

Urban and Neighbourhood Change

CALL FOR PhD APPLICATIONS 2017

The Urban and Neighbourhood Change sub-programme is inviting applications for PhD positions within the Housing and Urban Renewal research group led by Prof Dr Maarten van Ham and Dr Reinout Kleinhans. The research group is generally unable to fund PhD candidates from its own resources, so candidates need to take their own funding, or apply for funding from research councils or other funding bodies. If you bring your own funding, TU Delft will offer supervision, an exciting academic environment, and a work space with computer. If your application is accepted conditional on getting funding, supervisors are able to assist with the preparation of applications for grants, but the primary responsibility for finding funding rests with the applicant. Applicants will need to explain on their application how they will fund their studies. We generally do not accept applicants who are self-financed from personal funds. Applicants should be aware that there is great competition for research funding and certainly no guarantee of success.

Invited topics

The Housing and Urban Renewal research group has capacity for supervision in the topics listed below. Applicants are also invited to submit proposals on other topics, as long as they fit within the research programme of the group (see below for the programme). There is no deadline for submissions as we review them on a continuous basis. With your application (through the graduate school) we need an extensive CV and a full research proposal stating background, literature review, aims, objectives, data and methods and work plan. Your CV should show competence in the area of your research proposal.

For more information on the Urban and Regional Studies (URS) research programme and the Urban and Neighbourhood Change sub-programme, please look at: <http://www.bk.tudelft.nl/en/research/research-programmes/urban-and-regional-studies/>

To get an idea of other PhD projects within the larger Urban and Regional Studies program, please look at: <https://www.tudelft.nl/bk/onderzoek/graduate-school-a-be/phd-projects/urban-and-regional-studies/> and check out the www.deprivedhoods.eu website.

Topic 1: Neighbourhood Effects

There is a strong belief among policy makers in so-called neighbourhood effects: the assumed negative effect of living in deprived neighbourhoods on individual level outcomes such as income, education or health. The empirical investigation of such neighbourhood effects is not without problems because households do not randomly select into neighbourhoods.

Household income, preferences, but also housing market characteristics have an effect on the neighbourhood “choice” of households. Empirically it is difficult to distinguish these selection effects from “real” neighbourhood effects. There are various ways to increase our understanding of neighbourhood effects: using advanced statistical methods and longitudinal data; to investigate the neighbourhood selection process itself and subsequently look into neighbourhood effects; approach the selection process using qualitative research to get more insight knowledge on how households operate within their limited choice set; etc. This research will continue to build on previous work within the research group (see www.maartenvanham.nl and www.deprivedhoods.eu).

Potential supervisors include Prof Dr Maarten van Ham and Dr Reinout Kleinhans.

Topic 2: Citizen Engagement through ICTs, social media and mobile devices

Throughout Europe, governments are cutting budgets, and are giving more responsibility to citizens. Citizen-organised activities are increasingly considered as solutions for welfare state retrenchment and deficiencies in public services. In the context of neighbourhood problems, citizens' unique local knowledge, concerns and opinions are often not taken into account properly. Despite decades of efforts towards resident involvement, common participation instruments are still unappealing, disconnected from citizens' needs, and difficult to fit in their daily activity schemes (Innes & Booher, 2004; Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2010). As a result, citizen involvement in city and neighbourhood affairs and planning is far below its potential but more than ever needed for a transition from government-led neighbourhood change to bottom-up co-creation (McCall & Dunn, 2012). The popularity of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media has both spurred and enabled a demand for new forms of online participatory planning and self-organising governance by citizens, but this is yet underdeveloped. Social media, mobile apps and open source platforms have created opportunities for citizens to contribute ideas, suggestions and alternatives for redesign/improvement plans, to engage in participatory budgeting, to report problems to responsible authorities or provide ratings with regard to features of their living environment. From a theoretical point of view, these opportunities fit well in the concept of 'deliberative democracy'. The underlying assumption of deliberative democracy and the related planning theories is that deliberative methods make use of citizens' collective knowledge and aim to re-engage citizens to the political process (Coleman & Götze, 2003 cited in Scott, 2006, p. 345). In the Netherlands, current online platforms offer combinations of the aforementioned opportunities. While information is available on take-up rates of some platforms, crucial information is lacking about the extent to which these platforms effectively strengthen citizens' engagement in planning and local governance issues. The research will take up this niche by taking on the following objectives:

1. To gain insight in the state of the art and new forms of self-organizing neighbourhood governance fuelled by volunteered geographic information (VGI), social media and mobile devices;
2. To analyse both the online and offline interactions between citizens and between citizens and professionals;
3. To evaluate whether the platform and associated interactions effectively strengthen citizens' voice in local decision-making, by stimulating co-creation and two-way communication with policymakers;
4. To establish the preconditions and restrictions for using VGI, social media and mobile devices in self-organising neighbourhood governance.

