perception of the co-housing process. Therefore, the chosen research methods suits the set research aim.

### 7.2.5 Consequences of research design

*Internal and external validity*

The researcher should be aware of his choices and relativize them; a researcher should show reflexivity (Bryman, 2012: p. 393). Since data is required to be interpreted by the researcher, and eventually 'weighed' in light of the posed research questions, this research entails predominantly an interpretivist epistemology (Bryman, 2008: p. 15-17). The way in which knowledge is retrieved from the data, is through the

interpretation of the researcher. The internal validity of the research outcomes are considered as a strength, since there is potentially a high congruence between analysed concepts and conclusion (Bryman, 2008; p. 376). However, a weakness of this method is that data is potentially influenced by the researcher, since data is not statistically measured. Transparency can be an issue here, as results are subject to be biased by the researcher's values. According to Maxwell (2009), to achieve external reliability, it is not a matter of eliminating the variance in researcher's values, but to make the values clear. Lincoln and Guba (1985: p .385, in: Bryman, 2008: p.378) frame external validity as *transferability*, and encourage to use *thick description*. To do so and cope with this problem, the researcher entailed six major measures: transcription of all recorded interviews, a survey conducted by each respondent, case descriptions, recordings of memo's and an open attitude towards each respondent during interviews.

*Item-list and survey*
Transparency increases the reliability of the research (Bryman, 2008: p.376). The researcher acknowledges the possibility that replication of the research is not easy, since it is hard to 'freeze' a certain social setting. This is inherent to qualitative research. While collecting, displaying and interpreting the collected data, several aspects have been considered to cope with these issues. During all interviews, an item-list has been used to structure the conversation. The item-list secured that all topics were discussed in every interview. However, not every aspect has been discussed exhaustively and intensively in every interview; this is part of the research method when opting for semi-structured interviews and is therefore considered in the analysis. All interviews have been recorded and accurately transcribed (appendix VII), which allows to retrieve how certain arguments have been constructed in parlance, and even phonetic emphases respondents gave in their answers.

In addition, all respondents have been asked to fill in a survey prior to the interview. This provided quantified data on the resident's perspective, which had been used as an introduction during the interviews. Meanwhile, it is a measure to diminish the researcher's bias to the weight of certain aspects. Although it is acknowledged not as an optimal measure to reach more triangulation, but this mean is chosen considering the nature and extent of the research.

*Memos and field notes*
Regarding displaying and interpreting the data, notes have been written down in a number of memos and field notes (see appendix IV) throughout the data collection and interpretation phase. Besides being helpful to improve research questions and focus of the interviews, these memos give insights in the research process. They contain considerations and thinking processes of the researcher, that have resulted in taking certain directions in the research process. Qualitative data consists of rich information, meaning that every topic that has been mentioned, has a potential to contribute to the research outcome. However, it is up to the researcher to filter exemplary notions from these interviews, and how these relate to the posed research questions. In order to show that choices and interpretations has been influenced by the researcher's (personal) prejudices as little as possible, the traceability of both is important.

*Context description*
A weak spot of a qualitative research is its limits to generalise the retrieved knowledge, since the results are intrinsically context specific. Qualitative researches tend to have low external validity due to these limits. However, more specific examples can be gathered, giving valuable practical insights why certain aspects of co-housing are existing and appreciated or criticized.

Furthermore, qualitative data is still valuable in more general debates when very similar projects are ought to be endeavoured, and when the researcher exhibits transparency as much as possible. Therefore, the case and context of the project is described extensively in chapter 8 and 12. Furthermore, the analysis not only considered just what has been said, but also how and in what context. According to Bryman (2012: p.392) this adds to the transferability of the research, since it offers means to index its transferability. This is called 'thick description'. A rich amount of details on the cases and the method of data collection used provide handles for judgement to transfer outcomes to other milieus.

## 7.3 Research phasing

### 7.3.1 overview

For a systematic research strategy, this research is divided into roughly four parts. However, the qualitative nature of the research implies a reciprocal process (Bryman, 2008: p. 370). Several changes in the first two parts were impeded by performing phase three data collection and the analysis. A brief outline of the research is given below.

Hence, a more circular process instead of linear process took place (Flick, 2014: p.139), which is often implied by qualitative research. Gradually when the research process continued, the researcher became more familiar to field of study, as well as the subjects of focus. This resulted in reconsidering certain elements of the research outset. Preliminary data analysis led to new rounds of literature research, for instance to inquire more references for co-housing projects and reconsiderations of what should be measured when elaborating quality. The constant interaction between analysing results and growing necessity to pin down and demarcate the scope of the research insinuates the inductive nature of the process. In figure 3.2 a conceptual overview of the research process is displayed.
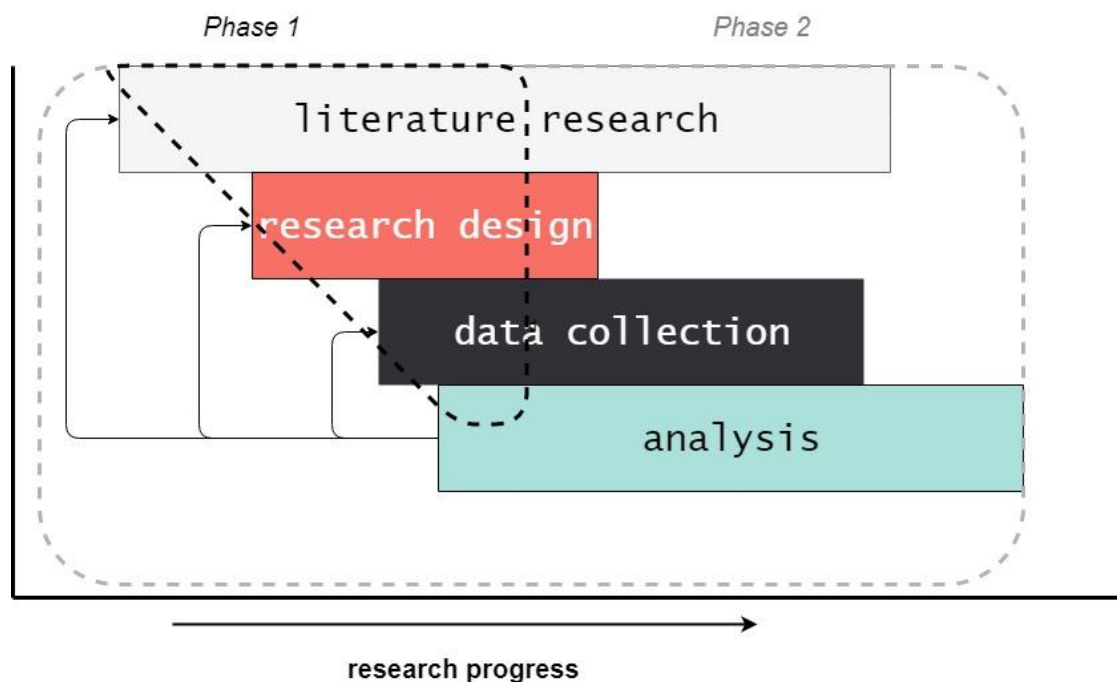


*Figure 3.2 Research process*

### 7.3.2 phase one

There are roughly two phases to be distinguished during this research, as showed in figure 3.2. The first phase contained explorative literature research and decisions on research approach. It produced the literature overview and first handles for the theoretical framework. In addition, a first item-list had been constructed according to the qualities found in existing literature and regarding self-built and co-living projects. After interviewing four respondents, several reconsiderations have been made. These interviews were analysed through initial coding (Bryman, 2008: p. 569). A thick description of the respondents perspective arose which led to an interpretation of the data, eventually leading to preliminary themes. Appendix V contains an overview of the thick description coding after two interviews.

### 7.3.3 Phase two

Several elements of the literature research on co-housing have not been recalled by the respondents, for instance sustainability, therefore no theme arose on this topic. Meanwhile, during the second phase, another literature study had been executed in order to find applicable theories for analysing communities, since this appeared to be necessary to conclude on the qualities of the project.

*Encountered the cases*
During the first few interviews, it became clear that the location of the Houthaven entailed multiple building groups, each having their own board of representation during the design and build phase. Instead of regarding the entire block as one single case, each project was recorded as an individual case. Further along the process of research, the variable of time and chronology of the cases showed significant influences on the result. Minor adjustments in the approach of the architect were visible in cases HH4 and BSH, such as the communication with residents, the coining of the term CPC 2.0 by defining even more the distribution of control of residents and the collective, and in issues with municipal regulations on urban design. It is not aimed to perform a comparative analysis and conclude on the sole evidence of their differences, but it has been found that their differences are essential to understand residents expectations and experiences of the projects, and to relativize certain outcomes.

In addition, the case of Buiksloterham had been added during the research process for two reasons. The first, to find more available respondents willing to participate. Second, to diversify the group of respondents by a small variable of location. One aspect of the justification of adding this case to the research is the fact that the project in Buiksloterham is, in the outset, identical to most of the cases in Houthaven. Moreover, in hindsight, it can be argued that it has more similarities with HH4, than HH4 has with HH1-2, since the contract forms between the actors were more defined a priori of development. Furthermore, the timing and economic conditions are identical. Also, both are part of the first housing development in their area, and both are (former) industrial areas. Hence, the urban context is comparable. It is expected that adding this case is far more valuable than it is undermining contextual variables. And if so, the qualitative nature of this research offers the possibility to place nuances in case such variables tend to blur specific outcomes.

*Refrained from researching external results*
Furthermore, the respondents have been asked questions regarding the neighbourhood, in an effort to conduct some information of their view on their surroundings. Considering large parts around all the cases are still in development, the respondents reacted in various ways. On the one hand, this implies that a scattered view exists when defining the neighbourhood: for instance including the existing area of the Spaarndammerbuurt, or just the few developments that have been realised, or the neighbourhood that has yet to come. Although these are interesting findings on itself and they can be explanatory for the views of these specific residents, it says little about the impact of the projects within the neighbourhood context. And although it is considerable that these projects have undoubtedly impact on their surroundings, epistemologically such findings cannot assert any strong causality between the erection of the projects and changes in neighbourhood. At first, a research question was formulated to include this element within this research. Regarding the length and nature of the research, the choice has been made to focus on the residents perspective only and refrain from further investigation on the local impact, since this required rigorous different research methods. However, certain statements of the residents hints to the existence a significant impact on the surrounding area, which in turn imply relevant topics of research regarding co-housing and rectifying unconventional planning methods.

## 7.4 Operationalisation

### 7.4.1 Themes
The literature research provided both understanding and handles to execute this thesis. The theories discussed per question are the foundation of the item list during the interviews. During the data collection phase, where the item-list had been used, a preliminary analysis moment produced the crystallisation of several themes. Along the way, these themes deepened or extended according to newly retrieved data. The result is displayed in figure 3.3.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Initiation phase** | Motives<br>Attitudes and expectations<br>Member selection<br>Concept description |
| **Design and build phase** | Building collectively<br>Control: objective<br>Control: subjective<br>Barriers/obstacles |
| **Living phase** | Results - subjective<br>Co-housing design<br>Community |
| **Gentrification hints** | e.g. contrast with surroundings |
| **Group dynamics and context** | e.g. Personal background |
| **Neighbourhood and surroundings** | Location |

*Figure 3.3 Major themes from data analysis*

The structure of the item-list is based on the chronological order of development, starting at the initiation, then design and building phase and lastly, the living phase. In this framework, it was determined that certain themes would occur based on these phases. However, the subgroups within these themes had been developed gradually through analysis. The themes on external social cohesion ('gentrification hints', neighbourhood and surroundings") have been incorporated during analysis, but have eventually not been used explicitly to answer the research questions. A list of all used codes is added in Appendix VI.

### 7.4.2 Research questions

*Question one:*

How are the contract forms of governance arranged and how are these experienced throughout the process of collective private commissioning by the residents?

Besides regular planning and building regulations, several aspects underlie the distribution of control. Control on design and responsibilities throughout the process is determined by which actor initiated the project, how the finances are secured, how members are selected and the motivations and expectations of participants. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation and Qu & Hasselaar's (2011) ladder of influence provides definitions to pose the findings in perspective. Both uses an extent to where the participation or influence reaches, and display this in a graph. For this research question, both theories are used to explain the contract forms found in architect-led collective private commissioning.

Several questions within the item-list have been posed to relate to these theories. Examples of questions for finding the contract forms are: did you had a lot of control? Who was in charge of deciding that? In addition, the way in which respondents structure their answers, contributes to the understanding. Here,

the researcher has to 'read between the lines', and use the opportunity interpret respondents answers. The way in which a respondent formulate their narrative, such as 'they have not finished it in time', says something about the perception of control as well as the control itself. Follow-up questions, possibly confrontational questions, lead to a deeper image of the respondent's perspective, such as: did you expected more control? How could you have acted differently to get what you wanted?

*Question two:*

What is the result of the co-housing projects and does it fit to the individual needs and wishes of the residents?

The theoretical framework contains a thorough description of what co-housing is able to entail. However, not all of these features are eventually part of this research. A focus has been put on the following five aspects of co-housing: 1) increased social cohesion, 2) like-minded population, 3) high appreciation of living arrangement, 4) communal amenities, 5) lower building costs.

Increased social cohesion (1) is measured through the use of the term Sense of Community, coined by McMillan & Chavis (1986). Questions during the interviews have been asked to let respondents talk about their neighbours. First, indirect hints such as using members' names or stating 'collective struggle' or 'group achievement', can be flagged when the building process is discussed. Directly, questions have been asked on their relation to others, and how they experience the group. Answers contain quotes on their interactions, but also on their expectations of their group members. For instance, a one can be disappointed on the amount of interaction, or state it is beyond their expectations. Among other elements, this leads to defining the Sense of Community.

Like-minded population (2) is measured through demographic statistics observed by the researcher, as well as statements given by respondents when the community had been discussed.

High appreciation of living environments (3) is measured in several ways. The overall grade they give their living environment (specifically asked in the survey) gives a general view of their satisfaction. What aspects are responsible for their (dis)satisfaction, is directly measured by asking follow-up questions when they explain their motivations of participating, design of their house and their relations with others.

Aspect (4) communal amenities, is measured through the researcher's observation, as well as by asking questions on the collective building process and its result. Theory formulated by Williams (2005) and Kompier et al. (2012) on co-housing design, such as accessibility, centrality, or practicality of communal amenities.

Lastly, lower building costs (5) are measured by extracting factual information from the respondents. In addition, an internship of seven months at the initiating architectural firm fuelled the researchers understanding through *tacit knowledge* on these particular cases. Also, the interviews took place within the houses of the respondents. Therefore, the researchers own observations contributed to gaining factual, or objective, knowledge on the process and results.

*Question three:*

How is architect-led collective private commissioning serving for a strengthening of the internal social cohesion?

It has been asserted that social cohesion varies in context and meaning, depending on the scale and demarcation. In light of the resident perspective, this researches uses Sense of Community to assess the

social cohesion. The sense of community found through the stories of the respondents is used to elaborate on the causal elements of the enhancement of social cohesion. In addition, elements of normalisation have been pointed out. Furthermore, evidence of socialisation has also been retrieved through the interviews. This element is discovered to be of interest to this research later on in the process, since several respondents referred to specific norms and social etiquettes. These elements are understood with the theory discussed by Koppenjan & Groenewegen (2005) on socialisation within groups of people, Answers given by the respondents when talking about their community provided the data to measure this. For instance, when a respondent states: 'so we decided to meet every year', or 'we use the whatsapp group for all kinds of topics', are signs of normalisation.

# 8 Case selection and description

The focus area of this research is Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Although several co-housing projects in The Netherlands have been researched (among others Bakker, 2012; De Haan, 2011; Fromm, 2012), little is recorded on architect-led CPC projects within urbanizing areas. The currently thriving housing market in Amsterdam provides a unique context in which these practices have to manifest These forces can influence the participating actor's motives, practices and skills, and also different policies can be expected.

## 8.1 Superlofts

The researched cases are known as the Superlofts. This is a housing design concept coined by Marc Koehler Architects which entails a collectively commissioned building, containing different sized units with double-heighted ceilings, as seen in figure 3.4. These double-heighted lofts offer every tenant to design their interior exactly as they wish, horizontally and vertically, offering extra flexibility to every individual project member. Purposely, this resulted in differentiated and unique apartments within each project. This unique design and process feature is part of all researched cases and defines the typicality of the cases. The projects are architect-led collective private commissioned. This already implies a division of control on the project between architect and residents.



*Figure 3.4 Empty Superlofts apartment. Source: MKA*

## 8.2 Justification regarding case selection

### 8.2.1 Reflexivity regarding choice of cases
By focussing on residents in the selected cases, awareness of the specific aspects of these cases and their consequences must be shown. These cases have been initiated and coordinated by the same architectural firm. This implies that retrieved data is biased in several ways, which inflicts an objective conclusion of this research. Specific work methods, culture, mind-set, approach, decision-making and coordination that is related to personal skills or inferiorities of the employees of the architectural firm is not controlled for in this research. This lack of diversity in a prominent role of the development process reduces generalisation of the outcomes to a certain extent. The reason to still research these respondents in these specific cases is threefold.

First, because the researcher obtained the opportunity to combine this research with an internship at Mark Koehler Architects, the architectural firm initiating all researched projects. This provided the chance to immerse into the researched cases to a deep level and catered extensive access to relevant documents, such as process management, concept development and cost estimations. This enhanced a comprehensive understanding of the process by the researcher by working with the same architects that deployed these projects and thereby retrieving tacit knowledge of the practice. In addition, this provided easy access to respondents, that showed a high level of cooperation.

Second, the Superlofts resemble a deviant case, and have been, accordingly, *purposively sampled* (Flick, 2014: p. 175). Its deviance lies in the fact that it is contains a unique architecture and it is one of the first architect-led newly built collective private commissioning projects in Amsterdam. Consequently, the choice had been made to research the residents of three from the outset highly similar cases, since this led to a larger pool of respondents. Minor differences can be recognised and, if necessary, filtered out. Although not aimed for, it implies the first step towards external validity (Bryman, 2008: p.376). In other words, for instance when researching respondents deriving from three (completely) different cases, the focus is likely to be aimed at differences between cases, since these are ought to be of influence to the results respondents deliver. Constant control for those differences would be necessary to assert certain causalities for all respondents.

Thirdly, the focus on the resident's experience and perspective of the entire collective development process, including the living phase. To utilise the scope and time of this master thesis effectively, while still pursuing to construct critical statements to the topic researched, the choice has been made focus on an enlarged group of respondents from one specific concept. Results are ought to retrieve a higher quantity of rich information and therefore the researcher chose to aspire more grand conclusions based on a singular phenomenon, over more modest statements on plural cases.

In practical terms, fifteen respondents representing 95 units deriving from the same concept have been given the favour over, hypothetically, researching three times five respondents representing 33 units from multiple concepts and subject to manifold of contextual differences.


