UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO BICOCCA

SCUOLA DI DOTTORATO

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

Department of Sociology and Social Research

PhD program URBEUR – Urban Studies Cycle 31

REFRAMING SOCIAL MIX AND THE MANAGEMENT OF MIXED COMMUNITIES IN THE NEW WELFARE STATE. EVIDENCE FROM SOCIAL HOUSING PROJECTS IN ITALY AND THE NETHERLANDS

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ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/2018

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Silvia Mugnano and Dr. Reinout Kleinhans, for their trust, encouragement, and their continuous commitment since the beginning of this long and arduous path. I will never forget the positive attitude, motivation and confidence with which you have guided me to achieve ambitious goals, which made this PhD so challenging. I am grateful for your invaluable advice which have contributed to my professional and personal growth.

I am grateful to all the people who have accepted to take part in this research project and dedicated their time to answer my interview questions. Your contribution has been of great importance for this work.

My sincere thanks go to the two external referees for the time they dedicated to evaluate this dissertation and for providing insightful comments and suggestions to improve it. Thanks also to the committee members for attending the PhD defence.

I would like to express special thanks to my colleagues of the URBEUR doctoral program at the University of Milano-Bicocca for sharing good and bad moments of the PhD life, as well as to the colleagues of the research group 'Housing and Urban Renewal' at the OTB Department, TU Delft, where I spent the most inspiring experience during my PhD.

I am grateful to all the housing researchers that I have met during the annual conferences of the European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) for the feedback on my research, stimulating conversations, lots of good memories, and new friendships too.

A special thanks to my beloved family, in particular to my father who never ceases to spur me to strive toward my goals. This dissertation is dedicated to him.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Nicoletta for her endless patience and love.

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Abstract

Discourses, values and connotations attached to the concept of social mix in housing studies are strongly shaped by the broad socio-economic and historical context as well as the specifics at national, city, and neighbourhood level. In the 1990s, the notion of social mix entered the housing and urban agenda of many Western European countries in the policy frame of area-based, state-led urban renewal programmes against residential segregation.

The 21st century society is characterized by global dynamics and societal trends, such as the growing socio-economic inequalities and residential segregation; the increasing problem of housing affordability affecting a variety of social groups, and the growing urban diversity, which provide new opportunities to reframe the ideal of social mix. Such macro dynamics unfold differently from context to context, due also to the role played by different welfare regimes and housing systems.

In this light, the aim of this dissertation is to better understand whether and how contemporary macro trends and societal challenges are reshaping the current framing of social mix, and to provide a better understanding of the role of contextual factors, in particular those related to current developments in welfare and housing systems, in determining different and/or similar patterns of such reframing process. This dissertation specifically looks at how the current framing of social mix is re-shaping housing professionals' roles, strategies and missions as well as the interactions between tenants and their relationships with professionals.

This dissertation compares Italy and the Netherlands, which are characterized by different welfare regimes and housing systems. However, facing rising demand for affordable housing by a widespread and differentiated audience, in both countries policy-makers and practitioners address this emerging need by implementing new social housing projects targeting diverse social groups, which results in a fine-grained social mix between 'resourceful' tenants (e.g. students, young households, etc.) and 'vulnerable' tenants (e.g. welfare dependents, refugees, etc.).

This dissertation is based on case study analysis of two Magic Mix projects, i.e. 'Startblok Riekerhaven' in Amsterdam and 'Majella Wonen' in Utrecht, and three Housing Sociale projects, i.e. 'Casa dell'Accoglienza', 'ViVi Voltri' and 'Ospitalità Solidale' in Milan and its metropolitan area. Totally, 48 semi-structured interviews with professionals, project managers, policy-makers and one focus group with tenants have been conducted.

This dissertation contributes the existing literature on social mix by elaborating a new conceptualization of this notion. While the 1990s-framing of social mix was mainly focused on combating residential segregation at neighbourhood level, central to such new conceptualization of social mix is the promotion of individuals' self-responsibilisation. This dissertation examines specific strategies that are promoted by professionals to increase tenants' responsibilities. First, it investigates innovative housing management approaches, e.g. self-management and Social Management, in which tenants' are assigned wider roles and obligations in the processes of housing management. Second, it examines the principle of conditionality underlying these projects, i.e. allocating social dwellings provided that tenants regularly engage in supportive activities within the housing project. This dissertation highlights similarities and differences that characterise responsibilisation strategies in both research settings, and discusses the specifics of each context in relation to broader transitions of the welfare state.

Riassunto

La connotazione del concetto di mix sociale varia a seconda del contesto storico e socio-economico di riferimento, nonché in base alle specificità nazionali, locali e micro-locali. Negli anni Novanta, il concetto di mix sociale è entrato nell'agenda urbana di molti paesi dell'Europa occidentale nel quadro delle politiche di riqualificazione urbana *area-based* di contrasto alla segregazione urbana. L'aumento delle disuguaglianze socio-economiche, della segregazione residenziale, delle forme di diversità urbana e del problema dell'*affordability* nel mercato abitativo, che oggi colpisce gruppi sociali sempre più diversificati, rappresentano alcune delle tendenze principali che caratterizzano le società urbane del XXI secolo. Tali dinamiche offrono l'occasione per studiare la declinazione dell'idea di mix sociale nell'attuale contesto storico. Ciascuna tendenza assume risvolti specifici a seconda del contesto nazionale e locale di riferimento, anche per effetto dei diversi sistemi abitativi e di welfare.