Potential supervisors include Prof Dr Maarten van Ham and Dr Reinout Kleinhans.

Topic 3: Person-neighbourhood interactions

A persisting problem in the research of neighbourhood effects on individuals' socio-economic, behavioural, or health outcomes is the variation in research findings between different studies. This finding-heterogeneity encompasses weak and strong neighbourhood effects, as well as insignificant effects and even effects with unexpected (reversed) signs. Besides this, neighbourhood research often fails to explain the total neighbourhood-level variance, which might suggest that omitted variables bias obscure the research results. We assume that the influence of the neighbourhood may be mediated and moderated by certain family and individual characteristics.

For example, it can be argued that unemployed individuals will be affected by their neighbourhood to a greater extent than employed individuals, because it is likely that they will

spend more time in their neighbourhood. Furthermore, parents with more children will be closer connected to the neighbourhood, as their children go to school there, resulting in a higher likelihood to meet neighbours (see e.g., Galster, Andersson & Musterd, 2010). Besides such socio-economic and demographic factors, more personal factors can play a role. Different neighbourhood effects have been found for people with different levels of impulsivity (Lynam et al., 2000; Meier et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2010), self-control (Gibson, 2012), hyperactivity, impulsivity, and attention difficulties (Zalot et al., 2009), thrill and adventure seeking and lack of premeditation (Jones & Lynam, 2009), and personality and educational commitment (Nieuwenhuis, 2014).

Within this theme we would like to dig deeper in the interactions between personal attributes and neighbourhood effects. Who is affected by the neighbourhood and why? We are interested in a more holistic approach, not limited to the study of one or few personal attributes, but rather a study that takes into account a broad range of different attributes, and their interaction with the neighbourhood, but also their interaction with each other.

Potential supervisors include Prof Dr Maarten van Ham and Dr Jaap Nieuwenhuis.

Process of application

1. Applications are made through the Graduate School AB+E and follows the process of the Graduate School which is given in detail at <https://www.tudelft.nl/bk/onderzoek/graduate-school-a-be/finding-a-position/application-procedure/>
2. Please state clearly at the top of your proposal which research programme and topic your proposal addresses (in this case: Urban and Regional Studies, sub-programme Urban and Neighbourhood change, and topic).
3. A panel of at least two academic staff will assess the applications and make a selection based on the following criteria (which are the same across the Faculty):
 - a) the scientific quality of the research proposal (including methodology);
 - b) the societal relevance of the research proposal;
 - c) the quality of the curriculum vitae including academic qualifications;
 - d) meeting specific requirements, particularly funding and English language competence.In addition we will pay particular attention to your writing skills.
4. Selected applicants will be interviewed, if necessary by video link or telephone.
5. Subject to funding, the successful applicants will be given a hospitality agreement for 18 months. During this time they will develop their research proposal and start up their PhD project. After 18 months there will be a formal progress review (the go, no-go moment). Following a successful review (a go) the candidate will register with the University as a PhD student.

APPENDIX

Urban and Neighbourhood Change sub-programme leader: Prof Dr Maarten van Ham

Mission and research area

Urban and Neighbourhood Change is concerned with neighbourhoods and cities as changing social sites and as sites of governance and civic action, including the effects of neighbourhoods on residents and how residents affect neighbourhood stratification.

Neighbourhoods are still important in our daily lives, as places where we live, meet and interact with others, where our children play. People are willing to pay considerably more for a house if it is located in a 'good' neighbourhood (Cheshire, 2012). The Europe 2020 Strategy puts neighbourhoods at the core of our understanding of some of society's most pertinent socio-economic inequality problems. As that document emphasises, the disadvantage affecting people in situations of poverty and social exclusion is reflected and influenced by where they live (EC, 2010a; EC, 2010b). The neighbourhood is the scale at which many government services and provisions are made; it offers a venue for promoting and enhancing governance; and it is a scale at which people can be persuaded to get involved and feel a sense of belonging (Pill, 2012). The neighbourhood is also of interest in the context of health and ageing, as it provides opportunities for the (informal) organisation of care.