### 8.2.2 Reflexivity regarding current state of cases
Residents have not yet lived in their co-housing projects for a long time. Hence, results are possible to be affected by this fact. It is possible that the community becomes tighter during the coming years because of a longer history of living together. On the other hand, it is possible that the sense community will diminish in time, since residents move in and out or just because interaction is avoided, and the 'social glue' has been the design and build phase instead of the living arrangement. All of this leads to the conclusion that there is not an optimal frame of time to measure. However, the researcher must be aware of the effects of the time of measurement has on the results. When the data had been collected, the bare buildings of the projects had been completed for approximately 1,5 to 2 years. However, during that period

of time, most of the residents completed their own units. This phase has been different for every resident, with some moving in after four weeks, while others still have not yet finished completely.

It is expected that the 'building together' aspects sustaining a community are still of influence, and have laid a foundation for a community. It took almost four years from the start of the project until completion of the buildings. At the same time, the residents have not yet lived long enough together to experience (unexpected) social events or encounters, as in sharing historic events together. Less than 1.5 years might be too soon for fostering a strong social cohesion as described in chapter four. In addition, the timing of the completion of the individual units has influence on the way the project is experienced by the respondent. When analysing the data, this has been taken into account.

## 8.4 Area of cases

In total three cases are selected in Amsterdam. Two of them are located in Houthaven and one in Buiksloterham. Both areas are in near vicinity of the existing urban fabric of the city (centre), but are finding themselves on borders of (former) industrial areas or business parks. In figure 3.5, the blue marker is Superlofts Houthaven 4 (HH4), the black marker is Superlofts Houthaven 1-2 and the red marker is Superlofts Buiksloterham (BSH).
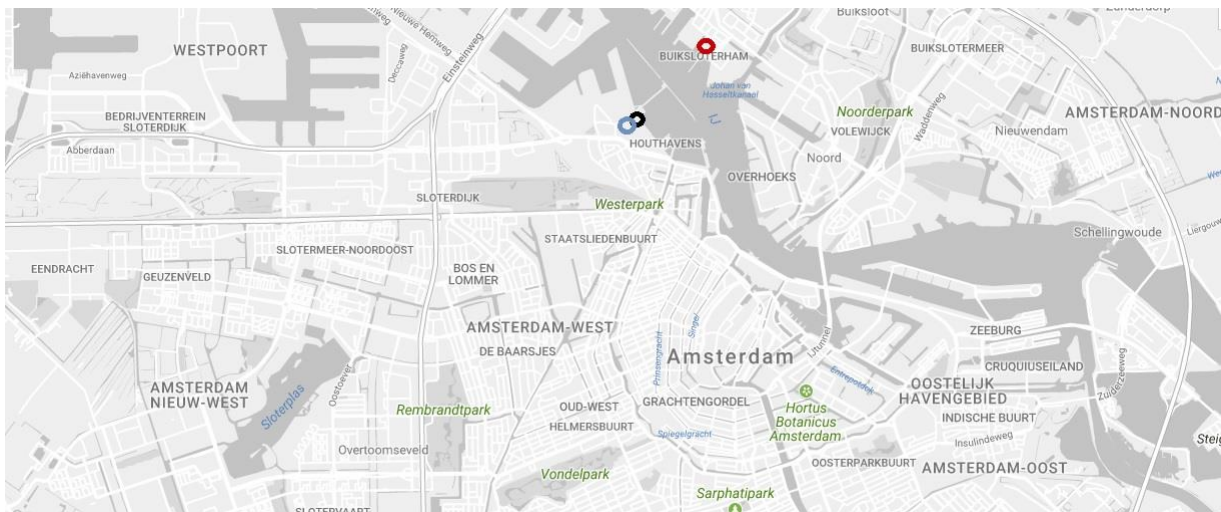


*Figure 3.5 Map of Amsterdam, location of selected cases. Source: adapted from Google Maps*

## 8.4.1 Houthaven

Houthaven is currently a residential neighbourhood in development and is located in the north-west of Amsterdam, at the southern bank of the IJ river. So bordered by the river in the north and east, in the south lies the picturesque neighbourhood Zeeheldenbuurt and the monumental neighbourhood called Spaarndammerbuurt. The former exists mainly of a mix of typical Amsterdam style of housing, ranging from seventeenth to late twentieth century buildings and canals with small bridges and tight streets. The latter contains the richest and well preserved collection of social housing dwellings of the capital, built in Amsterdam School style of architecture. At the eastern border an area is located containing light industrial companies, offices and other businesses.

Traditionally, the harbours of Amsterdam have played an important role for the economy of the city. Formerly, the Houthaven functioned as an international industrial harbour, distributing and processing wood. In the late twentieth century, one by one businesses moved out of the area and the Houthaven slowly transformed from industrial to residential, since houseboats gradually entered the area (Soeters van Eeldonk Architecten, 2007).

A structural urban redevelopment plan for the Houthaven was established in 2006 and 2007. As visualised in figure 3.6, where the cases are marked blue and black, circa 2700 new houses have been planned to be built within the plan area, with space for some additional functions such as schools, hotels, cafes and small business. Many waterways in between the housing blocks were planned, so that in total seven islands would arise (Soeters van Eeldonk Architecten, 2007). However, an economic crisis constrained the execution in the following years, and the first developments started between 2010 and 2012. The first realised projects were a high school (Het 4e Gymnasium) and a row of housing blocks on the western fringe of the plan area, called Blok 0 (Block null). The plots of land were of a small size and have been divided amongst small developers, architect-led CPO and CPO groups, predominantly by a lottery system.

*Figure 3.6 Urban plan of Houthaven. Source: Gemeente Amsterdam (2016c)*



The Houthaven is aimed to be a climate neutral neighbourhood. In line with municipal policies, specific energy and water solutions should be implemented to increase the sustainability of the new neighbourhood (Projectbureau Spaarndammerhout, 2010). The municipality obliges every newly built project to connect to the district heating network in order to remain control on energy resources for heating, for sustainability purposes. Exceptions are only made when project developers can show that their own heating solution is significantly reducing more $CO_2$ emissions than via district heating.

### 8.4.2 Buiksloterham

Buiksloterham is located opposite of the Houthaven, across the IJ-river. In the north and east it borders traditional labour class residential neighbourhoods built in early twentieth century, where houses have been recently undergoing thorough restoration from their dilapidated state. House values rose quickly and gentrification occurs (Meershoek, 2015). In the south west lies the river IJ and in the west lies a former shipyard and industrial area, named 'NDSM-Werf', which is now in the process of redevelopment. This

area has been a playground for artists and creative entrepreneurs in the last decennium and established to put the former wharf on the map as creative hub of Amsterdam.
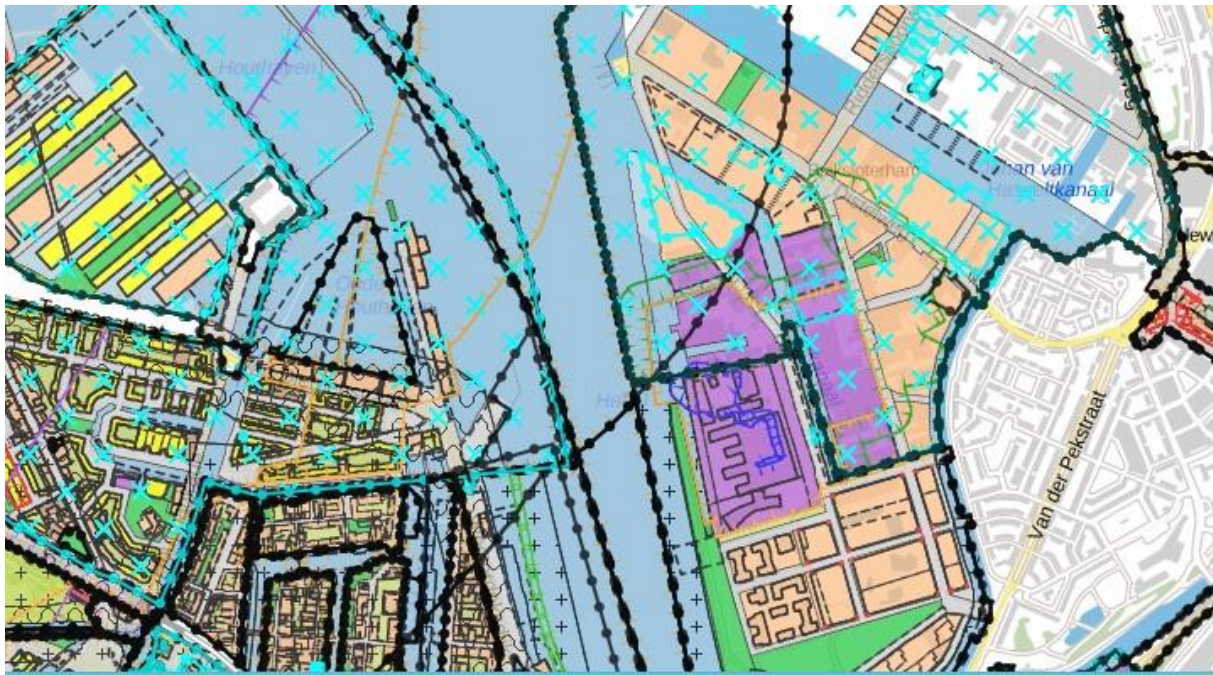


*Figure 3.7 Zoning plan of Buiksloterham. Source: Ruimtelijkeplannen.nl*

In Buiksloterham, a substantial area is still largely used by businesses in the light manufacturing industries. One glance at the zoning plan in figure 3.7 (Buiksloterham is the right of the IJ river) reveals that circa a quarter of the area is assigned for working use only (purple), and the rest of the area allows mixed use (orange), which implies housing as well. However, the three dark green sections represents an 'environmental restriction zone', meaning that within this area certain businesses are allowed to operate which may inflict the liveability of that place by producing nuisance in sound, smell or air particles. Due to its industrial history, the soil is highly contaminated which hold back a smooth transformation of land use.

Although a worked-out masterplan for the area has been made in 2004, it has never been constituted. Plans were based on traditional top-down development which imply high financial risks for the municipality, while financial resources were lacking. After the prevailing financial crisis of 2007 to 2009, organic development (Buitelaar & Bregman, 2016) has been adopted as the solution to initiate redevelopment of the area. Instead of setting a worked out masterplan, the municipality of Amsterdam tendered individual and small building plots for housing and temporary initiatives (Gladek et al., 2014). Among other factors, the challenge of transforming a light industrial area (which is still largely in use) with polluted soils and in combination with the organic development of pioneers in the area, a shared sustainability ambition arose among participating stakeholders. Buiksloterham adopted the fact that it is a living lab full of urban and sustainable experiments, aiming to become a circular neighbourhood (Gladek et al., 2014). At the moment, land is transformed and developed piece by piece, and it employs lenient and flexible zoning rules, in order to facilitate new forms of planning and urban development. However, although urban planning is performed piece by piece, land is still subject to zoning plans of the municipality. On the one hand, kavel 21, the plot where among other projects Superlofts Buiksloterham (BSH) resides, is a product derived from the organic planning strategies. This is because the individual projects such as BSH arranged the program of the development more or less themselves, and bared the financial risks of development. On the other hand, it is still development that requires zoning and active municipal attention; without their planning tools, these co-housing projects could not have been initiated.

# Section four

_____

# Analysis and conclusion

*This section consists of an overview of the data that has been collected from all respondents. The data is presented over three chapters and according to the three phases of the process: initiation, design and build, and living phase. The same structure has been entailed in the item list. In each chapter, first presents the data, which is subsequently analysed in regard to the literature. Throughout the analysis, all cases are elaborated on in a cross-sectional manner. Main focus is on the respondents narrative, subsequently the different cases are regarded. When significant differences in cases can be of influence to the result, these differences are pointed out. The overall conclusions of the research are also incorporated in this section four.*

# 9 Initiation phase

## 9.1 results

### 9.1.1 Initiator

Between late 2012 and 2014, participants joined the projects. Each project had a slightly different initiation. The first project was HH1-2, and has been initiated by a group of architects called 'De Hoofden'. The plot of land and building permit has been provided by the municipality, who selected the CPC project's plan to be developed. Many of the initiating architects also took part in the building group and currently reside in the building. The architects combined their technical expertise and divided the professional workload among themselves.

HH4 had been initiated by the founder architectural firm of HH1-2, Marc Koehler Architects. Entailing the same project concept, HH4 presented itself as a form of CPC, where the fundamental aspects are already provided for. The project architect of the firm that is also resident in HH4 (respondent 7), explains the initial concept in the following manner: ... when people join the project, they already agree on some fundament. (...) with other CPC projects (...) you first have to agree with the group on the architecture. You might grow closer to each other, but the outside and inside have to be discussed. That is just way too much."

In BSH, the project was initiated by the same firm. However, none of the initiating architects resides in the project, which implies not a genuine CPC construction. As several respondents confirm, severe mistakes made in the first projects have been avoided in this project. Because of the previous projects, trust in the concept was established among the residents. Some residents initially showed interest in the projects in Houthaven, but those projects were already filled at that time.

### 9.1.2 Motivations

Mainly, there are three reasons why members initially participated in this project. According to the residents, these are: the freedom to design one's own unit, the costs, and the location of the project.

*Design own unit, price and location*
Most enthusiasm derives from the fact that the individual units were totally open to design freely by the residents. Residents often mentioned that they 'bought' an 'empty box of five metres high' and were free to create whatever they wished inside their box. Those who were searching intensively for a dwelling in Amsterdam and who also already had several other options to buy, explain that the design freedom of this project was unique, and that this was the foremost reason to commit to this project. Of course, new buildings in general offer more options to personalise one's home than existing objects. However, some respondents had options to buy other newly built apartments, for instance in neighbouring projects, and still chose the Superlofts when they got access to the building group: "... we chose for this project because the opportunity was there. And even if we would have the opportunity to choose between twenty other projects that had the same price, quality, or type, we would still have chosen this one" (respondent 1).

The initial costs has been found important for the respondents to commit to their projects. All respondents were specifically looking for dwellings in Amsterdam. The price they initially had to pay and the cost calculation of finishing their individual lofts were found significantly lower than other options within Amsterdam. Especially for the starters, residents aged between 28 and 35, the initial low costs were important. Remarkably, almost all interviewed starters were architects themselves (respondent 2, 6, 7, 12). In addition to make their own designs, they saw the opportunity to invest sweat equity to claim a position on the housing market. The respondents do not refer to their homes as cheap, but 'more value for money' is mentioned by several. This value relates also the freedom of design, to get exactly the design they desire.

To complete the top three of most cited reasons, the project's location has been found important. The urban context of the projects have been described by most of the respondents as appealing, both in Houthaven and in Buiksloterham. They specifically refer to the raw and industrial environment. Having water in the vicinity, the views on water and industrial docklands and also the fact of residing among (soft) industrial activities are some examples of why they appreciate the locations. In addition, they explain that their projects are still close to existing neighbourhoods and use their amenities such as shops. Also the location within Amsterdam, fact that the projects are relatively close to the historic city centre, has been found an important asset for the residents.

*Other motivations*
Residents state that it is the concept of the Superlofts that attracted them to their projects, and explain that they were unable to find such a project anywhere else. In addition, two respondents ( 4 and 9) said that the most important reason was the trust in the architect and his concept: "... I have been interested in Marc Koehler Architects from the start. I had to have MKA ... and then I heard from Superlofts and cooperative development I thought, I want this." (respondent 4). Some knew the architects responsible for the project personally, or recognised their work. Respondents from BSH said they knew the concept from the projects in Houthaven, and either came to BSH for the place, the lower price, or because all spots in the Houthaven were taken. Eventually, the 'empty box' concept as it is referred to, they relate their conviction to the project with the trust in its initiators.

Only three out of fifteen respondents mentioned clearly the social aspect of collective private commissioning as a motivation to participate. These respondents mentioned their experiences with living in (squatting) co-housing arrangements in the past. However, when meeting with the other members, they got aware of the less 'communal' intentions of the others and were okay to accept these intentions. The freedom to design prevailed over their co-living aspirations.

*Expectations*
Although residents where, at the time, aware of the collective procedures they were facing, most did not expect or aspire to become a community: "Well, it is just a matter of, if you want this type of design freedom of your house, you just have to accept that this building method of collective private commissioning comes along with it" (respondent 6). When residents were asked to tell what they knew about co-housing in general and if it was the collective commissioning that had attracted them, many of them stated that they knew little about it and that collective private commissioning was just a mean to establish their customised apartment, in that location, for that price. The results of the survey confirm these three statements: (1) Freedom to design through the loft concept, (2) the location near the waterfront and the vicinity to the centre, and (3) the envisioned affordability of the project.

### 9.1.3 Selection process

*System*
Since the projects were initiated by the architectural firm, the firm controlled the selection process. The same concept occurred for every project. Essentially, everyone interested in participating this group was able to join the groups in the initial phase. At some point in the process, a deposit of a 1000 euros had to be paid by every member to the collective as a symbolic sign of devotion to the project.

Every aspiring member had to define their preferences regarding their unit, for instance floor level, minimum and maximum size, front or back etcetera. The architect then further crystalized the floorplans and the design of the building. According to the described preferences, units were assigned to each member. In case a specific unit was desired by multiple aspiring members, the rule 'first come, first served' was entailed.

*Outcome*
Important to note is the fact that both in HH1-2 and in HH4, architects that worked for the initiating firm, were also members of the group and now live in their projects. The first members of each group were

found through personal connections. Residents of HH1-2 and HH4 declare that it was difficult to find enough members to start commissioning. Many of them asked their friends to join them in their project, but with no end. The economic situation at that time constrained many to participate. Consequently, the initiating architects enhanced their marketing by using Funda (a Dutch real estate website) and developed a website.

The housing market, as well as the building sector, were on a low at that point and it was difficult to find people willing to take such risks. According to the respondents, this economic climate and selection process resulted in a recognisable group of members: "People that participate in this process, that is also something you can see in the group, are all high-educated people with an entrepreneurial mindset." (respondent 2). Especially the entrepreneurial mindset, or adventurous attitude, is underlined by many, undisputedly whether they were chairing group meetings or were intentionally 'freeriding' along the project.

Some of them praise the fact that their group has like-minded people, others' responses contain a more negative connotation to the matter. Nonetheless, there is one major distinguishable variable among the group members: age. Differentiation in size, floor level and price of the units resulted in a mix of household types in each project. Predominantly households with children live on the first floors, with adjacent gardens; starters live in smaller units; and empty-nesters and older couples occupy the penthouses. This mix of age groups within their project is often proudly mentioned and is also explicitly appreciated among almost all respondents.


**9.2 Analysis**

**9.2.1 The type of CPC**
Regarding the literature (Kompier et al., 2012), HH1-2 finds itself on the borders of *collective in charge* and *architect in charge*. Although the architects executed the project in a professional way using their companies, since they reside there themselves it can be argued to be a CPC project, regarding they formed the collective and initiated it. In other words, the fact that architects founded the project, is not making it an architect-led collective private commissioning per se. Kompier et al. (2012) argue that a collective is often run by a few fanatics, and group members have professions that come in handy, such as lawyers or architects. The group of architects did acquired a prominent role in the process of development and managed the process of the project. Respondent (9), who participated in the project from the very first day, underlines this argument by explaining the evolution of the concept. According to him, the project was first sketched to house eight households, and ended up to house fifty-five.

