

Schilderswijk and Transvaal in Den Haag

Regenerating two disadvantaged
immigrant neighborhoods



Urban Renewal in the Netherlands

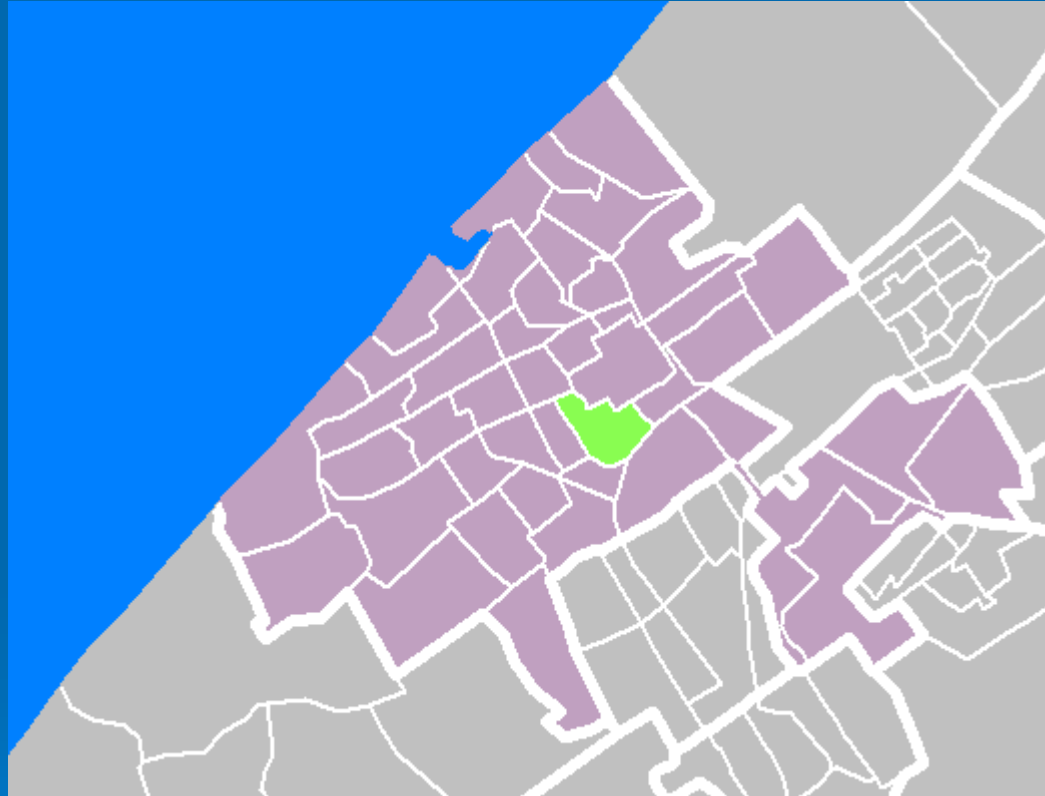
- During the 1970s and 1980s urban renewal targeted people within the neighborhood (unlike the US).
- Selective migration out of the city provided the impetus for urban renewal.
- Ethnic minorities benefited from urban renewal (also unlike the US)
- Decent social rental housing (i.e. housing associations) replaced substandard private rental housing
- Urban renewal turned inner city residential districts into relatively cheap residential areas with increasing numbers of ethnic minorities.

Urban Renewal Ends in 1994 and is Replaced by Urban Restructuring

- Upgrading, socioeconomic mix and promoting social mobility are the new buzzwords rather than 'building for people' in the neighborhood
- Urban restructuring focuses on 56 post-war housing zones
- Unlike the US residents generally are provided the 'right to return'.
- Focus is on providing housing careers for ethnic families from the neighborhood who can afford it rather than on attracting families from outside.
- Socio-economic mixing is unlikely to lead to ethnic mixing; same is true in America's HOPE VI.

The remainder of the presentation focuses on two of the forty most problematic neighborhoods in the Netherlands.