The neighbourhood has long been a site of government intervention in the battle against socio-economic inequality (Kleinhans, 2004; Kleinhans & Varady, 2011). In the last few decades, huge investments have been made by governments, housing associations and private developers in the physical fabric of cities and neighbourhoods. These investments were supposed to physically regenerate mainly 1960s and 1970s neighbourhoods. But their justification was also partly based on a strong belief among many policy makers that living in deprived neighbourhoods has an additional negative effect on residents' life chances over and above the effect of their individual characteristics: the so-called neighbourhood effects (Doff, 2010; Manley et al., 2013). A popular solution was to create socio-economically mixed neighbourhoods by accommodating social renters alongside homeowners. The effectiveness of such mixing policies is heavily debated, however (Kleinhans et al., 2007; van Ham & Manley, 2010; van Ham et al., 2012).

Studying the effectiveness of area-based interventions is more important than ever, now that the Western world is experiencing a major financial crisis. Many of the neighbourhood interventions of the past decades have drawn to a close, have been cut short or have been terminated. In this context it is important to investigate whether the belief in mixing is justified or not, whether there are solid grounds for area-based policy measures, and what the consequences might be of not investing in deprived communities (Manley et al., 2013). Against the backdrop of the current economic crisis and budget cuts, Western governments are increasingly searching for alternative ways to regenerate neighbourhoods and combat poverty and inequality. The idea is to recast state-citizen relations by promoting civil society and empowering citizens to help themselves (Wells, 2011; Manzi & Jacobs, 2011), especially in deprived communities (CLG, 2011; Kleinhans, 2012a). There is a need to find innovative ways to realise important goals in service provision, but without spending large sums of tax money. Stimulating civic action and promoting citizen self-organisation is high on the political agenda, and actors like housing associations and (local) governments are adjusting to

their new roles. This sub-programme will generate knowledge about the preconditions, supporting contexts and barriers to urban regeneration and the desired social outcomes.

The Urban and Neighbourhood Change sub-programme is the successor of the 2009-2014 Neighbourhood Change and Housing research programme. This previous programme was focussed on the processes that affect the positioning of neighbourhoods in a stratification of places, neighbourhoods as places that are made through people's actions and the interactions between them, and as places of governance, with a constantly changing significance and meaning for matters such as social networks, identification and social interactions. The new sub-programme includes new elements and sets different priorities. These are steered by new theoretical challenges, the availability of new data and the recognition of new societal needs. The appointment of Prof. dr. Maarten van Ham as the new chair of Urban Renewal and a significant change in the staff have contributed to this change. Where the old programme consisted of three themes and five research areas (15 topics), the new programme focuses on three strongly interrelated broad themes: 1) Neighbourhoods as sites of governance and civic action; 2) Neighbourhood change and stratification; and 3) Neighbourhood effects. The new sub-programme is a step in the direction of a programme that is more academic in orientation, more international in scope and focus, and more orientated towards publication in international peer-reviewed journals.

Neighbourhoods as sites of governance and civic action

Spurred by the current crisis and the ensuing budget cuts, there is a clear shift from government to governance in urban and neighbourhood policy. Within this research theme we try to understand the changing roles of government and of institutions such as housing associations as well as the roles of professionals and citizens. The focus is now increasingly on facilitating and activating citizens to help themselves and improve their lives and residential environments. Often induced by self-interest and a drive to get things done, citizens engage in a range of activities, sometimes (un)deliberately taking over responsibilities that were formerly carried out by public or private bodies. The actions of citizens may therefore cause tensions with local authorities and other stakeholders. Also, the selective nature of civic action and citizen self-organisation may result in social inequality as well-equipped citizens may develop specific activities to the benefit of their own interests but which might exclude or harm others (Kleinhans, 2012b).