In HH4, the leading role for the architect was set out to be more prominent from the start. One of the architectural firms (MKA) from the first project obtained a second plot of land in the same neighbourhood by a lottery selection of the municipality. The same concept that had evolved in HH1-2 has been initiated in HH4. Even though an associate architect of the firm also took part in the project as a resident, the concept and fundamental design had been coined before a substantial group of the residents was part of the plan. In other words, HH4 has been initiated by the architect, leading to an architect-led CPC.

BSH suits the term architect-led CPC. Moreover, some respondents state that they first heard from the projects in the Houthaven but were too late to participate. Through marketing of the architect, several discovered the similar project in Buiksloterham. This indicates a clear image of the architect initiating projects, and residents searching to join a project. The concept and architecture of the project was clearly articulated from the start of the project.

The HH4 and BSH are top-down initiated. Regarding the origin of HH1-2, it can be argued that that this project derived out of a bottom-up initiative, which later on is executed in a more top-down manner.

### 9.2.2 Motivations

*A collective of private commissioners*
A clear image is delineated by the respondents regarding their motives. It is obvious that the residents were highly interested in self-built apartments, rather than communal living arrangements. Prominent features of self-built housing, such as lower building costs and design freedom, are recalled by the respondents. This indicates great similarities with the manner in which *Baugruppe* have recently been regarded according to their residents (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016). Except for some respondents, the collective decision-making structure has been experienced more as a burden rather than a virtue. These results are opposing to Vestbro's (2010) definition of cohousing, and also Sargisson's (2012) conception of cohousing entailing intentional communities. Although the group of residents shared a common goal, intentionally collaborated to execute their project and even realised shared spaces and facilities, the data implicates that the projects have not been intentional communities as cohousing literature prescribes.

The manner in which the project had been advertised could be explanatory for the type of residents it has attracted, and thus explains the motives stated by the respondents. The emphasis has been on the design of one's own unit. The mean to establish this, was to collectively participate in this architect-led CPC. Therefore, it is concluded that co-building is, for almost all residents, regarded as a mean, and not as an end to end up in as living in a communal way.

### 9.3 Concluding remarks

As can be concluded from the initiation phase, the narratives of the residents imply the significant role of the architect, since it had delineated the initial design of the building, as well as the programme. This design, and the concept, had been the platform for residents to organise into a collective. All residents shared the dream to design and develop their own apartment, which resembles their initial connection. This highlights the role of the initiator even further, since not only the initial design and volumes are controlled by the architect, also the way in which the project profiles itself, for instance through a chosen concept, influences the type of residents.

# 10 Design and build phase

## 10.1 results

The design and build phase started gradually out of the initiation phase. During the initiation phase, a few meetings had taken place, instigated by the architects as project managers to share information to the group members. The 1000 euro deposit can be seen as a milestone in the process, and is a point of reference where the initiation phase ended. At this point, the group of residents was substantial enough to start commissioning their building. What followed, were two almost separate processes of development: designing the individual unit and cooperative decision-making on the collective building.

### 10.1.1 Individual unit

*Design and control*
As became clear from their motivations, residents were predominantly interested in designing their own apartment. Not surprisingly, much enthusiasm is invoked when respondents talk about this part of the process. Their spot within the building had been assigned in the initiation phase, according to their preferences. From this point in the process, the respondents depict a situation that looks much like a private commissioning process, where each individual household finds an (interior) architect and a constructor/carpenter to design and build their house.

Extensive design freedom was experienced when designing the private units. This took place early in the design and build phase. To accommodate apartments with unique floorplans, the building required special technical attributions. In other words, before the construction of the entire building could begin, every technical aspect of all individual units had to be designed and decided on: waterpipes, electricity and sockets, sewerage, bathrooms and kitchens. Each individual produced design had to be checked by the project architect, in order to complete the design for the entire building, which would be handed over to the development company.

*Experiences: long and intensive*
Having full control to design, also implied bearing responsibilities. This has been experienced differently by each respondent. A few declare they were prepared and were quite easily able to manage the construction of their interior. These respondents were predominantly found in HH4 and BSH. A more troublesome development of the private units occurred in HH1-2. Respondents often dedicate this to the inexperience of all actors involved, and the fact that the concept was new for every party. It has been found a complex process, where many technical and strategic decisions had to be made. When questioned whether this phase was as they had expected it to be, respondent 5 answered: " Well, that is difficult to recall, because it really dominated my life for a few years. I think that I had not realised it would be so intensive."

Respondents mention that they felt neglected by the project lead and felt (financially) responsible at the same time, which made them felt to be in an awkward position. A prominent example were the estimated costs to finish one's individual unit. Prior to the building phase, participants were informed by the architect that costs would be approximately 400 euros per square metre. However, it turned out to be around 1000 euros per square metre.

The long duration of the project and the stressful situations it produced is stressed by all participants. Most problematic had been extra costs. The predominant factor 'lack of experience', projected to all actors involved, is mentioned in different ways. "… it is likely that this happened because it was the first time. The municipality did not have any experience. The bank did not have any experience. No body knew the concept. You have to convince everyone that it is going to be a success. Maybe when it occurs more often, banks will be more easy about it. Municipalities too. But when it is the first time…" (respondent 9).

Another way the lack of experience is perceived: "well, there is no professional board. They put in a lot of effort but some things did not went so smooth. And the thing is, you cannot blame them for that, but when you hire someone [professional and external], you would approach him differently" (respondent 5).

The delay stemmed from two aspects of the building process. First, the delivery of the bare buildings had been delayed by almost two years in the Houthaven, and slightly less in Buiksloterham. As far as the residents knew, these delays derived predominantly from the lack of participants at the start of the project and the fact the architects and municipality were both new to this type of development, causing all kinds of bumps in the process. In HH1-2 and HH4, a solution was found in dividing certain units in half, creating smaller and cheaper options for aspiring participants.

Second, the fact that every household had to finish their interiors by themselves or with an architect and contractor, invoked new delays. For instance, too little available contractors for the mezzanine floors imposed the first major delay of the second phase. Eventually, the collective bundled forces to find a solution. In addition, many residents were not experienced with managing a development project, but were inquired to do so in this project. This has been found extensively time and energy consuming by those who managed it themselves. One respondent temporary quite his job to full time manage their project, several others eventually hired a professional. However, attitudes and motivations differed among respondents: "look, we had such a huge run-up. You know that [the building] is going to be delivered. And if you start searching for a contractor from that moment (...) yeah, that is not very smart. Look, I already had an offer for a year, also with the same prices from that year (respondent 8).

*Flexibility*
Although the responsibilities to one's own project were not pleasing to everyone, some used it for their benefit. As one respondent jokingly told they were prepared to camp inside their empty apartment, some actually had to for a while. Another respondent told that her neighbour first installed all the necessary aspects of the house, like a basic kitchen, bathroom and bedroom, and in the meantime were saving up to reconstruct the rest of their apartment in two years. Respondent 14 was pressured to move in quickly by high rental costs, and explained: "... for half a year, it felt like camping inside here. The bathroom and bedrooms were finished, and we were able to cook, so it was fine for time being." A bare few have found a way to apply the self-management and flexibility of the concept to their benefits during the building phase.

**10.1.2 The control on collective building**

*Collective*
Simultaneously, decisions on the 'building level' had to be made throughout this phase. In every project, several members formed the board of the collective, ranging between 3-5 people, including a chairman. In HH1-2 and HH4 members volunteered for this position, in BSH these members had been approached by the architectural firm. Approximately every month, the group held meetings to discuss their progress and made decisions based on a democratic model. The group delegated their power to the board, and the board decided on certain arrangements with the other actors involved, such as the architect, developer, and municipality. The collective served as a body to act as an actor in the game between these other actors. In addition, the board was able to decide on norms for the group process in certain situations, for instance minimum requirements for sound insulation of walls and floors. An expert on CPC processes had been hired in all cases to give advice when needed.

The board found itself at negotiation tables among those parties. During the design and building phase, there was more communication between the board and the developer, than between the board and the architect. "Although, the architect was present at every meeting during the building phase. But most discussion points derived from the builders" (respondent 8). Predominantly, issues as planning the building phase and minor changes in the plan were discussed. This reveals the responsibility the collective had during the building phase. The quote of the respondent delineates the setting of the process, in the

sense that the collective is the commissioning party, and has commissioned the project that has been designed and initiated by the architect, who is controlling and consulting during planning meetings. However, the architect already chose the development company and made crucial technical choices for the project, such as the geothermal energy system in BSH.

*Financial risk*
In all the cases, the developer eventually backed up the project financially. In HH4 and in BSH, there have been units that remained empty due to a lack of demand, while the building phase already started. The collective have been found incapable of providing the financial resources to cover for these empty units. Therefore, the developer opted to secure that risk, and paid the building costs at the start of the building phase. However, in both projects the units have been sold on the housing market, and according to the residents, assumingly with a profit for the developer. Giving this fact, the developer played a crucial role in the accomplishment of the project.

*Control on design*
Almost all choices regarding the architecture of the building had been made by the architect prior to the design and building phase. The collective had little to no control on volume of the buildings. Two individual participants eventually realised a top-up floor on their apartments, which did result in a minor design changes of the built objects. This was however not a collective endeavour and technically derives from the freedom from the individual unit. In each building, the architect created a grid structure in which a generic shape arose for apartments in the main building. At the moment of signing in, all participants de facto agreed upon the design of the entire building, including materialisation and the distribution of garden space. The ground floor apartments included a section of the inner garden space, and this space is only accessible through these apartments. The architecture is almost identical in form in every project, see figure 4.4. Several aspects changed during the design and construction of the building, for instance due to design improbabilities. Attributes that the collective had control over were details of the building, such as balconies, the façade, choice of finishing materials and partly on the shared spaces, such as gardens and roof terrace. However, delegating control to the individuals and the collective to decide on the design of balconies led to problems: the desired balconies were not in line with the initial ideas of the municipal committee of urban design. In addition, partly due to financial uncertainties and partly due to residents motives, there was no communal area created inside all three projects.

*Commissions within collective*
Throughout each project, several sub-groups formed in order to share some of the workload and responsibilities. For instance, the projects in the Houthaven had difficulties with their mezzanine floor constructor. A few members got together and contemplated their options. Eventually, they opted for using their own skills and offered the other participants their services where the other constructor was lacking. In every project, members tried to use their personal competences in order to enhance the project. Commissions were formed to sort out the collective's options for certain issues, such as the technical installations or security locks. The commission presented the options during a meeting and, as a collective, decisions were made based on votes.

Commissions concerning the roof terraces have at the moment of data-collection not yet been active in every project, remarkably. Many respondents quote that everyone is 'cooling-down' from the whole process. In other words, they lack the energy and also the financial resources to initiate any progression on the development of the roof terraces. Households living in the ground floor apartments in HH1-2 created a design for their garden collectively, and decided to make half of it a shared space.

### 10.1.3 Experience of the collective design and build phase

*Two processes*
In the conception of all respondents two different processes of design and building occurred: first their individual apartment, second the bare structure, the 'skeleton' (*casco* in Dutch) of the building. The focus was predominantly on designing one's own apartment, the infill of the project. The project answered the co-designing and co-building expectations of the residents adequately, when assuming the 'co' stands for the buyer-professional relationship, something all residents recalled as one of their prime motivations. However, other participants were indeed interested to co-build in the collective process of design and build, the casco, while others felt they just 'had to deal with' such a process. It is implied by the choices the architect made regarding the structuring of the process that it was experimenting with elements of collective decision-making: some were appreciated, some were not. All in all, whether one is satisfied or not by the practice of collective design and programme of the project, individual control on one's living environment had been facilitated through the 'Open Building' method, with the unanimously praised five metres high 'empty boxes'. This pleased every resident for most part of their ambitions, which results in an overall satisfaction to all residents.

*Control*
In general, the respondents did not express enormous discontentment towards the distribution of control. They were all interested in co-developing their apartment. However, the details of to what extent their influence should reach and coping with those (collective) responsibilities, have been experienced in different ways.

A shared opinion exists on the amount of control the collective had during this phase. While some respondents bring this matter almost jokingly, others stress this as a serious issue. Too many choices had to be made by the collective. Many of them state that they are not professionals, and therefore such decisions should not be taken by the collective of residents. For instance, respondent 9 formulated it as follows: "... one of the reasons for me to participate was that I knew that professionals were operating. Look, I can have an opinion on everything, (...) but I am reasonably... I think in efficiency in this situation. That is why I can and want to leave those decisions [up to the professionals]. (...) How important is the exterior design of your house? Eventually I can expect my house as an empty shoebox, and I can do everything I want."

Eventually, the enhanced decision-making responsibility for the residents resulted in two things: frustration and lack of interest. During meetings, long discussions occurred on matters that were difficult to get census on, and caused many frustrations. Especially design details are frequently mentioned, such as the choice of balcony types: glass or grated fences. Giving this to be a design matter, respondents mentioned that the architect should have made those decisions. Frustrations during and after the building phase are more or less invoked through three things: compromised results, low quality solutions and costly corrections after. Respondent 6 mentions the issue of the roof terrace: "for instance, we want to decorate the roof terrace and I am part of that group. Then, what does everyone want, okay you want this, you want that. So it does not progress even a bit. It is a dreadlock. It is very difficult when there is no single person in charge."

Like respondent 9, many were not interested in those decisions and the time and energy consuming discussions that resulted in compromised outcomes. This lack of interest also resulted in the non-existence, not yet realised or lower quality of the shared spaces. When taking their motivations into account, members were focused on designing and building their own units and had little concern for the collective building. Preferably, they would have outsourced these decisions to the architect and take it as it is. Firstly, because reaching consensus was difficult, and secondly, because focus and energy were aimed at completing the private units: "... in the beginning, I would have liked to participate [on the collective design], when I still had the energy. But eventually, I just thought whatever you put in it, I actually do not care anymore" (respondent 2).

*Attitudes and relating their expectations*

As is mentioned and confirmed by almost every respondent, all participants are found to be entrepreneurial and energetic people. The respondents state that a specific type of character is required to participate in such a project. However, still a variety of attitudes are measured among the respondents.

Several participants were (voluntarily) highly involved in the projects and took positions in the board of the collective. Actually they were non-professionals, in the sense that there was no experience in collective commissioning, but they were required to have high managing competences to establish certain goals as a collective. Those that were in the board eventually were people with managing experience conducted in their careers.

Others indicate that they felt being a free-rider during the process. One explains that the discussions during the meetings were in some cases highly technical and required such technical knowledge of the matter (respondent 5). She felt that she would hold back the progress the group was making, if she would interfere in the discussion: "Maybe I have been a bit too passive. But everyone has a different attitude during those meetings. Some people just want to make progress. Some of them have been in this group since 2011, and thought "do not complain all the time, come on, let us go on!"" (respondent 5). In addition, respondent 9 declared to had purposely refrained from mingling too much in such discussions, due to the lack of time, energy or will.

Respondent 10 and 11 criticise the manner in which the developing party was chosen. Both would have liked to have a say in that decision. In addition, respondent 10, who had as one of the few residents experience with a co-housing building process, said that she felt neglected as residents when suggesting ideas during design meetings. Nevertheless, some of her suggestions were eventually implemented. But she had expected to have more control: "off course, I immediately renounced the fact that shared spaces were not incorporated. You have to accept it (...) but what did irritated me, was the fact that the expertise from the buyers group was not taken seriously." (respondent 10)

*Communication*

Ambiguity prevailed to what extent the role of each actor reached, predominantly in HH1-2 and HH4. This concerns especially the role of the architect. As the initiators, designers and also residents of the project, the architects were highly involved, also personally. This created the image for some participants that the architect had control and responsibility of the success of the project, while the responsibility was initially shared by every member of the collective. Where one of the members praised the amount of involvement and dedication of the architect as a resident, the other complained of a malfunctioning project and failing project management. These opposite conceptions of the role of the architect says something about the lack of experience of all parties involved, as well as the attitude an perception of the participants. Some expected more to 'buy' a house, others more realised they were 'building' their house. Eventually, it invoked a vague distribution of responsibilities within the projects, between individuals, the board of the collective and the architect. Communication between the architect and the collective is a frequently mentioned problem throughout this phase.

## 10.2 Analysis

*Collective control*

It is clear that the architect had the initiative, and was also in the position to construct the distribution of control among the actors involved. The control on the development process looks similar to traditional development schemes: a triangular relationship between commissioner, developer and architect, and additionally, the municipality verdicts on the permission. However, the researched processes of development shows two differences.

The first, as expected, the architect already delivered an initial design and obtained a land position, before the commissioning party is involved. The architect regulated the programming of the building: who is getting which unit. From the outset a top-down development (see also chapter 9). The architect decides to what extent it delegates control on design and programming to the collective. This form of tokenism (see Arnstein, 1969) or consultation (Qu & Hasselaar, 2011) had been applied for several elements: type of balconies and shared spaces (hallway and roof terraces). The utility and application of these 'tokens of control' turned out to be unfortunate, as they have been regarded by the majority of the collective more as a burden than as a virtue. However, the architect decided to refrain from outsourcing decisions on the garden space, this was accredited to the ground floor apartments. Remarkably, multiple respondents of non-garden apartments state to lack a communal garden space. The rooftop terraces are not regarded as a pleasant surrogate for the gardens. Moreover, after the project had been built, the owners of the garden space in HH1-2 decided to collectivise most of the garden area themselves, and make a shared space out if it. Both imply a missed opportunity.

The other difference is that the commissioner (in the triangular relationship) is the collective of households. This collective is represented by a board, who has a mandate of the group-members to decide for them. This democratic structure of organising the collective had been experienced positively by the residents. A reason for this is the fact that this structure facilitated two types of interested participants: the aspiring collective self-builders and the mandate giving participants. Both have been necessary to make progress. dedicated members with management skills were essential in board positions. In addition, other enthusiasts with dedication organised themselves in one of the sub-groups. Doing so, democratic decisions were made (for parking spots, sound insulation, collective acquisitions of infill). When, hypothetically, all participants had these ambitions and everyone was as involved (as a board member), it could had resulted in challenging and ongoing debates, and unfeasible control structures. The 'parliament' construction facilitated a feasible and satisfying organisation. This is both explicitly recalled by respondents by acknowledging the board's hard work (respondent 1, 3, 9), as it is implied by the polarised motivations and expectations of the respondents.

However, the execution of this system was unsatisfying. It was often unclear for several aspects in the building process for the collective whether it was their responsibility or the architect's, a difference between decision-making and consultation (Qu & Hasselaar, 2011). This result derives from the fact that, in general, involved parties were unexperienced with the development process, including the architect. In other words, more experienced actors are ought to lead to more suiting results: either the architect is able to retrieve more adequate the collective's wishes and is able to articulate an outcome beyond the bundle of individual wishes; or the collective itself is able to construct their desired outcome towards the architect. Nevertheless, it is unlikely to expect an optimal result in co-housing, since the collaboration manifests at the intersection of supply and demand, requests and consults, and meanwhile, the probability of concessional outcomes.