L'obiettivo di questa tesi è comprendere se e come le attuali tendenze e sfide macro-economiche e sociali stanno trasformando la concettualizzazione del mix sociale e comprendere il ruolo giocato dai fattori contestuali, in particolare i recenti sviluppi dei sistemi abitativi e di welfare, nel modellare similitudini e/o differenze fra diversi contesti all'interno di questo processo di trasformazione. Specificatamente, la tesi esamina come la trasformazione dell'idea di mix sociale sta modificando i ruoli, le strategie e la mission di policy-makers e operatori, nonché le interazioni fra inquilini e tra inquilini e operatori.

La tesi confronta Italia e Paesi Bassi, due paesi con regimi di welfare e sistemi abitativi differenti. Di fronte all'aumento della domanda di alloggi a prezzi accessibili che riguarda un'utenza sempre più ampia e diversificata, in entrambi i paesi si osserva lo sviluppo di nuovi progetti di edilizia sociale indirizzati ad un mix di diversi gruppi sociali, in particolare tra inquilini "consapevoli" (es. studenti, giovani ecc.) e inquilini "vulnerabili" (es. nuclei socio-economicamente svantaggiati, rifugiati, ecc.).

La tesi si basa sull'analisi di casi studio, ovvero due progetti di Magic Mix, cioè "Startblok Riekerhaven" ad Amsterdam e "Majella Wonen" a Utrecht, e tre progetti di housing sociale, cioè "Casa dell'Accoglienza", "ViVi Voltri" e "Ospitalità Solidale" nell'area di Milano. Sono state condotte 48 interviste semi-strutturate con operatori, responsabili di progetto, policy-makers e un focus group con inquilini.

La tesi contribuisce alla letteratura sul mix sociale, proponendone una nuova concettualizzazione. A differenza della cornice entro cui si innestava l'idea di mix sociale negli anni Novanta, ovvero contrasto alla segregazione residenziale tramite diversificazione abitativa a scala di quartiere, attualmente l'elemento cardine della proposta di mix sociale è la responsabilizzazione individuale. La tesi analizza le strategie messe in atto dagli operatori volte ad aumentare il grado di responsabilizzazione degli inquilini. Da un lato queste strategie riguardano la sperimentazione di approcci innovativi alla gestione abitativa, quali l'autogestione nei Paesi Bassi e la Gestione Sociale in Italia, che implicano nuovi ruoli e obblighi per gli inquilini; dall'altro si introduce un principio di condizionalità tale per cui l'assegnazione degli alloggi sociali avviene a condizione che gli inquilini si impegnino regolarmente in attività di sostegno all'interno del progetto abitativo. La tesi evidenzia similitudini e differenze che caratterizzano le strategie di responsabilizzazione nei contesti indagati, discutendo le specificità di ciascun contesto in relazione ai processi più ampi di trasformazione del welfare state.

1. Introduction

1.1 Defining social mix in urban and housing studies

Since the 1980s, in Western Europe as well as in North America and Australia, the notion of social mix started becoming popular among urban and housing policy-makers concerned about the growing residential segregation of socially deprived groups, e.g. low-incomes and ethnic minorities, predominantly in decaying social housing neighbourhoods (Arthurson, 2013; Bolt, 2009; Bolt et al., 2010; Bridge et al., 2012; Musterd & Andersson, 2005; Rose et al., 2013; Veldboer et al., 2002; August, 2008; Joseph & Chaskin, 2010; Jourdan et al., 2013). Following Arthurson (2010), "social mix is commonly used to refer to the level of socio-economic variance of residents, housing tenure within a particular spatially delineated area, age range or ethnic mix of residents" (p. 50). However, the ideal of social mix is much more rooted in time. In her seminal work, Sarkissian (1976) traces the development of this concept, which dates back to the 19th century, and shows how this ideal has evolved over time and space.

The overarching policy framework in which social mix is applied has changed too. Indeed, from mid-1800 to the 1980s, the notion of social mix was particularly popular in the UK and USA, where it originated as a planning principle for new housing settlements (*ex novo)* aiming at creating socially balanced communities (Sarkissian, 1976). Starting from the 1980s and throughout all the 1990s, the ideal of social mix became widespread in most Western European countries in the policy frame of area-based, state-led urban renewal programmes for deprived housing estates and neighbourhoods affected by socio-economic segregation processes (Andersson & Musterd 2005; van Gent et al., 2009; Kleinhans, 2004; Kleinhans & Kearns, 2013; Tunstall & Lupton, 2003). In this context, social mix generally refers to the mix of housing tenures (Arthurson, 2010), frequently achieved through demolition of old social housing estates and rebuilding of private rental housing or owner-occupied housing with middle classes as the main target of such tenure mixing strategies (Bolt et al., 2009; Kleinhans, 2012; Lelévrier 2013).

The choice of middle classes as target of social mix strategies builds on specific assumptions. First, middle-income groups are expected to act as positive 'role models' for lower-class neighbours, i.e. social housing residents. Second, middle-income groups, who have overall higher economic resources, can afford higher quality and quantity of facilities and local services (see Bolt & van Kempen, 2013), thus driving the economic revitalisation of local fabric. Third, increasing the share of middle-class households, i.e. social mixing, is seen as "an indispensable instrument for the social management of disadvantaged neighbourhoods" (Uitermark, 2003, p. 532) as it helps tackling anti-social behaviours, e.g. vandalism, crime etc. In this sense, middle-class households are supposed to influence lower-class neighbours in conforming to shared social values and desirable norms of

conduct, especially in the most deprived areas of social housing (Manzi, 2010). The next subsection will discuss in depth such assumptions.