Schilderswijk is located near the center of The Hague.



View of Schilderswijk



The Holland-Spoor station, at the edge of Schilderswijk, is the oldest one in the Netherlands. Amsterdam-The Hague railway line provided impetus for building the community



In the late 19th century Schilderswijk was a working class community with jerry-built homes. Here is a view of the Van Ostade Homes on Jacob Cats Street, built 1886-1898 by Jewish residents of the Hague.




Neighborhood shopping prior to urban renewal. This probably is an indigenous Dutch butcher shop.



Urban renewal replaced most of the older housing with new buildings, "urban renewal with style" according to alderman who advocated for the approach. Rather boring but quite substantial.

Schilderswijk's Current Planning Challenges

- Poverty
 - Segregation
 - Crime and incivilities, especially in public spaces
 - Social isolation of immigrants
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90% of the residents are from ethnic minorities primarily Turks, Moroccans, and Surinamese. This is not called an “enclave” because there are so many ethnic groups.



Dutch officials provide a portrait of the painter for whom the street was named. Did they do this to help to integrate residents into Dutch society? Will this effort make a difference?



Transvaal in Den Haag

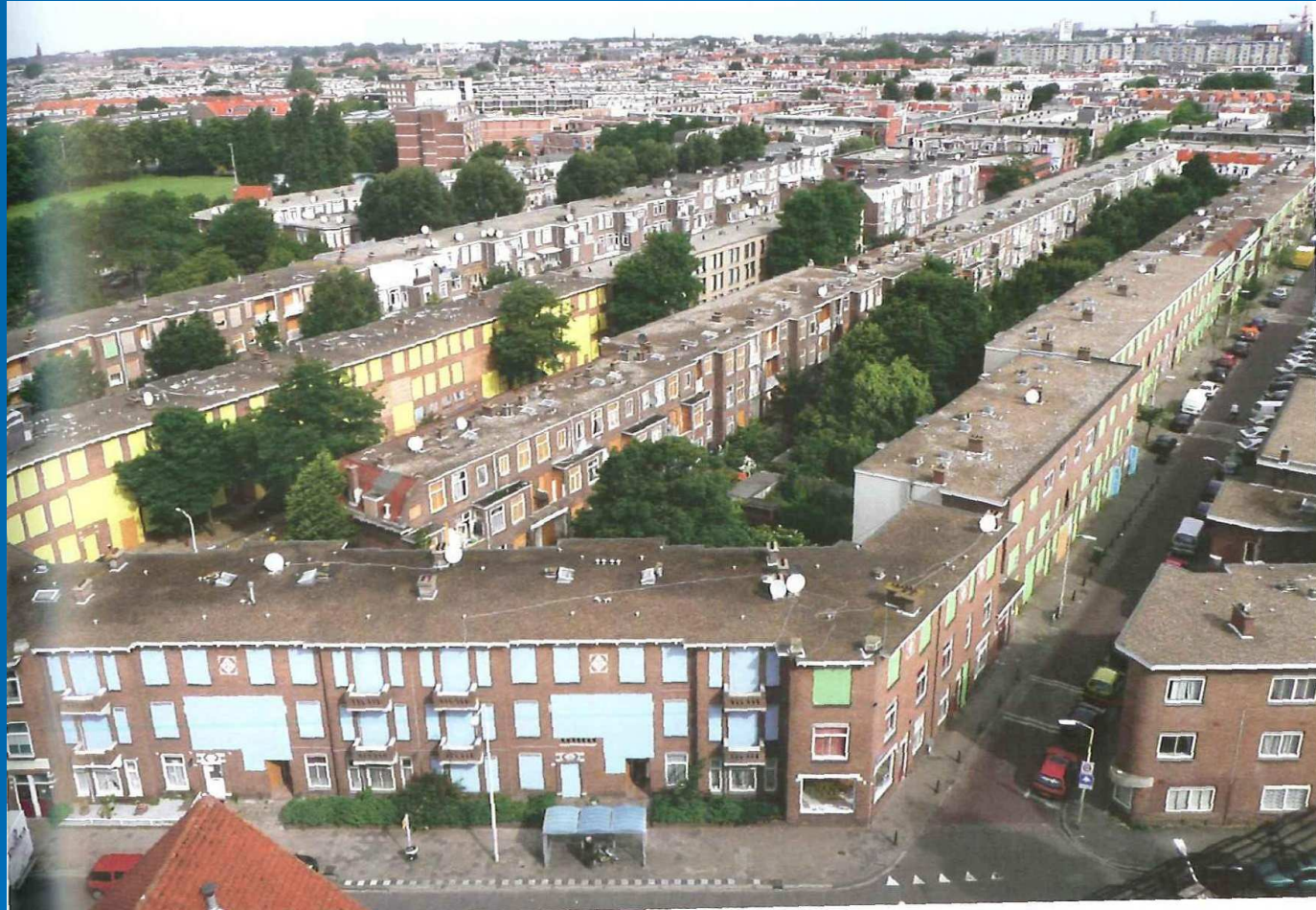


Transvaal's History

- Built as an extension of Hague between 1890 and 1935
- Name dates back to the Second Boer War in South Africa
- In the 50s and 60s the community was divided into streets where Roman Catholics and (separately) Dutch Reformed families lived
- Foreign immigration began in the 70s; currently it is 90% immigrants (Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans).
- District had to contend with the stigma of being an 'impossible community'
- Since 1999 The Hague and housing corporations have worked together to "restructure" the district.



Transvaal in the 1930s



Transvaal prior to urban renewal

Transvaal's Housing Stock



These apartment buildings, recently refurbished, were built for younger Dutch families. When they moved on to newer structures in peripheral locations, they were replaced by immigrants.



Satellite dishes enable immigrants who use them to stay connected to their countries of origin.



This is the Mosque on Scheeperstraat.