*Compensation on individual level*
The projects embody fitting examples of Open Building schemes (Habraken, 1961; Kendall & Teichner, 2000). The separation between the 'skeleton' of the building and the 'infill' is highly appreciated by all respondents. It represents a unique aspect of the projects, in process and in result. Moreover, it is causally related to the fact that non-CPC type of participants still participated. In addition to this co-development (individual-professional relation), the execution of the collective building (individual-individual relationships) had to be realised. This had been a tough process, especially for those not prepared for or not expecting such a decision-making process. The collective design process was the price to be paid to realise their individual apartments, as respondent 14 stated: "... well I have to say, we just liked our design and we liked to work on it. That is what pushed us through the entire process. Because, realising the casco was very laborious."

*Co-housing for a wider population*

Serving both groups reveals the reach of co-building initiatives, it goes far beyond intentional communities. It can be argued that these co-housing developments correlate with the Dutch housing context. The leading role of the architect succeeded in arousing interest from a wide spectrum of potential residents, bringing co-housing to a new level. Or, more precisely, customise co-housing to the Dutch context. It is an application of collaborative planning (Healy, 1997) in practice.

## 10.3 concluding remarks

The distribution of power in the building process of these projects contain a degree of tokenism, and balances between initial 'consumer-oriented development' and 'co-commissioning' (Boelens & Visser, 2011). However, responsibilities and risks are assigned to the users, which led to unusual and sometimes uncomfortable situations for the residents. According to their expectations and aspirations to get involved, a wide variety of types of participating residents are recognised which can roughly be divided into two groups: aspiring collective self-builders and mandate-givers. Although the outset may have been performed in a top-down fashion, the fact that the board has a mandate and acts as the commissioner in the building process did lead to the expression and realisation of collectively decided aspects. This result embodies ideas on collaborative planning (Healey, 1997).

# 11 Living phase

## 11.1 Results

### 11.1.1 physical result of individual units

*Specific realised elements*
Since every household was able to design (with their own architect) their apartments, floorplans are personalised according to the resident's wishes. This resulted in unusual floorplans and designs. For instance, one household created a 'two-in-one' apartment: two separate apartments from one loft, each with its own kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms (respondent 10). At the moment, they use the entire apartment, since they often have their kids or other guests sleeping over. Another example of an extraordinary design has been made by a respondent that customised his house into a chef's atelier (figure 4.1). This resident installed a professional kitchen and runs, from time to time, cooking workshops in his home.

Others entailed designs without any doors (figure 4.2), or unconventional allocations of rooms and facilities (figure 4.3). The freedom of the 'empty box'-principle resulted in completely different outcomes for each household.



*Figure 4.1 Cooking and workshop-space integrated in apartment. Source: Marcel van der Burg*



*Figure 4.2 Design without any doors. Source: MKA and Marcel van der Burg*

*Figure 4.3 Unconventional allocation of rooms and facilities. Source: MKA and Marcel van der Burg*
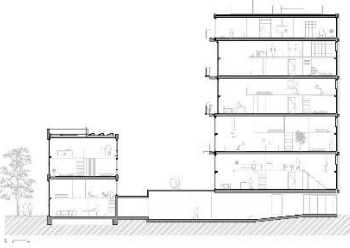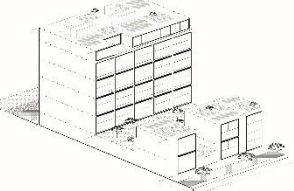
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **H H 1-2** |  |  |  |
| **H H 4** |  |  |  |
| **B S H** |  |  |  |

*Figure 4.4 Axonometry, floorplan and section drawings per project. Source: MKA*

## 11.1.2 Physical design of the collective building

An overview of the building's drawings is found in the table in figure 4.4. Figure 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 show the different but recognis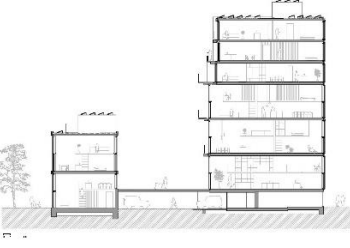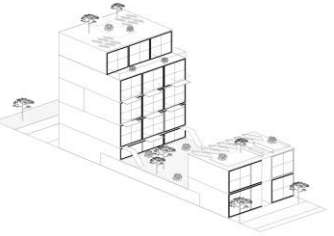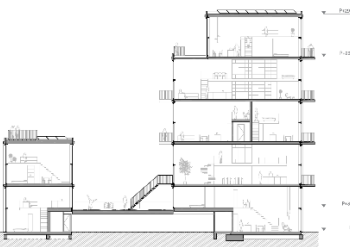able designs of the projects. The form of the buildings is similar. At the front, a high-rise block of six (five in BSH) stacked houses making up ten floors in total. At the back, smaller buildings of four to five floors have been realised. The large building of HH1-2 has three entrances in total, HH4 and BSH each have one. Differences in layout inside derived from group structure, plot width or amount of participants. Each project has their own shared parking garage (with electric charging points for electronic vehicles), rooftop terrace, entrance and storage facilities.

*Figure 4.5 Front and back façade HH1-2. Source: MKA and Isabel Nabuurs*



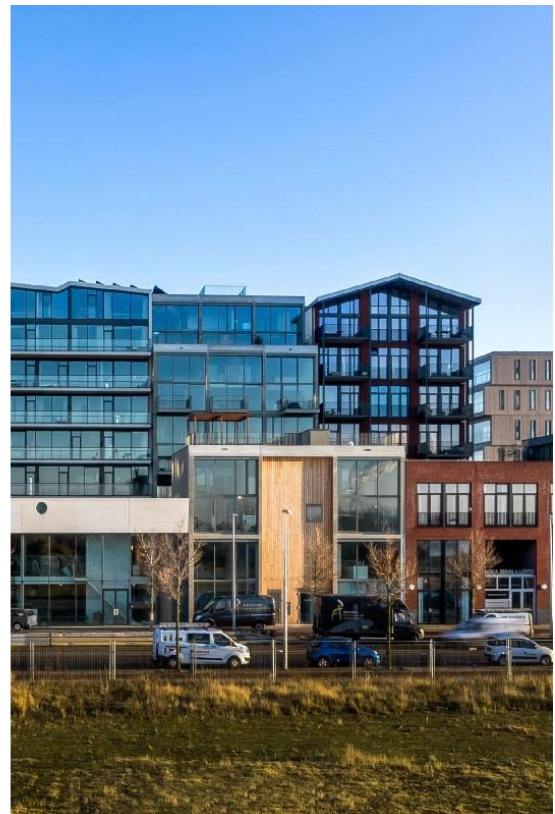*Figure 4.6 Front and back façade of BSH. Source: Isabel Nabuurs.*

*Figure 4.7 Front and back façade of HH4. Source: Marcel van der Burg*

### 11.1.3 Experience of result

*Highly satisfied*

Undisputedly, all residents are highly satisfied with the built result. On average, respondents gave an 8.6 out of 10 for living in their homes (admitting that this result implies quantitative data). Many of them refer to their house as a place 'they only could dream of' or that it feels luxurious. Despite the generic grid structure of the building in each project, every apartment has a unique design from the inside. The design freedom through this building method led to housing designs created by the residents themselves, or mostly together with an architect.

"Yes, this is totally what I wanted!" (respondent 5), "It is something I have always dreamed of" (respondent 1), "Well, it was like heaven. It was, so bright, so open. And sunny. Everything I could have wished for. And so much space, so open!" (respondent 4).

According to respondent 7, their apartment suits adequately to their personality, as the other apartments do for their neighbours. Apart from designing the interior in a (unique) shape that suits their lifestyle, also the position within the building is expressed to be according to their preferences, which adds to their satisfying feeling of their unit.

*Financial value*

During the period of commissioning, the housing market showed a revival. At the moment of data collection, respondents stated that the value of their house rose extensively, and in most cases even doubled. This causes a feeling of financial security and eases the large amount of effort that has been put in over the years. It is clear that the increase of value, the increase of their financial capital, contributes to the level of satisfaction. By some, this is literally stressed (respondent 2, 9), by others it is mentioned indirectly (respondent 1, 12 and 14).

*Collective building*
The residents are content with the architecture on the outside. This was already implied by their interest in the project at first: the concept of the design was already sketched before the initiation phase. However, the materialisation of the shared spaces is criticised. As respondent 11 formulated it: "So we were not involved. That was the architect's territory and we all signed for it when we stepped in, he is the one, let us say, ensuring the quality for these spaces. And they have failed miserably. And probably because he needed to negotiate with a lot of things that were more expensive". This criticism is found in all three projects. Respondent 8 formulated it slightly more nuanced for her project: "Yes, well, there is something with the entrance, I do not find it really good. Compared to that of our neighbours, it is not as good as theirs."

### 11.1.3 Community (structure)

*Composition*
Demographically, the group is mixed. People of all ages and different types of households are found in each project: retired older couples, starters and families. There is no particular type standing out. However, there is homogeneity in ethnicity and class. Residents are described to have well-paid jobs, to live according to Western culture and are predominantly ascribed to the high or creative class.

*Structure*
Formally, the residents have been a member of the building collective, or also called the building group. During this period, everyone still lived in their previous dwellings and the interactions were based on the commissioning of their building. These required to some extent a formal relation, having a board of representatives and where responsibilities had to be held. Also, contracts and transactions were partly shaping the interactions. After this phase, the collective converted into a VVE (homeowner association), which implies a less intense collaboration. They meet at least once a year, where the building collective, at some point, had to meet at least once a month. During the design and build phase, documents have been set up that constitute the rules of the VVE.

During the living phase, such rules and institutions evolve as new problems occur. There have been issues regarding AirBnB and short stay rental within the project (HH1 and HH4), where new rules had to be constructed. In every project, they agreed to refrain from renting out their apartments for short-stay and tourism purposes, because it invoked too much nuisance.

*Connection*
The respondents stated to have close bonds with their fellow members and current neighbours. They say they know everyone and describe to experience a 'togetherness'. Especially the core of the group was forged during the process of commissioning, and now they are looking back at that process together. For three to four years, they have worked together in several aspects to develop their project. Often is referred to the shared suffering from all the obstacles along the way. For some aspects, for instance the gardens and roof terraces, people are still working together to develop these parts. Meetings for these unfinished elements provide interactions that result in social contacts. Remarkably, even a respondent that joined the project after the building was completed, confirms the tight social connections and states that the established cohesion of the community positively influences her experience of the group since their entry: "At first, I thought that they would not like us because we live abroad sometimes, and just partly reside here. But now that I have spoken to the VVE, and since I have met everyone, they have no problem with that at all and they are all very welcoming. And I really like the group. you can feel that they share a lot of history together. They are very nice people and they all have incredible stories" (respondent 4).

Most respondents describe the connection with other residents as a tight connection, but not as their best friends. It differs per person to what extent they enjoy or cherish this connection, but the same description of the community is given for every project. However, they reject the assertion that they are living in a communal way. "... we just share the collective spaces, and we have a lot arranged through the VVE, like the window-cleaner and other regular things, but further than that, we do not have an intensive social life together" (respondent 1).

This is also implied by the outset of the design. Nonetheless, the connection and interaction they have is described in various ways, for instance: "... that you have a community, and there is a lot of connections to that residential group. It is like a residential group, but then a bit more individual" (respondent 2). Others say that they know every member through the collective design and building phase, but explain that there are some that you catch up with more often than others. With some there is a better social click, and this leads to more social interactions.

*Whatsapp*
There is a Whatsapp group chat, in which the members inform each other and socialise. This is an important platform for the communities, although a few state that it is a place where predominantly negative information is shared. One respondent even left the group chat because of this. However, all respondents referred to this chat. It provides the community a low-level instant mean of communication, from initiating maintenance plans to missing cats.

*Shared spaces and activities*
The shared spaces are places were interaction takes place. Children play in the (soon to be finished) gardens, drinks are shared on the roof terrace, and daily, people greet in the private garage.

Even though the garden and roof terrace are not finished in all three projects, these are the places where residents get together for food or drinks. Such activities occur sporadically. Respondents say they have organised get-togethers since they lived there as a group and aspire to organise a barbeque every year. In Houthaven, a select part of the members organised such an event with their neighbours on their side of the street, which did not include the entire project, but did included members from other projects also living at that side of the street. In HH4, they organised an event where everyone opened up their doors when all the apartments were finished. In BSH, also parties have been initiated by the residents for their project.

**11.1.3 Community appreciation**

Now that the structure and the nature of the community is described, this paragraph presents the data that contains the interpretation of the respondents.

*The community in regard of their expectations*
While a few of the residents from all projects have had some experience with co-housing, many of them did not. For many, there was not the expectation that such a community would grow. The motives to join this building group derived from the intention to build and design their own house; the collective aspect was for many an additional obstacle. Several explicitly mention to dislike communal living arrangements, and therefore chose this project over other CPC projects in the neighbourhood because they wanted to focus more on their own design.

However, this hurdle of collective decision-making did produce a tight social connection according to the respondents. Furthermore, the respondents state that they like the social cohesion that exists in their community. Some of them explain it by comparing previous situations in traditional housing schemes in the city, where almost no interaction takes place between neighbours. Even when an open question was asked about their satisfaction in general, respondents mention the existence of the collective: "well not only how it looks, but also the location. And everything about it. All aspects, the neighbours, this, that.

Everything." (respondent 6). Respondent 7: "eventually it is so unique to live here, in such an awesome house, surrounded by all these people. The other day we had an opening party to see everyone's house, so different". They are happy that this togetherness exists. Besides their shared history, another reason for the satisfying state of cohesion is given by most respondents. Specific personal characteristics are frequently recalled. Most of the group members are found to be ambitious, energetic and sometimes slightly pedantic. Respondents state that everyone suits this description in some way, which makes them alike. They appreciate the fact they are alike, and, according to most respondents, this enhances the quality of the community.

However, some respondents do criticize the homogenous population of their building. They refer to the social mix of their previous neighbourhood in Amsterdam and conclude that this is not the case here. Remarkably, they explain that such a CPC project as their own inherently attracts, and requires, a certain type of person. As respondent 2 says: "everyone has, yeah, a high middle-income and, are entrepreneurial. And that is also a bit dangerous. It means that, that there is not much diversity within the group. It is definitely not a representative cross-section of society", and later: "... these are projects for high-educated people and the privileged (...) so, is it for everyone? No. I think many people do not want this [type of commissioning]. A lot of people just want to buy their house where everything is arranged for them without any specific features."

When the question was posed if they cherish their privacy over a good social cohesion, they said to disagree. A good social cohesion within the community is more important than their own privacy. One of the examples resembling this feeling towards cohesion is their own AirBnB policy. Although some see AirBnB as a lucrative way to yield income through renting out a room, as a collective they have decided to ban such practices from their project. This is the case in every project, although in BSH, it is not yet officially stated in their documents. Another situation that shows their cohesion was found in HH1-2. One unit is privately rented out on a long-term basis. While the person that designed and built the dwelling has been part of the building group, the current tenants are found to be outsiders. This resulted in social conflicts between the tenants and the others. However, the norms of the community oppressed unwanted behaviour of these tenants like smoking in collective spaces or use of the balcony late at night. Currently, they are fine living together. However, the group of residents do not regard the tenants as part of their community, but the initial building group member, technically now a landlord, still is. He is also still a member of the Whatsapp group, the tenants are not.

*Activities*
The fact that they live in individual units, and not share daily-life practices, contributes to the satisfaction of the respondents. As some respondents explain, the period of collective decision-making and meanwhile finishing their own apartment has been intense. At the moment of data-collection, this phase finished approximately a year earlier, in each project. According to the respondents, the energy and intention to initiate collective activities is lacking at this moment; it is not their priority. A reason why most residents feel like this is given by respondent 7, naming it a 'collective sigh': "that collective sigh is predominantly caused by the length of the project." However, some are optimistic and state that their community will be more active in the future. This potential is stressed by several others as well, especially regarding their shared spaces.


**11.2 Analysis**

**11.2.1 Result**

*Design*
In line with the literature focused on self-built co-housing (Brown et al., 2013; Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016), the projects resulted in highly satisfying designs, customised to their personal wishes. This predominantly applies to the individual units since the motivations of many of the residents were focused on the individual unit. Not many shared spaces have been realised in the projects. Those that have been, are only partly in line with Williams (2005) findings of key-elements of co-housing design. For the high-

rise buildings in each project, the proximity to buffer zones is excellent: they share the same entrance, elevator, stairway and hallway, which offer probabilities of social interaction. The low-rise buildings (at the back of the projects) are a bit separated from the rest. They do share the parking garage with the other part. Although there is a shared roof terrace, which is a perfect amenity for interaction (Abu-Gazzeh, 1999; McCammant & Durrett, 1994), it does not (yet) meet the requirements Williams (2005) pose. Since it is on the rooftop, surveillance and accessibility is doubtable. And since every project have not yet been able to decorate their roof terrace, these spaces cannot be specified as 'good quality' or 'functional' yet.

*Cost*
All projects, especially HH1-2 and HH4, went extensively over budget. Although many struggled with the constantly increasing costs during the building phase, residents state to be very satisfied with the current financial value of their apartments. It is felt as a gratifying reward for the personal effort the residents have put in. Many state that their house is worth double of what it had costed. Three factor are assumed to be responsible. For a large part this is accredited to the uprising housing market in Amsterdam, which showed unusual rise from 2013. Secondly, the projects in Houthaven are adjacent to a monumental Amsterdam School-architecture neighbourhood on the one side, and a developing high-end neighbourhood on the other. In addition, it borders the waterfront and is in close vicinity to the historic city canals. This resembles the quality of their location within the city. Project BSH finds itself in a (mentally) more remote area, which resulted in relatively low costs for the plot. However, this area is developing at the moment and increasingly gains popularity. Thirdly, the uniqueness and quality (in materialisation) of the apartments is making them more valuable. Through the self-built principle, by deploying the development of their own apartments on their own risk, value is accumulated through sweat equity. This corresponds to assertions made by Boelens & Visser (2011).

## 11.2.2 Sense of community

Although a design of a building is of influence to its users, it must be considered that such elements of co-housing discussed in 10.2.1 only leads to the probability of social interaction (Carmona et al. 2003, in: Dempsey, 2009). To what extent the residents sense the existence of their community, is reliant upon various factors (McMillan & Chavis, 1994).