1.2 Why do policy-makers advocate for mixed communities?

From a policy-making viewpoint, increasing the levels of social mix in deprived neighbourhoods and communities is desirable not only as an end in itself but also as a means to reach higher goals. Besides contributing to improve residents' quality of life, according to Bolt et al. (2010), mixed communities will provide higher-income residents of targeted districts with *in situ* opportunities for upwardly steps in their housing career; create more opportunities for social contacts and social cohesion; increase social capital and social mobility; facilitate integration of ethnic minorities groups through planned dispersal.

Enhancing opportunities for social interaction as a means to improve social cohesion and increase social capital has been a strong argument for social mix policy. This arguments builds on Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, according to which positive social contact between groups or people who perceived themselves as different will help them overcome prejudice and intolerance.

Equally important is policy-makers' assumption that social housing residents in deprived districts lack of positive role models, which builds on social learning theories (Bandura, 1977). In this regard, marginalized people are stimulated to emulate and internalize desirable behaviours and norms of conduct from middle-class neighbours, either by observing them from distance or by having direct social interaction (Graves, 2011).

Greater diversity in terms of socio-economic composition of neighbourhoods, i.e. social mix, is supposed to offer residents more opportunities to diversify their social networks with consequent benefits in terms of social capital formation (Kleinhans, 2004). Kleinhans et al. (2007) define social capital as access to resources available to individuals by virtue of social interaction and social networks, reciprocity, mutual trust, and norms (see also Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 2000). A central claim in policy-makers' discourses in fact is that most deprived neighbourhoods *need* social capital (Blokland & Savage 2008). The particular type of social capital to be boosted in policy-makers' view is referred to as *bridging social capital*, that is when aforementioned resources originate from weak social ties established between people from beyond one's own social circle (Putnam, 2000). Bridging social capital helps individuals gaining new opportunities to get access to resources, in contrast to *bonding* social capital that originates from strong and dense social ties between individuals and can provide social and emotional support (Putnam, 2000).

A further argument to support the need of social mixing relates to the neighbourhood effects thesis (Bolt & van Kempen, 2013; see also Wilson, 1987). The spatial concentration of poor populations in delimited territorial areas, usually the neighbourhood, has been considered responsible for negative 'neighbourhood effects', that is "the idea that living in deprived neighbourhoods has a negative effect on residents' life chances over and above the effect of their individual characteristics" (Van Ham et al., 2012, p. 1). Neighbourhood effects affect individual life chances in domains such as educational attainments, health, job opportunity, social and occupational mobility (Van Ham et al., 2012).

The effects of social mix policies have been subject to large academic and policy discussion. The next section presents a review of the main outcomes, highlighting some of the gaps that this dissertation aims to cover.

1.3 State of the art and current gaps

1.3.1 An appraisal of existing evidence

Notwithstanding the commendable expectations, empirical research has provided a rather complex picture in relation to the outcomes of mixed communities. Besides methodological shortcomings reported in several studies (Bond et al., 2011; Sautkina et al., 2012), there is a common and well-established agreement about the fact that reducing physical distance does not necessarily mean reducing social distance (Chamboredon & Lemaire 1970; Gans, 1961). Recently, Bolt and van Kempen (2013) concluded that three types of effects of social mixing can be possible:

- mixing does not work;
- mixing has negative side effects;
- mixing does not address the real problem.

These types of effects question the effectiveness of social mix policy. Taking the third effect, i.e. mixing does not address the real problem, as an example, several scholars argued that social mixing alone, intended as a spatial re-ordering intervention, cannot really tackle the structural inequalities which shape segregation dynamics (Arbaci & Rae, 2013; Cheshire, 2009) and consequently neighbourhood effects. In this regard, several scholars make the case for promoting people-based policies in other fields such as education as a way to address the socio-economic inequalities that causes segregation (Musterd and Andersson 2005).

Bolt and van Kempen (2013) stress that a number of relevant variables and factors need to be taken into account when it comes to assess the effectiveness of social mixing at neighbourhood level. A key conclusion is that most of these factors relate to *contextual* or *contingent* issues: “what works in one place does not necessarily work in another place, and this may be due to all kinds of contingent issues” (Bolt & van Kempen, 2013, p. 3). By contextual and contingent issues, the authors apparently refer to a combination of both micro- and macro level elements. Concerning micro-level elements, these include the quality of the architecture, the state of maintenance of the dwellings and common areas, the presence of places for social encounters (see Van Eijk, 2010), the spatial configuration of tenures (Gans, 1961; Kleinhans, 2004). Not the least, the chances of successful social mixing can increase when there are investments in community development actions, e.g. by offering residents opportunities to organise and manage activities or participation in social programmes, and when careful, thorough and preventive management strategies are implemented (Tunstall & Fenton, 2006; Manzi, 2010; Sarkissian, 1976).