In the Netherlands there is a strong interest in the British concept of Community Enterprises (CEs). These distinguish themselves from other kinds of citizen initiative through their organisational form and goals. They are community-based, -owned and -managed businesses and develop non-profit activities aiding the regeneration of a particular neighbourhood or community. Important questions arise about CEs: How do various groups in neighbourhoods build structures for collective action? What is the role of institutions, mutual understanding of interests, power (im)balances and decision-making processes in how groups get things done in a local area? In response, governments are looking for new ways to communicate with citizens and activate them. Citizens, meanwhile, are looking for new ways to exchange information and mobilize others. There is enormous potential for participatory and empowering use of the Internet and social media, although such uses are still underdeveloped (Buccoliero & Bellio, 2010). Part of the potential of these virtual practices lies in engaging and reaching groups that are traditionally not involved in local initiatives.

Neighbourhood change and stratification

We can distinguish a hierarchy or stratification of neighbourhoods within urban areas based on socio-economic position, ethnic concentration and neighbourhood reputation (Hortulanus, 1995; Permentier et al., 2007). Spatial inequality should not be understood solely as the result of differentiation. It should also be seen as a cause of persisting patterns of differentiation, because competition among places can reinforce the existing stratification (Logan, 1978; Logan & Molotch, 1987). Within this theme we try to understand which social, economic and political processes, mechanisms and interventions affect urban neighbourhoods in their spatial, social and economic position. These include large-scale trends such as globalisation and individualisation, area-based interventions (including social-mix policies) (Boschman et al., 2013), social housing allocation mechanisms, housing policy (e.g., the Right to Buy), micro-level processes such as household change, (changing) residential preferences (Van der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2007) and residential moves. Neighbourhood change may be unintentional (spill-over effects) or intentional (for example, by branding, see Reinders, 2008; or as the result of social-mix policies, see Kleinhans, 2004).

We are interested in neighbourhood change itself as well as in neighbourhoods as changing social sites. A neighbourhood's population characteristics will change because of the selective inflow and outflow of residents and the in-situ changes of existing residents. These changes may show certain non-linear patterns with clear tipping points (Galster, 2012) and may lead to a downward spiral or to the gentrification of neighbourhoods. Also the significance and meaning that people attach to their neighbourhood can change. We therefore investigate their neighbourhood ties, examining how meanings and ties originate and develop in and through social relations (Van der Land & Doff, 2010) and how these processes serve as building blocks of relations between people and places. Within this context, we are interested in the role of public spaces in the (re)production of ties with and in neighbourhoods and the ascription of meaning to them. For instance, we study how claims on public space (for example by youth, see Binken & Blokland, 2012) may conflict with the potential claims of others.

Neighbourhood effects

Within this theme we aim to develop a better understanding of the relationship between socio-economic inequality, poverty and neighbourhoods. The book *The Truly Disadvantaged* (Wilson, 1987) has generated unabated interest in the neighbourhood effects on school dropout rates, childhood achievement, transition rates from welfare to work, deviant behaviour, social exclusion, social mobility, income, etcetera (see for a review Ellen & Turner, 1997; Galster, 2002; van Ham et al., 2012). Theoretical explanations of neighbourhood effects include role model effects, peer group influences, social and physical disconnection from job-finding networks, a culture of poverty leading to dysfunctional values, discrimination by employers and other gatekeepers, access to low-quality public services and exposure to criminal behaviour (Galster, 2012). The strong belief in neighbourhood effects has contributed to the development of area-based policies promoting a more 'favourable' socio-economic mix in deprived neighbourhoods. However, there is little consensus on the importance of neighbourhood effects, the underlying causal mechanisms, the conditions under which they are important and the most effective policy responses. It is likely that most studies claiming that poor neighbourhoods make people poor(er) only show that poor people live in poor neighbourhoods because they cannot afford to live elsewhere (see Cheshire, 2007; van Ham & Manley, 2010).

According to Small & Feldman (2012), neighbourhood effects research is at a crossroads since current empirical and theoretical approaches do not seem to be moving the debate forward. A recent paper by Van Ham and Manley (2012) has set out an ambitious research agenda, formulating ten challenges for future research. Within this theme we will take up several of these challenges, most notably the following: to make better use of individual-level longitudinal survey, administrative, register and census data; to move away from single point-in-time measures of neighbourhood characteristics and to take into account people's neighbourhood histories (Sharkey & Elwert, 2011; van Ham et al., forthcoming); to investigate intergenerational neighbourhood effects (Hedman et al., forthcoming); to understand neighbourhood choice (Doff & Kleinhan, 2011) and to incorporate choice explicitly in models of neighbourhood effects; and to include other spatial contexts in addition to the residential neighbourhood.

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