*Membership*
Within membership, the following five elements are regarded: boundaries, emotional safety, personal investment, sense of belonging and identification and common symbol system. The membership that the residents experience is high. Clear boundaries of their community is recognised through their physical togetherness in the same building and the ongoing contact they have on their Whatsapp group. The membership is mostly due to their personal investment in their projects; both their own individual units as well as those who participated in the board of the building group or one of the sub-groups. Their own uniquely design apartments within the clear 'grid' architecture functions as a symbol that the residents identify themselves with. In addition, the name Superlofts is mentioned with pride by the residents. Not only because everyone started building their apartment at the same time in the same building, every unit has a distinctive similar shape which gives a feeling of equality. The membership is underlined when other neighbours in the area are discussed. Especially in Houthaven, a 'we' feeling exists among the Superlofts residents. In BSH, several residents point out that other (neighbouring) CPC projects are 'closer' or seem to share more elements in daily practices among their group members. However, emotional safety is explicitly mentioned by respondents with children. Others, for instance, mentioned that they look after each other's apartments when they are on vacation.

*Influence*
During the building phase, the democratic model of decision-making offered ample opportunities to express one's opinion. This provided the necessary mutual trust among members. However, some declared that, especially since the subject was often technical, it was hard to follow all the decisions during this process. Nonetheless, input from (groups of) individual members led to collective action, such as the

mezzanine floors in HH1-2 and HH4. Processes of socialisation and normalisation (Koppenjan & Groenewegen, 2005) gradually evolved out of the building process, such as the democratic structure of decision-making. Other institutions grew during the living phase. A prominent example is the ban of AirBnB, which had been collectively decided upon. This resembles adequately McMillan & Chavis (1986) condition for Influence: "Member openness to influence by community members <-> power of member to influence the community" (Ibid: p. 15).

*Integration and Fulfilment of Needs*
When reviewing the motivations and expectations, which in this case resemble their social 'Needs', it can be concluded that the residents (except for respondent 4 and 10) did not demanded a strong social cohesion as a result. In fact, they did not expect any extra social cohesion at first. The fact that they know every neighbour personally, and the fact that several state to have stronger social connections, exceeds their social needs.

In addition, fulfilment of needs can be conceived in another way. As residents' motivations were predominantly based on the fact that they had extensive freedom to design their own apartment, the community played a crucial role in the fulfilment of that need. In other words, without each other, they would not have had such uniquely designed apartments. The environment that is created is therefore a sensed as a good fit by the residents. However, only to a certain extent they have had the opportunity to influence the collective design. But feeling of the design freedom for the individual units, makes the up the fulfilment of needs. As such, enhances the Sense of Community to a certain extent.

*Shared Emotional Connection*
The residents state to have qualitative social interaction with some of their fellow members. Especially during the build phase, the residents shared their happiness as well as their sorrow. Since they all experienced the rough and laborious building process, they can emotionally relate to one another. However, currently, the frequency of these interactions are low. Formal events such as VVE meetings are annual. Just several informal events have been organised. The desire to interact more often is not existing among the residents. Some predict this is yet to come, since they just recently finished the building phase and state that everyone is 'cooling down'. Nonetheless, the residents mention that more frequent social contact is not necessary for their everyday lifestyles.

**11.2.3 concluding remarks**

To conclude, residents are highly satisfied with the physical result of their apartments and state that they are customised to their needs and dreams. The quality of the collective elements in the projects are found to be low, for instance in materialisation and, especially in BSH, the distribution of garden space. Little aspects of typical co-housing design are represented in the projects. A few regret the fact that there is little co-living within the projects, however the result fits the motivations of the majority adequately. Financially, the projects turned out to be lucrative, which contributes to the overall contentment of the project. In addition, a high sense of community is measured. This is mostly due to the collective building process, where most of the intensive social interactions took place. Especially Personal Investment as element of Membership is a strong feature of the prevailing Sense of Community.

# 12 Conclusions: Answering sub-questions

To answer the sub-questions posed at the beginning of this thesis, the themes derived from the analysis chapters are used. The following chapter elaborates each sub question. This provides input to answer this research's main question, which is done at the end of this chapter.

## 12.1 Question one

The first question had been posed in order to assess which kind of contract forms had been the case in the researched projects. Sub-question one is: How are the contract forms of governance arranged and how are these experienced throughout the process of collective private commissioning by the residents? This sub question contains two sections. The first to assess what kind of co-development has been executed, and second, to regard the residents' perspectives on this type of development.

### 12.1.1 Contract forms

*Architect initiator*
The architectural firm has been the initiator of the project. This means that it had secured a plot of land, made agreements with the municipality and made an initial design, prior to the entry of the co-housing participants. The contract forms derived out of this initiation were evidently implicating that the governance of the project predominantly resided at the architect's side. The firm searched for participants on the housing market, eventually using traditional marketing (advertisements, websites and Funda). This unfolded in the situation where the architect had been responsible for the project's group formation. It also decided, on predefined terms, who got which unit in the project. The prominent role of the architect also materialised in the design of the building. Technical lay-outs, volumes, allocation of services and shared spaces, have all been governed and controlled for by the architect. In addition, the builder had also been chosen by the initiator. In an effort to deliberately insinuate aspects of co-building, several elements of the design were consigned to the choice of the collective. Such elements of co-design/co-building is defined as tokenism of control. Overall, the projects had been initiated top-down rather than bottom-up. However, every resident had to arrange financial support individually, which also meant that the residents bared the risks and receive any made profit from the development, similar to private commissioning. During the building phase, the developer backed up the collective building financially in case of participants dropping out.

*Parliament structure*
Nevertheless, the collective had been the commissioning party. Instigated by the initiating architect, a board had been constructed to represent the collective. This board had the mandate to make decisions, which often were made based on a voting system during meet-ups. This parliament construction provided a feasible way for the collective to act as an actor when negotiating with for instance builders, contractors and the architect. The collective organised itself into commissions, to focus on different aspects. Tasks of the board were predominantly based on arranging maintenance plans, allocation of parking spots, decorating shared spaces and provide a platform for individual participants to collaborate (for example, to purchase floors collectively).

*Individual unit*
For the individual unit, households held much control for its design, and building process too. In fact, this had been highly similar to a private commissioning form of contract. The design of each apartment had little restrictions, and the future residents were free to choose their (interior) architects, contractors and carpenters.

*In theory*

Regarding Boelens & Visser's (2011) version of Arnstein's ladder of participation, the architect-led collective private commissioning touches on various forms of participation, even within the Dutch collaborative forms as described by the authors. The projects started from the architect's initiative, where future residents apply for a project with a concept of their taste. For the initiation phase, the citizen participation is at its lowest, at consumer oriented development. Then, the processes split in two.

For the collective (marked yellow in figure 4.8), the design and build phase balances between co-commissioning and collective private commissioning. The collective was organised in a way that they had control on certain aspects of their project, however the architect played a prominent role in final decision-making.

The development of each apartment by the individual household (marked red in figure 4.8), entail utmost forms of collaboration, and comes near to the maximum of what is possible in urban development on this scale. The contract forms are similar to private commissioning or self-built (as in the figure below), however it were apartments stacked on top of each other in stead of ground based single-family houses.

| | Ladder of citizen participation | Dutch collaborative forms |
|---|---|---|
| Degrees of participation | Citizen Control | Self-built |
| | Delegated Power | Collective private commissioning |
| | Partnership | Co-commissioning |
| Degrees of tokenism | Placation | Consumer oriented development |
| | Consultation | Traditional development |
| | Informing | |
| Nonparticipation | Therapy | |
| | Manipulation | |

*Figure 4.8 Contract forms derived from Arnstein's ladder of Participation. Source: adopted from Boelens & Visser (2011)*

When relating to Qu & Hassleaar's (2011) theory, and their rendition of power distribution (figure 4.9), a similar image derives due to the parallel processes of the projects. Individually (red), the maximum is almost reached in terms of citizen control on their living environment. There is less vigour ascribed to the collective, where the architect often is able to make a final decision, or is obliged to do so. The architect takes on the role as a project manager, resulting in a close relationship between representatives of the collective and the architect. Therefore, the yellow marker of the collective process resides near consultation.
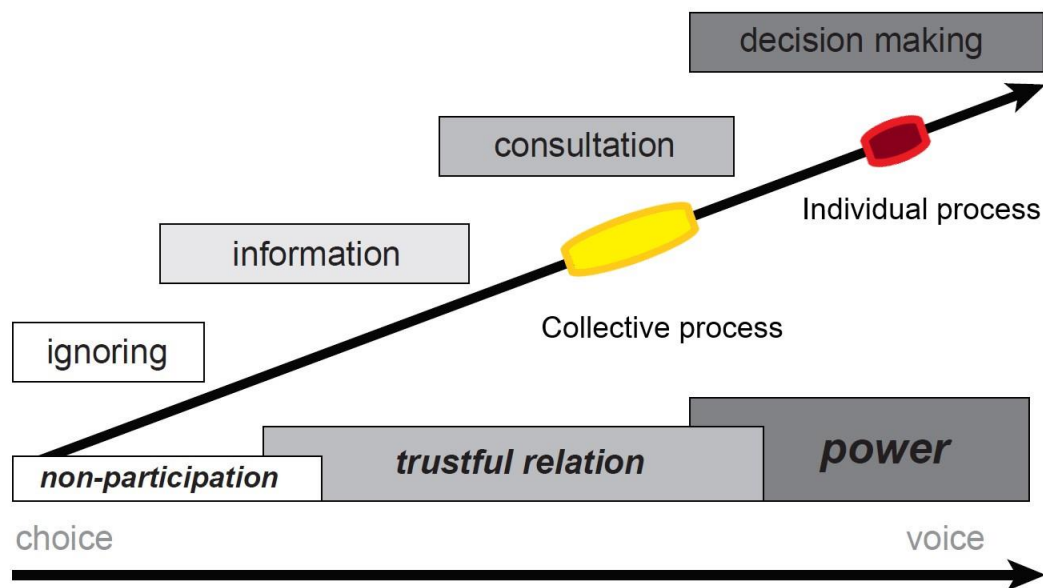
## Ladder of influence



*Figure 4.9 Visualisation of difference in power distribution of the two processes in development. Source: adopted from Qu & Hasselaar (2011)*

### 12.1.2 Residents' perspectives

Accordingly, the different contract forms had been experienced by the residents as two different processes, where they had two different roles.

*Individual*

The individual commissioning is a satisfying, though intense, endeavour for the residents. Motivations to participate the project in the first place were predominantly focussed on this element. The residents experienced much freedom, and state that this leads to results that are close to their dreamhouse. The freedom to design the finishing of the interior resulted in highly satisfied residents, with housing designs tailored to their needs and wishes: a close match between supply and demand. However, it also incorporates other externalities related to private commissioning, such as financial uncertainty and the requirement of sweat equity. The latter mostly in terms of managing contractors and builders, but also do-it-your-self practices have been endeavoured. It is a stressful period of time, which demands resilience from participants. Although it is, in general, not uncommon for building projects to overdue their deadlines, in combination with a layman (the resident) as a project planner, there is a high probability of delay in the individual project, possibly resulting in financial problems. Therefore, residents with more experience in managing projects, for instance from their profession, are able to complete their individual unit with more success than less competent self-builders.

*Collective*

The collective part of the development process is received differently among residents. Those residents that are motivated by collectively developing their housing project or possess the competence in doing so, are able to participate in the board or form commissions, serving the co-housing development process. However, those that are less concerned with co-housing and the collective development process, are able to adopt a more passive role in the process. Two types can be distinguished: aspired collective self-builders and 'mandate giving' participants. The difference in ambition and motivation between these two, eventually leads to a feasible structure that produces generally satisfying outcomes. The obligation for every resident to at least attend meet-ups and foster their mandate, forges a togetherness among the collective. In this setting, the mandate-givers are less likely to slow down the process due to their lack of

competence or motivation, and aspired collective self-builders are able to express their ambition and initiate ideas that derive from their co-housing ambition.

However, the collective part of the process is also experienced as a burden, to both types of residents. Residents with previous experiences in co-housing projects also state that the contract forms are not delivering the control for the residents to the extent that they are used to. The residents underline the importance of the role of the architect, and also describe that tenuous situations occurred, where responsibilities and governance were not clear. One of the criticisms on this structure was the liability of the assigned roles. When wrong choices are made, choices that probably would not have been made by a professional, then the burdens are shared by everyone. It is therefore that residents, for a more steadily process, argue that clear boundaries of responsibilities are crucial. Although their control on the outcome is appreciated, they acknowledge that, as a collective, they often reach consensual outcomes. Moreover, concerning the time it takes to reach decisions in a collective, the collective decision-making does not always leads to synergy for the project, and quite often, to the opposite.

### 12.1.3 Concluding remarks
The instigator of a project also has a prominent role in the rest of the development, and thus should consider their role in this process. Because of this, there are restrictions to the amount of governance ascribed to the collective, and therefore, the end-users. However, less participation is definitely not a burden by definition, as participation is also likely to inert synergy of the project. In addition, high satisfaction for residents is achieved by enhancing governance on their personal living space. Architect-led collective private commissioning is able to produce maximum citizen participation, while it requires the architect to overlook the collective process throughout all phases of development.

**12.2 Question two**

The second question had been posed to find out what the result is of the co-housing projects in Amsterdam. Additionally, the question is formulated to find out to what extent the co-housing is an answer to the residents needs and wishes: What is the result of the co-housing projects and does it fit to the individual needs and wishes of the residents?

### 12.2.1 Collective design

The projects entail shared entrances, shared parking garages and shared rooftop terraces. While these hint to co-housing features as described by Williams (2005), such elements are also common in traditional housing. There are regular hallways with staircases and elevators have been realised, with two to six apartments sharing a floor. However, since each 'floor' has a height of five metres, the infill of the building block is rather the opposite of traditional design. There are no common rooms or shared areas realised in the projects, apart from the rooftop terrace. In addition, in one project the units that have a garden space attached to their apartments, made this space into a semi-collective area. The lack of shared spaces in the project is mainly due to a lack of financial resources from the collective at the time of initiation and the choices made by the architect initially. The quality of the finish of the collective elements in the building (entrance, hallways, elevators) are found to be low, where residents actually desire and expect to have a higher quality.

### 12.2.2 Individual needs and wishes

The loft-style units, with its 5 metre high ceilings, provided horizontal and vertical design freedom for the interior, which resulted in uniquely designed apartments. Every household was able to design their apartments from the inside completely as they wished, by themselves or by hiring an architect. Unusual or unique housing wishes or needs have been made possible in these projects, such as a house-sized restaurant or two-in-one apartments. A great match between supply and demand of housing, which is in line with self-built housing or private commissioning. Considering residents' motivations to participate, the predominant motivation had been to create their own individual unit, inspired by the design freedom the concept would deliver them. Therefore, the results fit the individual needs and wishes of the residents greatly.

### 12.2.3 Recalling the features

| Co-housing features | |
|---|---|
| Increased social cohesion | ✓ |
| Like-minded population | ✓ |
| High appreciation of living environment | ✓ |
| | - |
| Communal amenities | ✓ |
| Lower building costs | |

*Figure 4.10 Checking for the prescribed co-housing features*

Recalling in a deductive way the features of co-housing, the projects entail communal amenities to a little extent. The residents highly appreciate their living environment, which derives mainly from their opportunity to design their private living space and the total price of building their homes compared to current value. The fact that residents state to require certain characteristics, which according to them, they all possess, indicates a like-minded population. However, also explicitly, residents have similar cultures and income levels.

### 12.2.3 What is it not?

| Co-housing features not incorporated |
|---|
| Intentional community |
| Commune / co-living |
| Utopian pursuit |
| Buyer's options |

*Figure 4.11 Other co-housing features*

While the residents share certain areas of their projects, it cannot be called co-living, which makes them not cohousing projects as described by Vestbro (2010). For most residents, the motive has not been living together, but creating their own unique dwelling in inner-urban Amsterdam. However, they cherish the community as it is, and they are satisfied with the social cohesion that exists in the group. In addition, the researched co-housing projects are not intentional communities either, or an effort to live in an utopian arrangement (Sargisson, 2012).

In terms of collaborative development, building upon the answer of sub-question 1, the end-users had been involved extensively. Although elements of tokenism have been found, the contract forms applied in these cases distances them from co-commissioning (Van der Klundert, 2016; Kompier et al., 2012) or buyer's options.

### 12.2.4 Induction of co-housing features

While the posed co-housing features deriving from literature merely served a deductive framework as a starting point for this research, the qualitative research design provided retrieval of inductive knowledge on co-housing.

*Co-building*
Initially, residents ought to build their own individual lofts. To do so, they had to collaborate within their collective. Therefore, the projects are co-building projects. Here, the meaning of 'co' is twofold: co as in collaborative, and co as in collective. Collaboration takes place between the residents, the architect and the builder. Both on individual and on building block scale, development is performed a dialogue. In addition, the process demands the group of individuals to organise themselves in a collective. This emanates into inter-resident collaboration, where residents find support throughout the development process, for instance by sharing recourses.

*Open Building and loft type*
The projects incorporate features of the Open Building concept. The generic shape of the building had been established before the commissioning process. In addition, the fact that the individual units are five metres in height, coins a three dimensional freedom of design. This resulted in uniquely designed houses, customised to users' wishes.

*Community forging*
Eventually, collaboration within the collective shaped a shared emotional connection, and by being in a collective provided opportunities to help each other. For those that were not aspired collective self-builders, the result exceeded their expectations and wishes, since they did not envisioned themselves to have such strong connections with their social environment. Consequently, these co-housing projects entail 'unintentional' communities. The level of intimacy may be low in terms of 'living together', but residents appreciate the social connection within the group. Some aspects produced by this cohesion are recalled to be a safe and secure feeling to live in, the existence of social norms within the community and access to shared facilities.