Macro-level elements that affect the success of social mixing policy refer to the wider context in which this strategy takes place, including economic recession and residualisation processes in social rented sectors (Bolt & van Kempen, 2013). For example, the increasing inflow of low-income tenants into the social housing sector (i.e. residualisation) risks exacerbating residential segregation dynamics in certain estates or neighbourhoods undermining the degree of social mix. In times of neoliberal austerity-driven policies, residualisation is also a consequence of state withdraw from financial support to social housing sectors in Europe. Cole and Goodchild (2001) showed that the wide societal and historical context influences policy approaches, discourses, and values attached to the idea of social mix and mixed community (see also Sarkissian, 1976).

In a similar vein, scholars found that the connotation of social mix is strongly shaped by macro- and micro-local contexts, referring to specifics at national, city, neighbourhood levels (Rose et al., 2013; Schuermans et al., 2015; Arbaci & Rae, 2013; Veldboer et al., 2002). As Fincher et al. (2014) argued "the specifics of new social mix planning vary across countries and cities depending on differences in planning cultures, the role of the state and market in housing and neighbourhood development, and commitment to multicultural policies" (p. 19).

Not the least, the success of social mix depends also "on the residents themselves, as they are the ones who contribute to neighbourhood life through the ways they use the neighbourhood and the way they choose to interact (or not) with others" (Bolt & van Kempen 2013, p. 5). Hence, the macro- and micro-level contexts in which social mix is implemented combined with residents' willingness to establish social interactions with people from different socio-economic background are essential to understand the potential and limits of social mix.

This dissertation looks at the main socio-economic processes and transformations characterising the beginning of the 21st century, defined as the *macro-context*, and put them in relation to the concept of social mix. Since the macro-context has shaped the framing of social mix ideal throughout different epochs (see Sarkissian, 1976, Cole & Goodchild, 2001; Bolt & van Kempen, 2013), we expect that a specific framing of the concept 'social mix' will emerge from the combination of many recent developments such as growing socio-urban inequalities, new migrations and diversity, changing social housing contexts and restructuring of the welfare state. The next sub-section presents some of these trends whereas an in-depth discussion on how they are related to a reframing of social mix ideal is provided in chapter 2.

1.3.2 Social mix: where do we go from here?

The conceptualization of social mix is susceptible of changes in policy statements and assumptions, even though it can present traits of continuity and discontinuity throughout different epochs (Cole & Goodchild, 2001). This dissertation contributes the current literature on social mix by presenting a new framing of this concept, which adds to the mainstream framing of social mix as tenure mixing operations on neighbourhood level in the context of large-scale urban renewal policies.

Most recent research on urban segregation in Europe has found increasing separation between rich and poor inhabitants, which is connected to rising socio-economic inequalities. In the long-term, this trend might contribute to increase social discrimination, unrest and disaffiliation from specific urban districts where the poorest live (Tammaru et al., 2016). While social inequality has increased hand-in-hand with residential segregation, many national governments, such as the Netherlands (see Uyterlinde et al., 2017) have stepped back from continuing large-scale neighbourhood-based urban renewal policies in which social mix played a pivotal role to tackle segregation. Many governments are now keener to support citizens' bottom up initiatives dealing with different societal issues, including bottom-up urban regeneration strategies. Such developments are framed within the new welfare state whereby the public actor seeks to nudge citizens to contribute in the co-production of welfare services (Newman & Tonkens, 2011; Peeters, 2013; Taylor-Gooby, 2008).

The increasing socio-economic gap between top and bottom strata of the society (Tammaru et al., 2016) does also raise issues about the size of middle-income groups and their position within socio-spatial polarisation processes affecting most EU capitals. Not the least, as middle-classes used to play both a social buffer role in-between the two extremes of the social ladder and a 'role model' in social mix policies, there might be broader implications connected to increasing socio-spatial polarisation. In addition, research showed that middle-classes are increasingly facing both accessibility and affordability issues in the housing market (Jonkman & Janssen-Jansen, 2015). However, affordabiltiy problems are not limited to middle-income segments, but affect also low-incomes, young households, and newcomers who struggle to find affordable dwellings in both private and social rented sectors (Czischke & van Bortel, 2018). The crisis of affordable housing represents a major challenge for policy-makers at global, national and local level who wish to design attractive, equitable and inclusive urban environments for all (UN-Habitat, 2015). The lack of housing affordability is becoming more problematic in Europe (Czischke & van Bortel, 2018; Pittini et al., 2017), and many factors have concurred to its exacerbation, including post-GFC austerity measures, and neoliberal policies supporting homeowernship against social housing.

Connected to the widespread need of affordable housing for different social groups, the last decades witnessed an increasing number of innovative living arrangements like cohousing, self-building, collaborative housing, shared housing etc. All these forms have in common a high degree of residents' involvement in several aspects of housing management (Mullins and Moore 2018), which provide diverse people with opportunities to get in contact, to form new social relationships, and to share collective living spaces. Mostly, residents join these living arrangements on a voluntary basis because of very diverse motivations, both financial (reducing housing costs) and relational (living with others), giving rise to peculiar forms of social mixing between people committed to mutual help, support and solidarity.

European cities are characterised by strong diversity related to socio-economic, ethnic and lifestyles (Vertovec, 2007; Tasan-Kok et al., 2013). Our way of living and experiencing social contacts has been profoundly reshaped by the diffusion of new communication technologies and the wide spreading access to mobility opportunities, which have extended

our ‘exposure to social difference’ far beyond neighbourhood boundaries, physical or residential proximity. Gwyther (2009) raised the limits of the ‘sedentarist’ view that dominates policy assumptions about social mix. The idea of residential neighbourhoods as the privileged site of social interaction, encounters and socialization can be misleading. Today “the residential space reflects only one facet of the multi-space experiences of an individual” (Wong & Shaw, 2011, p. 130), which call for new methodological approaches to measure segregation beyond individuals’ place of residence (Van Ham & Tammaru, 2016).