Demolition as part of urban renewal.

OpTrek: Contesting Urban Renewal in Transvaal

- Op Trek, means build or erect
- This non-profit organized art projects on sites in Transvaal about to be demolished
- Attempted to create a sense of remembrance of “community lost”
- Op Trek artists functioned as “advocate planners” (a term coined by Paul Davidoff from University of Pennsylvania) against excesses of modernist, rational planning.



Hotel Transvaal, OpTrek's
last project, closed in May
2009



OpTrek collected and showed family albums to create a shared remembrance about the community, Fatima Housing Association in Dublin produced a video on remembrances of a social housing project recently demolished. I am unaware of similar “remembrances” at HOPE VI developments.

Transvaal's Master Plan

- Calls for the demolition of 3,000 rental dwellings and their replacement with 1,600 dwellings, 70% owner occupied
- Goal is to achieve use income mix to create a more socially viable community
- However, it is unlikely that many native Dutch will be attracted to Transvaal.



The Hague is marketing itself as an interesting multicultural city and taking advantage of assets like the Haagse Market, a good place for immigrants and native Dutch to interact in a public setting. Toronto is a model of the type of multiculturalism that The Hague is trying to attain.



The City of Hague is currently promoting a multi-ethnic shopping district on Paul Krugerplein, a street with a concentration of South Asian Indian businesses. The Hague planners are using America's Chinatown's as a model. Similar multicultural shopping districts are evolving in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

Conclusions

- Schilderswijk and Transvaal, two of the most problematic communities in the Netherlands, illustrate the Dutch approach to social housing regeneration
- Dutch policy has shifted from urban renewal (rebuilding) to urban restructuring (a more comprehensive approach)
- Dutch urban renewal efforts have helped immigrants but have contributed to segregation.
- Current efforts to achieve income and tenure mixing are likely to succeed but they probably will not lead to ethnic mixing.
- Perhaps it is unrealistic to expect urban restructuring to solve complex social problems like crime, welfare dependency and socio-cultural isolation.

Endnote

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