The increased social cohesion might be experienced by the residents as an unexpected bonus, but it is inherent to co-housing projects according to literature. However, it rejects the assertion that the community to be intentional, since residents selected this project based on certain characteristics of the building, and its way of building. Furthermore, it denies the necessity of an intentional community, since the residents of these projects are highly satisfied with their fellow residents, while their motives derive from individual goals.
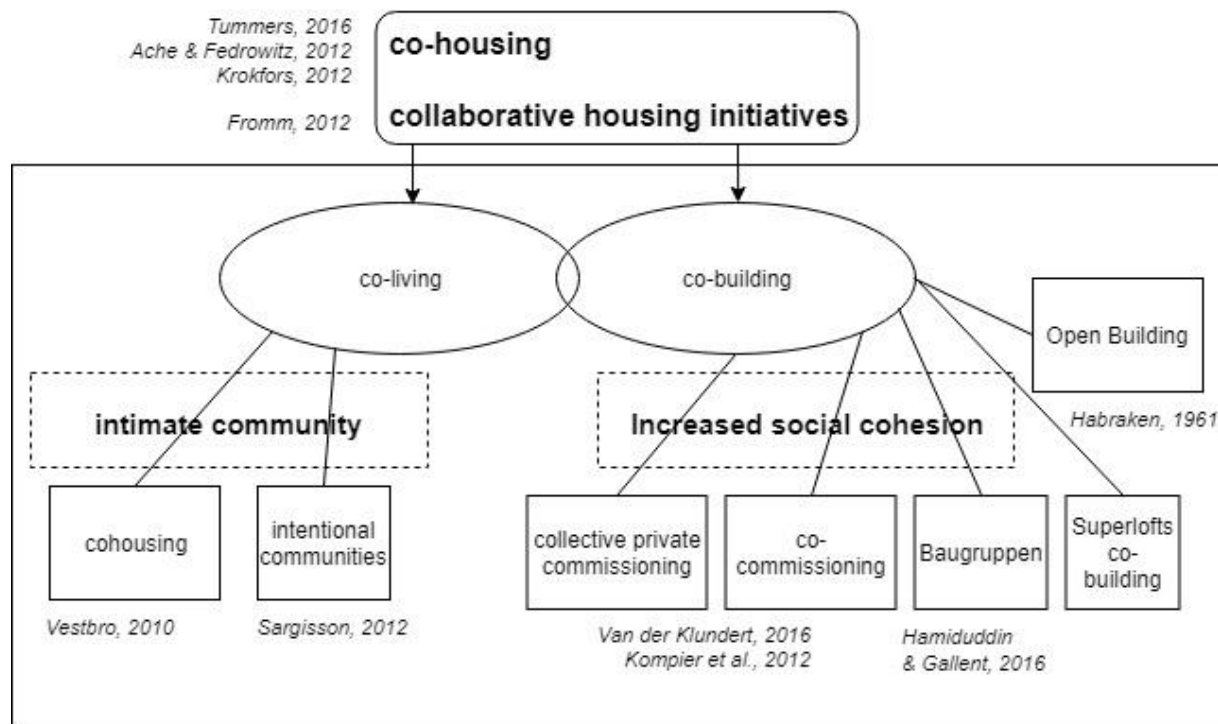
**12.2.5 Superlofts co-building**



*Figure 4.12  A section of the field of co-housing ex post*

To collect all these findings into an answer to the posed sub-question, a new term within co-housing has to be coined. The researched cases in Amsterdam incorporate different aspects in such manner that it requires its own definition to fit within co-housing theories, therefore it deserves an own branch in the overview in figure 4.12. It entails a hybrid version of private commissioning and collective private commissioning (Kompier et al., 2012), where motivations of individual participants have to obey the application of collective building. Process-wise, it is close to the contemporary description of Baugruppe, given by Hamiddudin & Gallent (2016), where 'group-building' also derived from financial and practical motivations, and delivered similar outcomes. However, in contrast to Hamuddidin & Gallent's (2015) group-building, the collective goals do not prevail the individual housing wishes. The extra design freedom delivered by the loft design is experienced as an extra dimension of personal expression where residents long for, and also serves participants without collective building aspirations.

The Superlofts style co-building entails, in short: initiation and orchestration from the architect, residents' motivations to design individual loft, the involvement and the collective action and decision-making ability from the group of residents during the design and building phase, and the exceeding individual design freedom through its loft typed units.

## 12.3 Question three

The third question posed in this research considers the state of the social cohesion within the co-housing projects, since this is a prominent outcome of the practice. The question is: How is architect-led collective private commissioning serving for a strengthening of the internal social cohesion?

First of all, it must be renounced that the question considers only the internal social cohesion. While social cohesion is a wide and nebulous term, the analysis focussed on assessing the state of the community, and therefore, the term Sense of Community is used to explain the residents' perspectives on their community.

### 12.3.1 The community
First of all, all residents clearly have the sensation of being in a community. Everyone knows their neighbours and acknowledge the feeling of being a member of the Superlofts. This is invigorated by the physical boundaries the projects have. In addition, there are social and organisational boundaries maintained that enhance this feeling, such as a Whatsapp group and by the VVE. Some residents care more for this fact than others. At the moment, the communities contain a mix of household types: starters, young parents, parents with older children and elderly couples. There is less variety in social class and culture, and they are self-claimed like-minded people, in the sense that they find themselves to have entrepreneurial and assertive mindsets. The like-mindedness makes it easier for individuals in the community to relate to others, and conform to others' ways of living.

### 12.3.2 Design and build phase
The main cause of the sense of community is the collective building phase. The architectural firm opts for the formation of a parliament structure of organisation by the residents, with assigned roles within this structure. The collective building process demands residents to cooperate with each other in an early stage of the development. Regular meetings with the building group forges a social connection between future residents. Moments of despair and moments of success are shared among the group, which leads to stronger connections. This is called shared emotional connection. The like-mindedness of the residents in the process of collaborating, is an important foundation for the success.

The moment right before the design and build phase, when every future resident declares to officially participate, is the first moment of official togetherness. From there on, the process demands collaboration for collective and individual benefit, with elements of collective decision-making. The duration and intensity of the building process result in closer social ties, although this is experienced as a stressful and unpleasant period of time. Being in this collective process, residents also found opportunities to collaborate for individual benefits (collective purchases for instance), which resulted in several tight connections between those residents.

The roles within the project demand management competences of those that fulfil these roles. In cases that the appointment of these roles do not come about naturally from the group, the architect can assign or motivate certain competent residents to take on such a role. While the cohesion is formed by the community themselves, the architect plays a significant role by organising the social setup in case this is necessary.

### 12.3.3 Living phase
In addition to the collective design and build phase, several elements after this phase cause enhancement of social cohesion. First and foremost is shared obligations such as maintenance contributions and VVE meetings. In addition, a Whatsapp group facilitates instant communication between residents. Since many residents have more personal relations with each other from the design and build phase, the Whatsapp group chat is used frequently for formal and informal purposes. This sustains the cohesion among the residents. Products of the existing social cohesion are several elements of normalisation, for example a collective decision to ban Airbnb-practices within the project.

The design of the building is also of influence on the sense of community residents have. A shared entrance, garage and roof terrace makes random encounters possible. When having multiple entrances or buildings within one project, the sense of community reduces for the residents of the other building. However, the use of branding (Superlofts) and a distinct way of architectural design, brings along a feeling of togetherness by all residents, even though multiple entities exist within one project.

### 12.3.4 Concluding remarks
The process collective building, while pursuing also a private commissioning in this building, creates a bond. Foremostly, the obligation to each individual to take on a role within the collective, no matter a passive or an active role, immediately determines the involvement of each member. This togetherness during a long period of stressful times for each individual, forges a connection. And the shared goal of developing the building, fosters a definable community. Whether this is can be called intentional communities (Sargission, 2012), is not entirely outright. For some residents it has been, for others it has not, which mainly depended on their motivations to become a community prior to the building process, which clearly had not been the case for everyone. However, one could say an 'unintentional community' is measured, since the sense of community is significantly measured in this research.

While the initiating architect can play a significant role in orchestrating the group's dynamics, eventually, it is the intensive collaboration of the residents themselves that create social cohesion among the community. The sustainability of this social cohesion is partly subject to the architectural design of the building. However, it is mainly determined by the motivations and personal wishes of the particular residents whether tight social connections remain. Nevertheless, the social infrastructure is present, and is very much able to result in friendships, pleasant relations or just good neighbours.

# 13 Main conclusion

The main question of this research is: how and to what extent are architect-led collective private commissioning projects in Amsterdam, according to the residents, serving for the preconceived qualities as stated in contemporary theories on co-housing? Doing literature research, retrieving empiric data and analysis of this data, and eventually formulating answers to the sub-questions, all lead to the answer of this main question.

*The initiator and the residents*

The most dominant finding of this research is the fact that top-down initiated and orchestrated co-housing projects, where the members were predominantly motivated by individually commissioning their own apartment, resulted in a significant increase of social cohesion within the sensed community of residents. The architect took on an unconventional role as the instigator of a development project, leading to unusual structures of governance within the development process of a housing project.

Although some parts of the building are shared, the projects did not result in co-living arrangements. The designs and floorplans do not incorporate co-housing features to a large extent. It is clear that the instigator of a project has a determining role, for the process as the result, since he is responsible for framing a concept. After the formulation of this concept, participants reach out to these instigators to apply, implicitly agreeing upon the concept of the project. Therefore, it is likely that the group will consist of like-minded people, which relates to the phenomenon of self-selection. However, future residents conform to the concept and contract forms that are posed by the instigator, whether the residents are cohousing fanatics or individually focussed home-buyers, eventually the participants all have to oblige to the collective unity of the group.

While there is a difference in motivations among participants regarding collective commissioning, it is not blocking the way for a feasible collective commissioning project, but rather on the contrary. The parliament structure of the collective throughout the design and build phase provides different roles, where it is necessary that some do want to take the initiative, and some do not want to do so. It enhances progression.

*Co-housing according to the Superlofts co-building concept*

The concept applied to the researched projects entailed collaboration between professional and consumer, as well as collaboration between resident and resident. The former resembles clear practices of the collaborative planning theories such as Healy (1997) and Habraken (1961), where new distributions of governance and control are sought between policy-maker and citizen, or producer and user. Here, the residents had the architect providing a platform to pursue their self-built dream. The latter resembles the power of bundling individual resources, be it intellectual capital, social capital or sweat equity, resulting in a lower dependency on financial resources only and increase of social engagement. Eventually, although not fully envisioned by the residents, a stronger social cohesion is induced within their living environments.

The quality of these Superlofts co-building projects in Amsterdam is found in the high satisfaction of the residents with their current living environments, and the close match of supply and demand of housing provided by the Open Building concept that is entailed. The architecture of the loft concept plays a remarkable role. It empowers the end-users to design their own living space, and additionally, participate in the development of their surroundings. Through the eyes of the residents, it is a long and intense process that demands persistence and dedication, and also requires competence and courage, but it will result in a home that comes near their envisioned 'dream house', within an unexpected socially cohesive housing project.

# Section five

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# Theory building and recommendations

*The empiric research conducted in this thesis functioned as a practical assessment of what is understood of co-housing. In return, the qualitative research design delivered new insights on the matter. These findings, posed in the previous chapters, resemble a stepping stone leading towards the field of co-housing. This section elaborates on established theories in existing literature in an effort to discuss their claims. In addition, the aim of this section is to contribute to the field of co-housing, by handing new insights.*

# 14 Theory building

While the conclusion focussed on this research's findings, this chapter aims to align these with the conceptions in current scientific debates of co-housing.

## 14.1 Architect as collaborative manager

Drawing on the final points made in the conclusion, it is the architect that takes on the role of collaborative development manager. In terms of collaborative development (Healy, 1997), it is the architect that provides the platform for people to participate. It is a market party that gives an answer to the demand of participation and collaboration by the end-users. On architectural level, Habraken's (1961) ideas on Open Building, with the construction by a professional and the infill by the end-users. Superlofts co-building produced an applicable method, both organisationally as architecturally, to answer Healy's (1997) pleads for collaboration, only on a finer grain of the urban fabric.

A challenge lies in the upscaling of the notion of the Superlofts co-building philosophy, and shift this method from the private realm into the public realm. Without intensifying the community, the enlargement or linkages between communities within a neighbourhood scale would produce answers for planners to adhere to (social) sustainable urban development. Opportunities may be found at parties originally concerned with public goals, such as housing corporations.

## 14.2 Dutch planning and co-housing

### 14.1.1 co-housing in light of planning culture

The Superlofts co-building model is a product of the following forces: desire to self-built in inner urban areas, the dedication to do this collectively, and the Dutch prevailing planning culture. This last point is made because in The Netherlands, self-built housing is not the common way of housing, in contrast to Belgium and Germany where more than 50% percent of housing is built through self-building. However, building upon Hulsman's (2017) conclusions, the Dutch homebuyers are not given the supply that suit their wishes; they are looking for more personal expression in their living environment. The Superlofts co-building embodies an answer to this demand, while adhering to still prevailing Dutch housing traditions and planning culture.

Buitelaar & Bregman (2016) argue that Dutch planning culture is now finding itself to entail organic development, or at least it is heading towards this. Considering the co-building attributes of the Superlofts style co-building, and the amount of end-user decision-making is incorporated in these projects, it seems to adhere to this organic development in several ways. For instance, private parties (the architect) create concepts for a building, and seek participants/buyers for these project to co-create a housing project. However the ability to do so by this party is implicitly granted by the municipality through incorporating these projects in their zoning plan and by reducing land costs. Therefore it must be understood that such bottom-up seeming initiatives are still highly depended on top-down regulation from planning bodies. Without programming these initiatives, especially in big cities where housing markets are thriving such as in Amsterdam, they will not be capable of competing with private development companies.

Subsequently, the search emerges to find the right agent in this development process to connect the planning goals with the demand of future residents, while maintaining a feasible process. The Superlofts co-building projects showed that the architect is able to be that agent, where the design of the building had been used as a platform for residents to organise themselves. However, for the practice of co-building it is a valuable quest to search for other possible agents, which may be found in other market parties, or even within the public domain.

### 14.1.2 No optimal distribution of control

There is no straightforward way in which co-housing projects should be arranged. The regulation of good co-housing projects face the challenge to bring together both ends of a project; the professionals with know-how and well-informed motivated groups of individuals. A dialogue between both parties leads to the formulation of a fitting outcome. In optima forma, close to the thoughts of Habraken concerning Open Building, the building group does not (have to) make decisions on technical aspects or urban design, but focus on the program of their desired living arrangement. Similarly, the professionals (on project scale) do not decide the program, but shape essential technical boundaries for individuals of the building group as well as for the group itself. Their experience and professionality should be used to overcome concessional results on quality.

The Superlofts co-building uses the architect as the process manager of this dialogue, which is not a conventional way considering Dutch planning and development traditions. In this role, the architect also decides on the extent of governance that is ascribed to the collective. This is something governmental parties struggle with, as is seen in Amsterdam, where policy refrains third-party development initiatives access. However, there is an objective and an organisational end to these projects. The dialogue within collaborative projects is not only held on supply and demand, which produces an objective result in the end, but it also provides a dialogue on the organisation of the development structure.

This thesis reveals the essential value of this element of co-housing, and that the contract forms within these projects are necessary to adjust to individual and collective motivations. The malleability of these contract forms within a project is decisive for its success. It is ill-judged to believe that co-housing projects with high amounts of governance for the end-users, per definition result in higher quality housing projects, or even successful co-housing projects. The strength, and the security of quality, is found in the customised solution between initiator and participant.

On the other hand, problems regarding distribution of control and responsibilities occur when these are vague, when too much choices are made by those expected to be not capable of doing so. Clear boundaries of control are important for a co-building project. Hence, the discussion continues. What can be questioned regarding this discussion is whether the architect is the right actor to orchestrate the distribution of governance, or that another party should be involved analysing the needs and motivations of the majority of the group, while setting boundaries of responsibilities.

## 14.2 Social cohesion increase

### 14.2.1 Legacy of social cohesion

The co-building process results in increased social cohesion. The residents sense a community within their projects, which is forged during the long process of collective and contemporary development. Hamuddudin & Gallent (2016) argue that the social cohesion within co-housing projects consist of two dimensions:

"The first is a heightened and measurable level of familiarity in those places that have, at least in part, been delivered through group-build activity. The second is a shared experience of self-help, and an awareness of how collective problems are resolvable through the 'power' of social capital" (Hamiddudin & Gallent, 2016: p. 378-379).

In addition, results from the Superlofts co-building provide to argue that practices of norm setting throughout the building phase and during the living phase contribute to the legacy of social cohesion. Processes of normalisation took place, which invoke processes of socialisation, for instance when new comers arrive into the community. In addition, Boelens & Visser (2011) argue that the rate of residents moving in and out is low in co-housing projects (at least, in The Netherlands). Therefore, the sustainability of the community, and its social cohesion, is predicted to be high.

### 14.2.2 Is it worth the struggle?

The flexibility of creating one's own apartment within a multi-story building, as if it was a private commission within an existing building, has been the main motive for the residents, as well as the virtue of the project for them. This aspect is highly cherished, and answers adequately the residents demand. The collective decision-making structure should only be applied when a group devotes their control fully to this system, and every individual pursues to live with those selected people. Furthermore, it is important that they are aware that they share the burdens and revenues deriving from those decisions, and are responsible for that themselves.

However, when the demand from aspiring residents is to individually commission their apartment within the urban context, and when they would not intentionally choose to realise this in a collective manner, the project should not aim to do so. Designing and building apartments requires professional decision-making, and is experienced to be too intense and time-consuming when executed by a collective of laymen.

Although this structure provides an increased sense of community among all participants, it invoked time, energy and financial costly situations, which led to undesired and unsecure circumstances. It is debatable whether this enhanced community is worth such risks. Based on the reactions of respondents in this research, collective private commissioning should not be imposed to an audience wider than the competent self-builders. Therefore, the conclusions of this research averse the statements made by Fromm (2012). If one is aiming for community enhancement strategies for new neighbourhoods, it is suggested that other means should be considered instead of architect-led collective private commissioning as performed in the researched cases.

### 14.3 Implicit and explicit gentrification through exclusion

 *"Co-housing is promoted as an opportunity for more sustainable urban development, and top-down urban development may perceive co-housing groups as resilient agents of change, specifically for brownfield development and gentrification. In this way, cohousing is embedded in debates on the spatial aspects of social cohesion and gentrification."* (Tummers, 2016: p. 2036). This quote hits two planning outcomes planners often employ co-housing is concerned. Building upon paragraph 14.2.1, this assertion is further discussed.

#### 14.3.1 Exclusion by increased social cohesion
This thesis has the co-housing residents as its primary focus, and thus has only briefly touched upon the topic of external neighbourhood effects of a co-housing project. Nevertheless, the general insights derived from the user interviews in combination with the literature study, do provide a starting point for theorizing: in the interviews with residents as well as in literature, a distinction is visible between 'internal' effects of a co-housing project and 'external' effects on neighbourhood level. This also accounts for experiences from the Superlofts co-building style projects in Amsterdam.

In the interviews conducted for this thesis, residents have signalled that the collective commissioning and styling of their loft apartments had asked much of their time and energy. Their lives had been going through a busy and stressful period. Now that the living phase had begun and the building phase was over, in general the residents wanted to take a rest. And in their responses of social behaviour, they reflexively remarked to show some 'pulling back from forms of group life' behaviour for a while, as an understandable reaction after an intense period of co-building. This pulling back behaviour also extended to the neighbourhood level, where a passive or inactive approach of the residents was the overall answer to interview questions on this point. This leads to arguing that a co-housing project in Superloft co-building style, predominantly evokes an inward orientation, which may have a non-effect or perhaps even a (slightly) negative effect on social cohesion on the scale of the (existing) urban neighbourhood.

Theoretically, while the increase of social cohesion among residents is regarded as a quality of co-housing in general, it must be addressed that it goes hand in hand with social exclusion of others. The phenomenon of defining 'us', by defining 'not them', can have negative effects on larger scales and is likely to occur when co-housing projects are infiltrating an existing neighbourhood. The importance of being aware of the scale on which social cohesion is analysed, and the consequences of the different outcome on different scales, is stressed by Kearns and Forrest (2000). There is a high possibility that co-housing projects turn their perspective inwards. Therefore, it is important to question the positive connotation that Fromm (2012) gives to co-housing (*collaborative housing*, as she refers to it). The claim that such housing projects also invoke "caring, interacting, and modelling community within the neighbourhood" (Fromm, 2012: p. 364), and that it can be used as a tool for deprived neighbourhoods, is a doubtful attribution of co-housing in general, from the perspective of this research study.