The recent inflow of new low-income migrants, e.g. refugees and asylum seekers, in Europe has increased the levels of diversity in Europe and created new challenges regarding the social integration of such groups. In times of economic austerity politics, the process of integration is revealing particularly difficult with increasing negative tones and attitudes towards diversity that are shaping the current political discourse. Within this context, cities and lower tiers of government are at the forefront in arranging solutions to improve new migrants’ chances of social integration, in particular through housing (Pittini et al., 2017).

The way in which the effects of such macro-contextual dynamics manifests and shape the logics of action of organisations and individuals at micro-level differ from context to context (countries, city, neighbourhoods etc.). Therefore, we expect that a new framing of social mix will present specific peculiarities that vary between national, city and neighbourhood contexts (see sub-section 1.3.1). To account for both macro- and micro- contextual elements, this dissertation adopts a context-embedded approach, which is presented in section 1.4.

1.3.3 Aim and research questions

> *This dissertation aims to better understand whether and how contemporary macro trends and societal challenges are reshaping the current framing of social mix and to provide a better understanding of the role of contextual factors, in particular those related to current developments in welfare and housing systems, in determining different and/or similar patterns of such reframing process.*

This aim is addressed through the following (main) research question:

> *How is the current framing of social mix re-shaping housing professionals’ roles, strategies and missions, the interactions between tenants and their relationships with professionals?*

From the main research question, we derived more specific research questions and sub-questions, which have been addressed in each of the three empirical chapters of this dissertation. Chapter 3 addresses the following research questions:

> *How is the concept of social mix currently reframed in the context of changing urban and housing policy in Italy and in the Netherlands? What are its main features in terms of theoretical assumptions, policy frame, and target groups?*

The research questions addressed in chapter 4 are:

> *How are current transformations in the context of social housing systems related to the emergence of innovative management styles, namely self-management and Social Management? How do such approaches unfold and what are the implications for residents and professionals?*

The research question addressed in chapter 5 is:

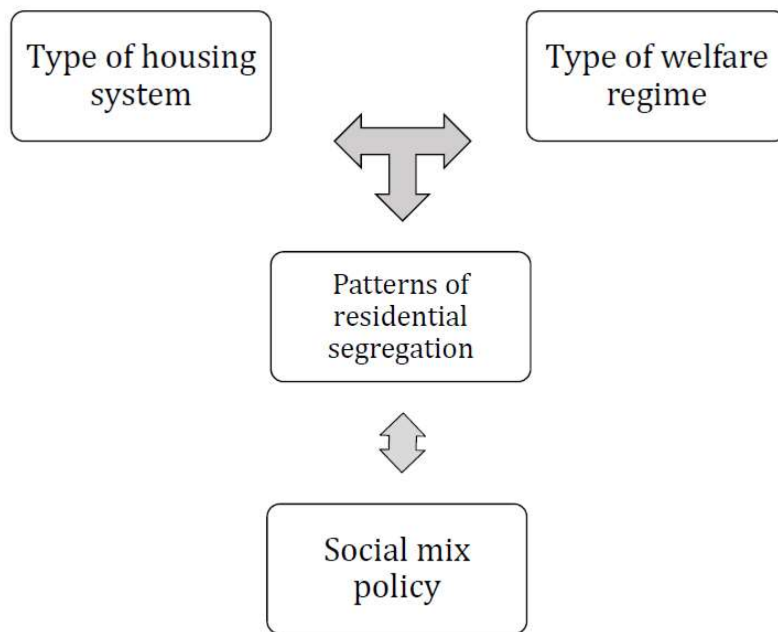
> *How are the concepts of responsibilisation and conditionality shaping recent approaches to the allocation and management of social housing in Italy and in the Netherlands?*

1.4 Research approach

Being widely diffused as a pillar of area-based urban renewal programmes in several Western European countries and beyond (see section 1.1), social mix represents a proper research object for comparative studies that seek to understand "how specific housing policy instruments are employed in different countries and what the effects of these instruments are" (Boelhouwer, 1993, p. 365). The contextualization of political, economic, social and cultural elements is essential for deeper understanding of social reality (Hantrais, 1999), particularly in cross-country comparative housing research (Lawson et al., 2010).

In this study, the contextual elements of social reality that are taken into consideration are housing systems and welfare regimes. The reason of this choice is that in the mainstream framing of social mix, i.e. area-based policies aimed at tenure mixing, specific configurations of housing systems and welfare regimes shape specific patterns of residential segregation dynamics (Arbaci, 2007), whose downsides are in turn tackled through social mix policy (Bolt, 2009; Van Ham et al., 2012; Kleinhans, 2004) (see Fig. 1). In addition, housing and welfare systems are seen by many scholars as key theoretical components for comparative housing policy research (Fahey & Norris, 2011; Malpass, 2008; Allen et al., 2004; Arbaci, 2007; Hoekstra, 2003; Matznetter, 2002). However, few research have used such theoretical basis in comparative studies on social mix.

Figure 1 Conceptualization of the 1990s-framing of social mix policy



Different typologies of social housing systems are present in Europe (Scanlon et al., 2015). Trying to account for such extremely diverse configurations of social housing across EU, we focused on contexts presenting the greatest *diversity,* in terms of welfare and housing systems, applying Przeworski and Teune's (1970) 'most different systems' approach. Previous research have shown that in Western Europe, social mix policy received widespread emphasis in countries with high shares of social housing and a high degree of state intervention in urban and housing issues (Bricocoli & Cucca, 2014), for example France or the Netherlands. Accordingly, today there is a lack of studies dealing with social mix in Southern European countries, notably Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece, where the share of social housing is very small as typical of dualistic rental markets. In Southern European cities, the combination between dualistic rental markets and Mediterranean welfare regimes have produce distinctive patterns of socio-spatial segregation, generally lower than other North and Central EU cities (Arbaci, 2007; see also Maloutas & Karadimitriou, 2001; Costarelli & Mugnano, 2017).

In the Southern European context, few studies have explicitly addressed urban policies to promote social mix in the context of social housing stock. These studies are mostly referring to Italy and more specifically to the Region Lombardy and Milan (Bricocoli & Cucca, 2014; Mugnano & Palvarini, 2013).

Aiming to juxtapose two extremely diverse welfare and housing EU contexts, we selected the Netherlands, being representative of a unitary rental market with conservative-social democratic welfare regime (Hoekstra, 2003) and Italy, a context presenting features of dualistic rental market within a Mediterranean welfare regime (Allen et al., 2004). Despite contextual diversity between the two countries, there are a number of commonalities that will be highlighted in section 1.5.

1.5 The research contexts

1.5.1 Welfare regime and reforms

With respect to Esping Andersen's (1990) first classification of welfare regimes, both Italy and the Netherlands have later been clustered to the Southern-European or Mediterranean model, Italy, and associated to a cross-over between social-democratic and conservative type, the Netherlands (Allen et al., 2004; Arbaci, 2007; Borghi & van Berkel, 2007; Hoekstra, 2003).

Research has also detected significant common transition towards an increasing assimilation of governance principles typical of the 'new welfare states', including decentralization, empowering of municipalities, increasing involvement of local non-state actors (i.e. civil society), and use of conditionality-based mechanisms (Borghi & van Berkel, 2007; Leone, 2016; Newman & Tonkens, 2011; Veldboer et al., 2015).

In Italy, as a result of horizontal and vertical subsidiarization process started in the 1970s (Kazepov, 2008), some Regions like Lombardy have embraced 'welfare mix' models where private third-sector organisations, both profit and no-profit (foundations, volunteering associations, and cooperatives), establish partnerships with public authorities to provide welfare services, including social housing. A particular form of 'welfare mix', called community welfare, is increasingly shaping the approach of welfare policies in particular in Region Lombardy. The community welfare approach broadens the role of citizens and local communities from mere consumers/users to providers of welfare services becoming additional stakeholders of the organisations to whom they refer for specific public services (Ponzo, 2015).

In the last decade, the Dutch welfare state has undergone a number of government-led reforms centered around the promotion of active citizenship, responsibility and communitarian solidarity (Brandsen et al., 2011; Koster, 2015; Peeters, 2013). The present and future position of the Dutch government is to support citizens to self-organise and run initiatives that deal with current societal issues by themselves within a new frame called the Participation Society (*participatiesamenleving*) (Kleinhans, 2017). The new welfare paradigm assigns more responsibility for individuals and community. When possible, social care and support with daily activities for receivers should be provided at home, informally, without a professional framework and relying as far as possible on the network of citizens living and volunteering in their own neighbourhood (see the Social Support Acts 2007 and 2015) (Dijkhoff, 2014).

1.5.2. Current developments in housing

In tandem with mentioned developments in the welfare state, significant changes are going on in housing sphere in both countries. Concerning Italy, the latest Housing Europe report highlights that "today we see an increase in the demand for social housing by low and middle-income families with difficulties in accessing or keeping an accommodation in the

private rental market" (Pittini et al., 2017, p. 76). Indeed, the public housing sector (*Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica*) in Italy, which consists of 963 000 units (3-4% of the total housing stock) is unable to cater for the current housing demand: about 650 000 applications for public housing are pending despite the eligibility of applicants (*ibidem*). Roughly, 5 000 public housing units are vacant because they are not suitable for standard living; over 400 000 units are in need of maintenance. (Pittini et al., 2017).

On the private market side, as part of the effects of the economic crisis, estimated 1.7 million households struggle to cope with housing cost burdens, which exacerbate risks of falling into arrears with payments. There has been a 62% increase in the number of eviction measures undertaken between 2006 and 2014 (*ibidem*).

Affordability is one of the key themes in the housing issue of the new millennium in Italy (Mugnano, 2017). It does not only refer to quantitative increase of the share of tenant households spending more than 30% of their income on rent, which passed from 16% in the 1990s to about 34% in 2014 (Pittini et al., 2017), but also to the widening of housing demand to new typologies of households, such as students, young households, foreign immigrants, divorced, evicted, single-parents. The Italian term *area grigia* (grey area) of the housing demand has been coined to refer to social groups, like those mentioned above, who cannot access public housing (because of above-threshold incomes or unavailability of supply) and cannot fulfil their housing needs on the free market due to unaffordability (Pittini et al., 2017).

Various experiments have been conducted by public housing companies and private third-sector housing organisations (cooperatives, bank foundations etc.) to develop innovative solutions to deliver affordable housing units to these groups, especially in large cities, like Milan or Turin, where the pressure of housing market is very high. These experiments have laid the foundations for a more structured policy approach to address the issue of affordable housing.