When the elements constructing the *sense of community that residents perceive* in their projects are considered, these elements only apply to participants of the project, and are more likely to exclude others surrounding them, than including those others. Therefore, it is not likely that residents make efforts beyond their co-housing project. The priorities are set upon one's own direct living environment, first of all the private unit, and second the collective building. (The perceived elements that construct the *sense of community according to residents* incorporated in this research, comprise co-housing *project-internal* elements such as: their shared emotional connection within the co-building process, the physical, organisational, and eventually, social boundaries, and the rewards retrieved from their personal investments during the building phase.)

However, it should not be regarded as impossible that a 'neighbourhood engaging community' that reside in a co-housing project, enters a particular neighbourhood and invoke social cohesion, through various means among a larger group of the residents in that area, sooner or later. But one should be careful with linking increased social cohesion within a co-housing project, to a probable radiation of this effect on its surroundings. As stressed by Kearns & Forrest (2000), social cohesion enhancement for one group, means, per definition, social exclusion to other groups.

### 14.3.2 Implicit exclusion of participants
In line with group-building as described by Hamiddudin & Gallent (2016), a certain familiarity among the participants is measured, in this thesis exposed by measuring a sense of community. Although collaboration throughout the process fostered connections between all participants "*this does not mean that strong friendships now exist between all residents*" (Ibid, p. 378), which is highly similar in this research. It is argued that this familiarity, as a result, is more viable and desirable than creating tight communities. This argument builds upon the theory on social cohesion within communities (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). Intentional communities, where residents share certain ideas on life and seek others to create a living environment that adheres to these ideas, are likely to invoke social exclusion of 'others', by the wish to forge or foster their own community to reach their shared goals. Therefore, such projects should not be promoted as viable social sustainable developments, or even as a tool to apply in neighbourhoods for social repair, as is argued by Fromm (2012).

Intentional communities are not wrong, or unfeasible, rather, given the outcome of 'unintentional communities' and their state of familiarity within their community, it is argued that intentional communities are not housing structures desirable in cities. Along with Chiodelli's (2015) arguments concerning the probability of exclusion of others physically in the neighbourhood, it also excludes people in the organisational way, prior to the development. Groups are often formed through informal social relations, in an unstructured manner.

Nonetheless, it must be concluded that co-housing projects in general requires specific motivation and competence from its participants. Moreover, also in line with Hamiduddin & Gallent (2016), ethnically homogenous groups derived out of these projects, which is obvious for several reasons. Besides financial capital and a stable income, a certain wittiness is demanded to manifest in the field of self-provided

housing. With the extra dimension of sparring with fellow group members to decide on collective elements, a certain competence of management and communication is required.

Instead, if policy makers ought to promote co-housing projects for various reasons, it must be considered to whom these projects should be accessed. Binding groups of people by a certain concept or architecture, or even a more basal shared goal such as just the bare aim of realising a home, leaves more room for a diversity of people to apply. It is the process that is collectively executed, which creates social ties. A fair way to reach a diversity of population groups is more likely to be handled in cases like Superlofts, since the selection process of participants is handled by an external party, not the group itself, and a 'first come, first serve' principle is handled. Additionally, "... *those groups that are brought together by built environment professionals may later take on many of the qualities of self-selecting social groups* "(Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2016).

### 14.4 Definition of co-housing

#### 14.4.1 Co-living, co-building, co-housing
The dialogue prior to design and building phase is essential to extract synergy, or in other words, to prevent misfits and missed opportunities. When there is the perspective of co-building, individuals should be aware of the fact they are being part of a group. When one takes the perspective of a co-living project, individuals should be aware of the influence the building-process has. Co-housing projects cannot be easily divided in two types, a co-housing project consist of a form of co-building and co-living. They do not rule out each other. Both elements can strengthen each other, but both demand the right attitude and energy. However, there is a clear relation between an intentional community (Sargisson, 2012) and co-living arrangements. Nevertheless, co-living arrangements are, in its widest sense, not always intentional communities.

While it is regarded as a virtue to have clarity on the definitions of what is co-housing, Vestbro's (2010) definition of cohousing is excluding many forms of highly similar practices. To relate to the arguments of Fromm (2012), Krokfors (2012) and Tummers (2016), it is important to include "sister developments on the borders of co-housing, sharing many traits, but where residents do not eat together on a weekly basis, and where the future residents may not have been the instigators of the development" (Fromm, 2012: p. 365). Hence, it is worthwhile to underline the difference between cohousing and co-housing. The former is predominantly claimed by Vestbro's argument that a project should be communal, collaborative and collective all together. The latter is used as an umbrella term to address the wide scope of projects that incorporate many features of those three dimensions, and thus are of interest to practitioners, policy makers and researchers.

#### 14.4.2 How to dissect co-housing
Tummers (2016) elaborates on the manifold of co-housing practices throughout Europe. Her summarising overview of co-housing projects makes clear that the conception of what is regarded as co-housing, varies highly: "the uniqueness of each project, is often emphasised, leading to the question of what holds them together?" (Tummers, 2016: p. 2024). While reviewing co-housing literature and in an effort to define the researched cases in terms of what makes them co-housing, this research produced insights into the first steps of answering Tummers' question. It is argued that four dimensions are comprising a co-housing project. Along these dimensions, one is able to define what kind of co-housing is being dealt with. Argued here, these dimensions are: initiator, influence (during building phase), design, and use.

As latently is done in this research, using these dimensions, the researcher is able to compare projects. Eventually, using a systematic approach of these four dimensions, the road towards quantified data on co-housing is opening up. However, more research is required on the correlations between these dimensions. Nevertheless, how a co-housing project are defined to fit into the larger debate of co-housing, is highly depending on these four dimensions.

# 15 Reflection

While different aspects of this research, in regard to other researchers, is already elaborated in the previous chapter, there are several elements specific to this research that require further reflection.

## 15.1 Context

### 15.1.1 Single private party
A shortcoming of the case selection in this research is the fact that the projects have been initiated by the same architectural firm. The role of the architect appeared to be of great influence to the type of project it has resulted in. On the one hand, this is regarded as a result from this research to co-housing, by assessing the prominence of the architect's role and his architectural design and concept. On the other hand, three cases initiated and process-managed by one private party is obviously not a representative cross-section of all architect-led collective private commissioning in Amsterdam.

### 15.1.2 Local housing market
It must be addressed that the housing market in Amsterdam, during the start of the projects until their deliveries, made an extreme revival. Especially in these areas, where house prices rose extensively. Therefore, the outcome of the low building costs is significantly influenced by this effect, and therefore also the satisfaction measured among the residents. Because the building costs had been exceeded multiple times throughout the project. However, since the housing market made this rise, relatively the value to investments became lucrative. Hence, the overall satisfaction of being in this co-building project, is highly biased by the local market forces. Therefore, there is a possibility that this research constructed conclusions that are bound by time and space.

## 15.2 Research methods

The research methods chosen to retrieve data entail a low external validity. This had been noticed by the researcher while conducting interviews. The influence of the researcher is present since the researcher is ought to keep a balance in the conversation between the item-list and induction of new themes, produced by the narratives of the respondents. During the interviews, the item-list had been often ignored in terms of chronologic structure. The preference had been given to let respondents construct their stories, and check for the topics on the item-list at the end of the interview. This was done to retrieve as much self-formulated data as possible.

The researcher assumed that it had the option and possessed the skills to 'translate' these self-formulated data into relevant jargon. Although this task is inherently part of qualitative research, the extent to which the data had been checked for was too detailed, and eventually the data turned out to be not as effective as assumed. It is too grand of an effort to interpret quotes and find the lexis to link these with. Moreover, even if this is managed for every transcript, it still diminishes the quality of the data. This research can be improved by collecting data more according to the posed item-list. In addition, while letting respondents first construct their perception, the research should check for their understandings with explicit questions.

## 15.3 Analysis

The thematic analysis performed in this research could have been more transparent. The software Atlas.ti has been used for transcribing and coding interviews, and the relations and aggregations made in this software program are not all fully visualized in the main text of the master thesis. Although efforts have been undertaken to provide as much transparency as possible, the themes have been extracted from the coding list by the researcher. The code list (see Appendix V and VI) used in the programme could have been better organised, in terms of serving readability for outsiders wanting to re-read and reconstruct the research. (Note: the coding scheme and processed transcripts are stored and made available, the annexes and Atlas.ti file are archived alongside the thesis at the Radboud University, Faculty of Management. These archives remain available through the thesis supervisor for purposes of transparency and repeatability of the research)

In addition, some claims have been made within the analysis chapters such as: 'three out of fifteen'. Scholars may regard these assertions as inappropriate to qualitative research, since quantified statements should not be the aim. Therefore, some (for instance, Flick (2014)) may regard this as invalid or unimportant arguments. However, it is used to show the magnitude of a found theme. The amount of references to proportions of residents giving the same or similar answers, is kept limited, because making statements on quantities does not obey to the true essence of qualitative research.

# 16 Recommendations

## 16.1 Research on co-housing

### 16.1.1 Acknowledge both co-living and co-building within co-housing

As being one of the lessons drawn from this research, it is advised to regard both the co-building as co-living dimensions of co-housing projects. Since these two do not rule out each other, it is a step into uniformity of researching the different practices of co-housing worldwide and assess them in a way that many forms of co-housing can be compared. For future case specific research, consider both aspects to have significant role on the definition of the project.

### 16.1.2 Contract forms and result

Further research should be conducted to compare contract forms of different co-housing projects, to find feasible and sustainable ways of achieving co-housing qualities. It is necessary to investigate further where the aspect of time and energy consuming process invoking risks could be kept under control while coping with the same circumstances. A search to correlations between contract forms and results should be continued. To contribute to this research, one way of researching this could be done by assessing A-led CPC in later stage, for instance 20 years post development.

### 16.1.3 Digital communities

Theories on community building and assessment are, luckily, widely available. However, an aspect of community construction that the researcher struck, is the importance of Whatsapp (or similar instant message groups). Further research to the wide field of co-housing, incorporating student-dorms, housing blocks, and maybe even the 'Whatsapp neighbourhood-watch' trend, should regard the importance of this 'boundary' within the Sense of Community (Chavis & McMillan, 1986).

### 16.1.4 Coherency

Further research on relating co-housing projects to each other, in stead of defining their differences, would be of essential value to policy makers. Further articulation on common features, such as suggested in this research to use four dimensions (initiator, influence (in building phase), design and use), is necessary to make further claims on the essence of co-housing.

## 16.2 Practice of co-housing

### 16.2.1 Selection of members

The success of cooperation within a group is based on their individual attitudes and motives. It can be questioned if it is beneficial to execute group-forming based on these two aspects, and not on financial resources or a first-come first serve principle only. This consideration invokes a discussion on how to provide accessibility to as many as possible, while aiming for a feasible and desired co-housing project. In line with the paradoxical relation of social cohesion internally and externally, the formation of the group inflicts a same problem. For instance, a highly heterogonous group is less probable to foster a successful co-housing project (all features considered), than a group of highly similar people. The choice of the architect to leave this up to the market seems justified regarding economic context of that time. However, when co-housing projects becomes more mainstream and housing markets are overheated, it is important to consider what the selection of group members is based on. It is recommended that the instigator considers the concept of the project, and selects members accordingly.

Hence, a search to distribute the qualities of co-housing equally among society, emerges. The municipality, in this case the municipality of Amsterdam, is pointed out specifically. While it is beneficial

for the probability of a smooth process to have already formed communities going into a collective building process, it is recommended to search for alternatives based on the results of this research. Two major factors are sustaining this argument: the implicit exclusion of certain groups by the self-selection of participants, and the likelihood of explicit exclusion through the inward focus of such tight communities. A more equal manner in which access to co-housing projects can be guarded for, is through appointing agents of co-housing, which can be an architect, but other actors might also be eligible to fulfil this role. By doing so, the co-housing qualities are guarded for, while a larger group of the population has access to participate in a co-housing project.

## 16.2.2 The power of architecture

An unexpected lesson for co-housing has been the power of architecture to provide a platform to bring people together in a collective. Co-housing projects are ought to skip complicated and time-consuming phases by having a concept and/or design before group forming takes place. In the cases studied in this thesis, the Open Building aspect of double-heighted architectural apartment structures where the users could design their interior horizontally and vertically as they wished, contributed to the 'freedom of design' for the urban residents. Together with the participatory development practice for co-building the overall Superloft apartment buildings, in these instances a qualitative fit between supply and demand of dwellings, with a large sense of ownership and an apartment-scale level of social cohesion, was achieved. The studied cases in Amsterdam thus serve as an example where practitioners in co-building have dealt adequately with the qualitative misfit between supply and demand in the Dutch housing market, as referred to in chapter 1.

In combination with a better general understanding of collective commissioning, and a smoothening of institutional processes in the building sector (finance, planning and building regulations), architecture can be the factor that shapes a collective. These collectives may consist of people who pursue a dream to privately commission an apartment within an urban landscape, people who are willing to work together and accomplish their dream houses.

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## List of Appendixes

Appendix I        Original quotes in Dutch per respondent

Appendix II       Item list used during interviews

Appendix II       Mock example of the survey used during interviews

Appendix IV       Fieldnotes and memos during analysis

Appendix V        Initial code list (PDF annex)

Appendix VI       Final code list (PDF annex)

Appendix VII      Interview transcripts (PDF annex)

Appendix VIII     Photocopies of surveys (PDF annex)

# Appendix I

Quotes displayed throughout this research have been carefully translated in English by the researcher. Since all interviews, except one, have been conducted in Dutch, a sum up of all used quotes are given in their original form and language to enhance the transparency of this research. The quotes are in chronological order of this research.

## Respondent 1

Goed met andere woorden we kozen hiervoor omdat we, de kans er lag. En als we uit 20 dingen hadden kunnen kiezen, zowel in prijs als in kwaliteit, of type project, hadden we dit zeker gekozen.

Nee gewoon de openbare ruimtes deel je, en je hebt ook via de VVE ook heel veel, ja de glazenwasser en andere reguliere dingen, maar verder hebben we niet een heel groot sociaal leven met elkaar

is het wel iets waar ik altijd van heb gedroomd

## Respondent 2

in het begin had ik me wel er mee willen bemoeien, toen had ik nog energie. Maar op het einde dacht ik pleur het er gewoon in, het boeit me echt niet meer.

dat je een gemeenschap hebt, en je hebt best veel met de woongroep. Het is een soort woongroep, alleen dan iets meer individueel

Ja iedereen heeft wel een beetje, ze komen uit hoge midden inkomens, en... ja en ondernemend. En dat is ook wel weer gevaarlijk. Dat betekende ook wel weer dat... er zit niet veel diversiteit in de groep. Het is absoluut geen doorsnede van de samenleving.

... het zijn projecten voor hoogopgeleide en bevoorrechte sociale klasse (...) is het voor iedereen? Nee. Ik denk dat veel mensen niet die willen dit niet. Veel mensen willen gewoon dat de woning voor hun geregeld wordt en niet iets bijzonders.

## Respondent 3

## Respondent 4

... ik was vanaf het begin heel erg geïnteresseerd in Marc Koehler Architecten. Ik wilde eigenlijk per se MKA... maar toen ik hoorde van superlofts en samen ontwikkelen dacht ik, dat wil ik.

In eerste instantie dacht ik dat ze het niet leuk zouden vinden dat we mensen zijn die veel in het buitenland zullen leven en een gedeelte maar hier zullen leven. Maar nu, de VVE die ik nu spreek, en de mensen die ik ontmoet, die hebben geen enkel probleem daarmee en ze zijn heel welkom. En ik vind het ook een hele leuke groep. Je merkt ook dat ze veel geschiedenis samen hebben. En het zijn hele leuke mensen. Ze, ze hebben allemaal bijzondere verhalen.

Ja ik vond het net de hemel. Het was, zo licht, en open. En zo zonnig. Nou ja alles wat ik me kon wensen was aanwezig. Ook nog eens veel ruimte. En al die openheid

## Respondent 5

Je hebt dus niet een professioneel bestuur. Ze hebben het gewoon, ja veel inzet gegeven maar je merkt af en toe wel dat er dingen niet heelmaal strak gingen. Je kan ze ook niet op die manier aansprakelijk stellen hoor, terwijl als je iemand inhuurt, zou je anders benaderen.

Misschien ook wel iets te passief in geweest. Maar ook tijdens zo vergadering zit iedereen er verschillend in. Sommige mensen willen gewoon door. Er zijn ook een paar mensen die al vanaf 2011 erin zaten. Die denken nou zeur nou niet zo, hup kom we gaan door.

Ja helemaal. Dat is wel wat ik wilde.

**Respondent 6**

Ja het is meer dat wanneer je de indelingsvrijheid van de woning wilt hebben, heb je de bouwmethodiek van de collectieve zelfbouw heb je er maar gewoon bij.

We hebben bijvoorbeeld nu ook dat we het dakterras inrichten waar ik dan in zit en dan ja heb je het erover laten we daar budget voor vrij maken. Ja wat wilt iedereen, de een wilt dit en de andere dat. Dus het schiet ook niet op. Gewoon een patstelling. Gewoon heel lastig zonder iemand die verantwoording en leiding neemt en die rol ook heeft.

Ja niet alleen hoe het eruit ziet ofzo, ook gewoon de plek en alles. Gewoon alle facetten. De buren je dit je dat, Alles.

**Respondent 7**

Wanneer mensen instappen dat ze al eens zijn over bepaald fundament. En dat is het superlofts. En dat, is misschien wel moeilijk te definiëren, maar het is wel heel veel al. Het is een casco en een kern, en veel flexibileit. Maar andere cpo projecten waar je gwoon met zes vrienden aan tafel gaat zitten en zegt kom we gaan 5 architecten uit nodigen en we gaan een project ergens maken. Nou dan moet je eerst eens worden over de architectuur. Je weet niet eens wat het is. Je komt misschien wel tot elkaar toe. En je moet het over de buitenkant hebebn en over binnen. Ja dat is gewoon veel te veel.

die collectieve zucht komt ook vooral door, lengte van het traject

Uiteindelijk is het zo uniek waar je woont en zo een tof soort huis, met de mensen om je heen. We hadden laatst het openingsfeest van al die verschillende huizen en dan is het zo sick als je ziet wat andere ook hebben gemaakt, hoe verschillend

**Respondent 8**

De architect was er altijd bij, bij onze vergaderingen. Maar de meeste actiepunten kwamen voort uit de bouw.

Kijk we hebben zo een lange aanloop. Je weet dat het dan en dan opgeleverd wordt. En je gaat pas een aannemer zoeken tegen de tijd dat het opgeleverd wordt (...) Dan, dat is niet handig. Kijk ik had nog een offerte liggen van een jaar daarvoor, met ook prijzen van een jaar daarvoor.

Ja ja ik heb ook iets met de entree, die vind ik niet zo geweldig. Als ik het vergelijk met het buurgebouw, vind het toch beter dan hier.

**Respondent 9**

Het is wel echt, het kan ook komen dat het door de eerste keer komt. Kijk de gemeente kende het ook niet he. De banken kende het niet. Niemand kent het. Je moet iedereen overtuigen, van we kunnen het wel betalen. Misschien dat het vaker gebeurd, dan gaan banken er makkelijker mee om. Gemeentes ook. Maar als het de eerste keer is.

Ja dat vind ik wel goed. Dat is ook het idee, waarom ik er eigenlijk ook durfde in te stappen, ik wist dat er vakmensen aan de slag zouden gaan. Kijk ik kan wel zelf overal iets van vinden, (...) Dus ja dat, ik ik ben er redelijk, ik denk dan efficiënt in dat geval. Dus daarom kan ik ook, kan ik het ook makkelijk naast me neer leggen weetje. (...) kijk hoe belangrijk is die buitenkant van je woning? Ja, uiteindelijk weet ik gewoon dat ik straks een huis als een schoenendoos heb, en daar kan ik straks alles in doen.

**Respondent 10**

Ik heb natuurlijk mezelf meteen neergelegd bij het feit dat er geen collectieve ruimtes waren. Ja. Dat is dan op een gegeven moment zo (…) wat mij erg heeft gestoord is, het niet serieus nemen van de deskundigheid uit, die vanuit de kopers kwam.

**Respondent 11**

So we were not involved. That was the architect's territory and we all signed for it when we stepped in, he is the one, let us say, ensuring the quality for these spaces. And they have failed miserably. And probably because he needed to negotiate with a lot of things that were more expensive".

**Respondent 12**

**Respondent 13**

**Respondent 14**

… half jaartje was het een beetje kamperen. Ja de badkamer en slaapkamers waren klaar en we konden koken zeg maar dus dat was wel prima.

En ik moet ik ook zeggen, een paar keer hadden, we vonden het gewoon zo een tof ontwerp en we vonden het zelf ook echt leuk om mee bezig te zijn. Dat heeft ons er wel doorheen getrokken. Want gewoon, af en toe dat werkelijke realistatie van het casco was wel heel moeizaam

**Respondent 15**

## Appendix II

**Itemlist**

*Motivatie/verwachting – realiteit – ervaring/bevinding*

Vragen- en itemlijst interviews bewoners CPO project

Korte uitleg waar het onderzoek over gaat, waarom het belangrijk is dat CPO onderzocht wordt en dat het waardevol is dat de persoon meewerkt. Vraag akkoord voor het opnemen van het interview om later uit te kunnen werken. Het duurt tussen 40 en 60 min.

### *introductie*
personalia: wie bent u, gezinssamenstelling, wat doet u voor werk, vrijetijd?

1) Wat is volgens u CPO?

2) Wat is voor u belangrijk als u denkt aan een goede woonkwaliteit?
*Los van wat er verwacht werd van het project, wat is belangrijk voor een goede woning.*

## I. Initiatiefase (terug naar voor het allemaal begon)

3) Waarom heeft u voor deze manier van bouwen gekozen? Wat is de voornaamste reden?
Ook open voor andere antwoorden dan de onderdelen uit de quick scan.

*Bespreek de volgende onderwerpen vanuit de quick scan*:

Locatie – nadruk Amsterdam? Nieuwbouw? Industrieel/pionierend?
Type woning – volume door loft formule? De flexibiliteit voor het afbouwen?
Prijs – verwachte u dat het goedkoper was?
Bouwmethode – zonder ontwikkelaar het zelf doen?
Duurzaamheid – EPC norm? Energie gebruik?
Community aspect – Samen ontwikkelen, ook samen wonen? Wenste u een hechte cohesie?

4) Hoe bent u tot deze groep gekomen?
Kende u al mede-bouwgroepleden voordat het proces begon?
Wat wist u al van CPO voordat u aan het proces begon?

5) Wat waren uw verwachtingen van het project, voor het begon? En zijn deze uitgekomen?
Wat voor woning had u in gedachte?

Hoe dacht u over het gezamenlijk bouwen vooraf? En het proces met verschillende <u>partijen</u>: <u>architect</u>, <u>aannemer</u> en <u>gemeente</u>? De bouwtijd?

## II. Ontwerp en Bouwfase

<u>6) Kunt u uitleggen hoe het bouwproces is verlopen?</u>
*Laat de respondent eerst zelf zijn/haar verhaal doen*

<u>7) Wie nam voornamelijk de beslissingen in het ontwerp voor het gebouw?</u>
*Over het ontwerp, wijzigingen, verdeling, materialen etc.*

<u>8) Was er begeleiding tijdens het bouw en ontwerpproces?</u>
Vanaf het begin? Persoonlijke begeleiding? Voldeed de begeleiding aan uw verwachting daarvan?

<u>9) Hoe was de samenwerking, als groep, als individu, als project, met de verschillende professionals? (architect, gemeente, bouwbedrijven, adviseurs etc)</u>

<u>10) In welke mate had u inspraak in het project?</u>
 Wat moest u zoal zelf beslissen?
 Hoe beviel dat voor u? (meer/minder willen bepalen? Zekerheid juist aantrekkelijk?)
 Hoe verliep dat met de bouwgroep? Discussies?

*Koppel terug naar de quickscan (vraag 5) en de verwachtingen uit deel I.*

<u>11) Hoe heeft u het proces ervaren?</u>
samenwerken, overleggen, beslissen, samenstelling groep, tijdsduur
Wat ging er <u>goed/soepel</u> en wat ging er <u>moeizaam</u> naar uw gevoel? Wat had u anders willen zien?

Voldeed het proces aan uw verwachtingen?

*Kijk naar de quick scan tabel –wat was belangrijk voor hen- en hoe heeft dat uitgepakt?*

## III. Woonfase

<u>12) Hoe bevalt de woning?</u>

*Quickscan vraag 1*

➔ Vraag naar elementen die hieraan ten grondslag liggen (locatie, CPO, loft, etc.)

Heeft de inspraak tijdens de bouwfase geresulteerd in de door u gewenste woning?

*Koppel terug naar vraag 2 – gedefinieerde woonkwaliteit van bewoner*

13) Hoe is uw band met de medebewoners, is het een community?
Worden er regelmatig gezamenlijke activiteiten georganiseerd?
Voelt het meer dan 'buren'? Vind u het een community?
Hoe staat de groep tegenover nieuwe bewoners?
Zijn er al veel veranderingen?

Vind u een hechte band met uw naaste buren belangrijk? (*quickscan vraag 6)*
    Had u dat verwacht? (past het bij CPO volgens u?)

Worden bepaalde ruimtes gedeeld?
Wat vind u daarvan? (had u dit verwacht? onderdeel van CPO gevoel? had meer gekund?)

14) beschrijf het wonen in uw woning

Kunt u mij het volgende beschrijven:

U komt thuis van uw dagelijkse activiteiten, parkeert auto/scooter/fiets, u begeeft zich naar uw woning. (indien nodig vraag naar: gevoel van de straat, gevoel van entree, parkeerwijze, postplekken, interactie met buren, verkeersruimten, licht inval, temperatuur etc)

Hoe ervaart u het thuiskomen? Wat bevalt u en wat zou echt anders kunnen?

Wat vind u van de architectuur van het gebouw?
Hoe ervaart u de vormgeving van het gebouw ten opzichte van de buurt?

## IV. Woongebouw en omgeving

15) Hoe bevalt de buurt?

Hoe ervaart u de sfeer/cohesie nu in vergelijking met dag 1?

In hoeverre bent u betrokken bij de buurt?
Ervaart u een goede sociale cohesie en controle in de buurt?
    Waar ligt dit aan? Zijn er regelmatig activiteiten? Een goede sfeer?

16) Had u een (hele) goede sociale cohesie verwacht en vind u dit belangrijk?

17) Hoe denkt u dat de buurt naar jullie project kijkt?

Wat is de waarde van het CPO project voor de buurt volgens u?

# Appendix III

## Quick scan

Op een schaal van 1 tot 10, wat voor cijfer geeft u het wonen in uw woning?

    1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Wat was voor u belangrijk voor de keuze om aan dit project mee te doen?

Rangschik de volgende onderdelen op basis van hoe belangrijk ze worden bevonden door u. Voeg vooral ook onderdelen toe mits deze ontbreken en wel van belang zijn geweest voor uw keuze om mee te doen aan dit woonproject.

| | |
|---|---|
| Locatie | |
| Indelingsvrijheid woning | |
| Prijs | |
| Bouwmethode (CPO) | |
| Community aspect | |
| Duurzaamheid | |
| ..... | |
| ..... | |

Stellingen:
CPO is de beste manier om mijn droomhuis te bouwen                           eens/oneens

Ik heb veel controle gehad op het eindresultaat                                 eens/oneens

Op een schaal van 1 tot 10, hoeveel inspraak heeft u gehad tijdens de bouwfase?

    1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Stellingen:
De inspraak tijdens de bouwfase heeft geresulteerd in mijn droomwoning       eens/oneens

Ik vind privacy belangrijker dan sociale cohesie                               eens/oneens

Door samen met de bouwgroep het voortraject door te lopen, vormen wij nu
Een hechte community                                                          eens/oneens

Op een schaal van 1 tot 10, hoe sterk is het gemeenschapsgevoel in het gebouw?

    1        2        3        4        5        6        7        8        9        10

Elke woning zou via CPO proces gebouwd moeten worden                          eens/oneens

CPO doe je maar een keer in je leven                                          eens/oneens

# Appendix IV

## Field notes

The recorded field notes are shown in order of date. There are five notes in total displayed. Each field not resembles a moment evaluation of the conceived image of the projects, relating to initial thoughts. These moments invoked reconsiderations of research approach.

### Field note one: 13/12/2017

Side notes after two interviews

opmerkingen bij interviews: 13-12-17

Respondenten struikelen over de stelling: Ik heb veel controle gehad op het eindresultaat

En de bijhorende vraag: op een schaal van 1 tot 10, hoeveel inspraak heeft u gehad tijdens de bouwfase?

Men verwijst naar de twee 'fases' van het bouwen, waarbij het casco gedeelte al zo goed als vast stond en dus men weinig inspraak heeft gehad. Ik heb er '(ook het casco)' aan toegevoegd, om duidelijk te stellen dat het gaat om het gehele resultaat, en welk gevoel overheerst. Als men er erg mee zit dat er geen controle is geweest op het casco, zal er wellicht op de stelling geantwoord worden met oneens. Of met eens op de stelling en een lagere score op de 1-10.

Het is een gegeven dat men geringe controle heeft gehad op het gebouw an sich, maar als voor het gevoel van de respondent veel controle is geweest voor de eigen woning en dit compenseert voor de

inspraak van het gehele gebouw, wordt dit gezien als een positieve uitkomst.

Bovenstaande wordt nog bevestigd met de stelling: de inspraak tijdens de bouwfase heeft geresulteerd in mijn droomwoning – waarbij een enkeling de omschrijving 'droomwoning' nuanceert. Thans is de ontwerpvrijheid voor de eigen woning voor velen de eerste motivatie om uberhaupt mee te doen aan het project.

Velen zijn uitermate enthousiast over hun woning. Hoewel enkelingen het afbouwen van hun woning snel en naar verwachting hebben ervaren, overheerst bij de meesten een gevoel van een uit de hand gelopen project, vooral bij de twee cases in de Houthaven.

Overwegend hebben de respondenten in eerste instantie geen CPO ambities gehad, maar wordt er positief gesproken over contact met de buren. Echter is er zeer duidelijk een individualistische insteek merkbaar, het gaat om de eigen woning, hun bezit, en 'dealen' met andere leden – die buren worden. Op een enkeling na die veel ervaring heeft met CPO projecten wonen, en deze bouw en leef vorm ook sterk nastreefde. Deze persoon geeft aan dat er ingeleverd is op die ambities. Dit duidt wel op een andere omgangsvorm en leefwijze van alle bewoners in Superlofts dan in 'traditionele', of in andere CPO projecten, ervaren wordt.

De insteek van het project was voor alle partijen nieuw (lees: gemeente, architect, aannemer, bewonersgroep), waardoor soms spanningen ontstonden en naar elkaar gewezen wordt.

Aannemer:

Voor de aannemer blijkt de grote verschillen per woning lastig zijn te verwerken, en veel fouten zijn gemaakt voor installaties als water, elektra en afvoer.

Verder komen er spanningen naar voren richting de aannemer die, naar mijns inziens, gebruikelijk zijn bij zelfbouw en/of nieuwbouw.

Architect:

Deze moest een dubbel rol vervullen: ontwerp en proces begeleider. Communicatie en duidelijkheid is voor de bewoners erg tegen gevallen. Dit bevestigd een bepaald verwachtingspatroon van de bewoners enerzijds, en de opzet van het project anderzijds (er wordt veelvuldig gesproken van het kopen van een huis, ipv participeren in een zelfbouwgroep). Deze opzet en bijbehorende verwachting van bewoners heeft ertoe geleden dat er veel vragen ontstonden zonder antwoorden – sommige bewoners leunden erg op de voortrekkersrol van de architect, andere wilden het graag zelf doen en voelden zich tegengehouden door de (soms falende) voortrekkersrol van de architect.

Bewoners

Velen zijn geen typische 'cpo' mensen en deden dit niet per se voor het groepsbouwen, op enkele uitzonderingen na. Wel zagen de meesten in dat het een prachtige plek was, voor een betaalbare prijs, en een avontuurlijke insteek, en namen letterlijk op de koop toe dat er met anderen het project voltooid moest worden.

Gemeente

Moeite met bepalingen van erfpacht – bij oplevering minder vierkante meters dan werkelijk mogelijk is. Daarnaast zijn niet alle woningen gecontroleerd op het bouwbesluit. Gedeeltelijk zijn ook concessies gedaan betreft openingen in een dove gevel. Duidelijk is dat de gemeente open stond voor een dialoog voor dit project.

Enorme verandering in de woningmarkt gedurende het project. WOZ waarde stijging van ongeveer 20% in Amsterdam. Respondenten geven aan dat hun woning het dubbele waard is dan waarvoor het gebouwd is. De oververhitting op de Amsterdamse woningmarkt heeft de bewoners erg goed gedaan – timing van het project precies goed om mee te dingen op de waarde stijging.

Ook een erg belangrijk punt voor bewoners wat betreft de tevredenheid. Men is gerust gesteld, en al het 'leed' wordt beloond met deze enorme waardestijging van hun huis.


**Field note two: 5/1/2018**

During data-analysis.

The process has taken longer than anticipated, delayed almost 2 years

One stresses clearly a lack of communication management to be the source of struggles in the process

Interesting to notify is that after the architects role is critized as process manager, and taking decisions which caused (according to residents) many delays and financial problems, the respondents say to be very satisfied with the result.

Research technical notes:

After several interviews, the code list has to be refined and categorised

important to separate basic/general info about what happened and when, by whom etc. and the experience of the residents.

objective information versus subjective, given by residents.

**Field note three: 16/1/2018**

Note 16 January

When thinking about respondents answers and the way they answer, an examplary case of gentrification process occurs in Houthaven. A new neighbourhood is built, invoke a large increase of population. New residents have (much) higher income, and are expected not be of a minority group. However, all new residents of the neighbourhood depend on existing aminities of the former neighbourhood -> slowly pressuring the rent and pushing out existing shopkeepers/population

CPC is clearly for those in possesion of financial, social and intelectual equity. A niche group in the market, a fortunate group, but also a desired group for every city. A handful of CPC projects sparked the development of a large scale, high-end residential area. However, the consequences for existing population of surrounding neighbourhoods should be considered before facilitating CPC. In contrast with Fromm (2012), so far Superlofts HH has not been a positive influence on the social cohesion of the entire neighbourhood. The projects does however link to each other on street level, and has lead to street parties and other initiatives (kade borrel). Timing of the completion of these projects has been important to create a social bond.

In some cases, the attitude and experience of this phenomenon is acknowledged, which seems paradoxal. They prefer a social mix (like in there former neighbourhoods) and despise the homogenity in social 'class', since they are convinced that this entails a less interesting neighbourhood (also facilities, shops, events etc). Nonetheless, they are part of the cause themselves, by participating in this housing group.

Regarding BSH, much of the same is true, although in another context. People refer less to interactions with other project residents (?? check this). More peripheral area.

**Field note four: 4-5/2/2018**

Summarise of initial image of HH1-2 and HH4

*Summarising hh4:*

struggled to get members.

Lessons from case 1 lead to a different approach in case 2: not too much control delegated to the collective. Not everyone desire and can cope with that amount of responsibility. So individual apartments were still totally customizable, the shape, size and distribution of dwellings within the grid structured building was already decided upon.

The constructor of the mezzanine floors was overloaded with work in the project, which caused major delays. In reaction, one of the groupmembers started its own company and offered to construct such floors for others in the building.

Difference in attitude prior to the project:

Respondent 1: als je verwacht dat je een turn key huis zonder veel zorgen gaat krijgen danmoet je dit niet doen.

Respondent 3: Ja het is wel allemaal heel moeilijk gegaan. En dat soort dingen moest je dus zelf ondervinden he dat werd niet vanuit de hoofden aangegrepen. Die problemenm moest je maar zelf zien op te lossen.

*Summarising HH1-2*

First project. CPC construction, but initiated by a group architects that planned to live there themselves. Thus more a cpc with a bunch of architects than a architect-led cpc.

Respondent 4:

Late arrival in the group, due to early drop-out of one member. The house was for sale, on regular housing market. Although they had been on waiting lists and followed the project from the beginning, they had to wait untill 2016 to buy their place in the group. The former member put through all the CPC struggle, implicating that respondent 4 did not take part in the 'shared history' making process. However, she clearly recognises the strong bond among all inhabitans, and declares that also she profits from strong cohesion in the building. However, she and her family can be considered as very like-minded people: culture background and income, plus they former experiences with squatting and they were interested in the project for just the same amount of time as the others.

**Field note five: 7/2/2018**

When referring to the building phase, I should use the term collective. People use this term extensively, or use building group. Decisions are made by the board, and the board of the collective held meetings throughout the building process.

When referring to current situations, in the living phase, people call it the group, the neighbours, their community. Offcourse they have their physical togetherness, but in addition they have the VVE as a formal connection. They run their VVE themselves, and a few of the residents form the head of this VVE.

The collective made decisions on development, design and management of the building (construction). The community decides the maintenance and management of current and future use.

The question is, does the groupfeeling from the 'collective' phase sustain throughout the 'community' phase.

Results: so far, the group feeling derived from building together as a collective. Their relation to each other was always based on the necessity of having enough members to establish their individual goal. By pursuing this goal, one had to work together in the collective.

However, a significant group of respondents mentioned the potential of these contacts, and also the value. Not that everyone became best friends, they do say that they can rely on their neighbours and also socialise now and then.

## Appendix V

Initial code list in pdf, after two interviews were coded.

## Appendix VI

Final coding list in pdf, after 15 interviews.

## Appendix VII

Transcripts of interviews in pdf, in order by the date they have been conducted.

## Appendix VIII

Copies of the surveys in pdf, conducted at the start of the interview.