In 2009, a new housing policy was launched with the aim to develop a new social rented sector besides public housing, called Housing Sociale (HS), which is based on public-private partnerships. Up to now, Housing Sociale projects are limited in terms of size, numbers and mainly located in few regions, notably Region Lombardy. An outstanding feature of some of the Housing Sociale projects, besides new financing mechanisms involving property funds, is social mix. This is intended as both tenure mix (i.e. social rent, intermediate rent, rent for sale, ownership) which usually corresponds to a mix in terms of socio-economic conditions of residents, and functional mix, referring to the mix of residential and commercial functions as well as communal space for residents.

A further innovative feature brought about by the Housing Sociale model concerns a new housing management style called Integrated Social Management (*Gestione Sociale Integrata* in Italian). This management style consists of three elements: the facility management, e.g. technical maintenance of dwellings; the property management, e.g. administrative tasks, and the social management, e.g. individual counselling to support tenants or management of communal spaces. Overall aim of this new management strategy is to improve organisational efficacy in terms of maintenance of dwellings, to foster social cohesion, and to ensure the long-term socio-economic sustainability of the project.

With 2 400 000 units (about 33% of the total housing stock) owned and managed by about 400 housing associations (HAs) (*woningcorporaties*), the Dutch social rented system is one of the largest and highest quality in Europe (Aedes; 2016; Pittini et al., 2017). Facing a deficit of social dwellings[1], housing affordability is becoming a crucial issue affecting also middle-income households (Pittini et al., 2017). These trends are particularly harsh in the four largest cities of the Randstad region, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and The Hague, than in other cities in the rest of the country. Between 2015 and 2019, the housing demand will increase, slightly more than supply (around 73 000 vs 62 000 homes per year) (Pittini et al., 2017).

A recent report by Platform 31 (Van der Velden et al., 2016) makes the case for a rise in the demand of temporary (short-stay) and flexible housing pushed by the growth in fixed-term job contracts, job mobility, which concerns in particular 'outsider' groups[2] like newcomers (e.g. EU migrants, expats, asylum seekers). The Dutch housing system as a whole has been in fact defined as ‘rigid’ referring to the sharp opposition between ‘insiders’, those who can benefit from secure and relatively protected tenure (i.e. homeowners or social rented tenants) and ‘outsiders’ of the rental market, those who struggle to reach such condition. Outsiders are estimated in more than ten percent of all households (Van der Velden et al., 2016).

The range of 'outsiders' will grow in light of recent reforms to the Dutch care system (see Social Support Act in 2015) (Van der Velden et al., 2016; see also Dijkhoff, 2014). In the name of *deextramuralisering* (de-extramuralization), vulnerable people who used to receive social and health care in specific publicly supported institutions are now encouraged, whenever their socio-psychological condition allows it, to live as much as possible in the society and to receive care and support from and by the other people in the neighbourhood. This change resulted in increasing number of homeless people and other welfare dependents (people with soft addiction and other soft social or mental indications) in charge of HAs that have to provide them suitable social rented homes. Together with former homeless and welfare dependents, HAs have the responsibility to accommodate refugees and asylum seekers who have recently come to the country (see van Heelsum, 2017), contributing to increase the pressure onto the social housing system.

Currently, there is a plurality of social groups for whom the rigidity of social rented system hinders their access to a decent home. In this regard, several housing associations introduced innovative concepts and ideas to create additional opportunities to accommodate the ‘outsiders’ of the housing market, for example by using removable construction on vacant land or by making a different use of their unused or residual housing stock. These new concepts are referred to as Magic Mix or mixed living (*gemengd wonen* in Dutch) (Van der Velden et al., 2016). Most Magic Mix projects in the Netherlands provide below-market rent housing mainly to students, status holders, young households, people with mental disorders or less invalidating problems, homeless, migrant workers, and allow

[1] In the aftermath of economic crisis, the constructions of new social dwellings has declined, and housing corporations are delivering fewer dwellings (from 30.000 in 2009 to 16.700 in 2015) (Pittini et al., 2017).
[2] These groups struggle to find affordable homes in the regular social rented sector because of long waiting time, especially in largest cities.

them to manage several housing services by themselves (self-management or *zelfbeheer* in Dutch) or in strict cooperation with housing professionals. Overall aims are to increase self-reliance, integration, and reduce social isolation of the most vulnerable groups.

The next section discusses the methodological aspects of this dissertation.

1.6 Data and methods

This research started with a selective literature review on the concept 'social mix' aimed to provide a solid theoretical framework, which has been expanded according to the need of addressing more specific research focuses in each empirical chapter. In particular, chapter 4 focuses on the relationship between social mix and management strategies in the broader contexts of changing social housing systems in Italy and the Netherlands, whereas chapter 5 considers social mix as a crucial component of new responsibilisation strategies based conditionality of social housing tenants.

Fieldwork was carried out simultaneously in Italy, with a focus on Lombardy region and on the metropolitan area of Milan, and in the Netherlands, specifically in the cities of Amsterdam and Utrecht, from January 2017 to June 2018. Data collection process started with a number of explorative interviews with housing experts, project managers, and civil servants in both research settings aimed to collect relevant information about organisations and relevant stakeholders involved in local housing policies and projects of social mix. Based on preliminary information collected through our explorative interviews, we selected and analysed the following housing projects: the Magic Mix projects 'Startblok Riekerhaven' in Amsterdam and 'Majella Wonen' in Utrecht; and the Housing Sociale projects 'Casa dell'Accoglienza', 'ViVi Voltri' and 'Ospitalità Solidale' in Milan and its metropolitan area.

We conducted 48 semi-structured interviews with professionals, project managers, tenants and stakeholders directly involved in such projects to collect specific information about: *dwellings* (tenure, size, rent, tenancy length, etc.); *tenants* (socio-economic profile, eligibility, selection procedure and allocation); *communal spaces* (availability, function, management and regulations, social activities etc.); *neighbourhoods* surrounding the projects (socio-economic and ethnic composition, potential linkages with the project, involvement of neighbourhood stakeholders in project activities). Fine-grained information regarding more specifically the project in itself (e.g. history and duration, realisation process, actors involved, financing, aims and problematic that it seeks to address, expected and observed outcomes) was gathered later. In addition, general information about interviewees' roles, affiliation, mission of the organisations, were collected as supplementary details. A full list of respondents' characteristics is provided as an appendix in each empirical chapter. Overall, a large number of interviews were multiple interviews, namely the interviewer met two or more respondents at the same time.

In the Dutch case studies, two interviews and one focus group with tenants were also conducted, respectively in the projects 'Startblok Riekerhaven' and 'Majella Wonen'. The focus group with tenants of the Majella project was organised in such a way as to allow participants talking about their background (profession), their housing situation prior to join the project (where they lived, why they chose to move, why they decided to apply), and

their current experience in the project (the initial selection, their participation in social activities, how they are involved in, and their feelings about the housing community).

All interviews, including the focus group, were audio recorded with the permission of the respondents. Later, interviews were transcribed *ad verbatim* and content analysis was carried out using the software Atlas.ti. Generally, the coding strategy followed a deductive approach whereby most of the codes derived from the literature review (see sub-sections 3.5.1, 4.5, and 5.4.1 for more details).

Table 1 Summary of data collection process

Chapter	*Case study projects*	*Number of semi-structured interviews*	*Type of respondents*	*Period*
3	• Startblok Riekerhaven • Majella Wonen • Casa dell'Accoglienza • Ospitalità Solidale	26	3 key informants (researchers and civil servants), 17 housing practitioners and project managers (seven in Italy and ten in the Netherlands), and six public servants (four in Italy and two in the Netherlands).	January – September 2017
4	• ViVi Voltri • Startblok Riekerhaven	21	14 in the Netherlands and 7 in Italy with HAs project managers, housing cooperatives professionals, tenants and management staff members.	January-December 2017
5	• Majella Wonen • Ospitalità Solidale	32	12 in Italy and 20 in the Netherlands with housing professionals, including four tenants of the Dutch case study project.	January 2017 – June 2018

1.7 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of one theoretical chapter (chapter 2) and three empirical chapters (chapters 3, 4, 5) that are structured as journal articles. Chapter 3 has been resubmitted to journal 'Cities' after a first round of peer-review. Chapters 4 and 5 are currently under

review in the ‘Journal of Housing and the Built Environment’ and ‘Housing Studies’, respectively.

Chapter 2, *Towards a reframing of the concept of social mix in a post crisis, hyper-diverse Europe*, is based on a selective literature review on the topic 'social mix'. It traces the historical and conceptual development of the notion of social mix. By discussing the theoretical foundations and the main evidence produced by social mix policies, this chapter concludes that the challenges posed by contemporary society, for example those connected to the weakening position of middle-income groups in the housing markets, the hyper-diversification of European cities (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013) or the residualisation trends in most social rented systems, offer new opportunities to reframe the concept of social mix.

Chapter 3, *Reframing social mix in affordable housing initiatives in Italy and in the Netherlands. Closing the gap between discourses and practices?,* applies the theoretical framework derived from chapter 2 to the study of four case study projects, ‘Casa dell’Accoglienza’ and ‘Ospitalità Solidale’ in Italy, and ‘Startblok Riekerhaven’ and ‘Majella Wonen’ in the Netherlands, drawing on 26 semi-structured interviews with housing practitioners, key informants and public servants. The chapter concludes that a similar re-framing process of social mix, which is unfolded in several domains and sub-domains namely *discourses*, *target groups*, *practices*, *institutional frame*, and *urban downscaling*, is common to both settings. The chapter discusses the persisting ideal of positive 'role models' and the new type of target groups which are associated to such role model idea. It also presents new eligibility criteria for tenants who have to take active part in community-oriented activities aimed to help their vulnerable neighbours as part of the requirements to join the projects. Attention is paid also to the new *locus* of social mixing, namely the housing estate instead of the neighbourhood, and the new institutional frame, which shifted from state-led policies to experimental trial-and-error practices.

Chapter 4, *Exploring innovative management strategies of socially mixed communities in changing social housing contexts,* discusses social mix from a housing management perspective. This chapter is based on 21 semi-structured interviews with housing practitioners, professional, policy-makers and tenants coupled with case study analysis of the Housing Sociale project ‘ViVi Voltri’ in Milan and the Magic Mix project ‘Startblok Riekerhaven’ in Amsterdam. This chapter compares two innovative management strategies, i.e. Social Management (*Gestione Sociale*) and self-management, respectively in Milan and Amsterdam, focussing on three specific activities of social housing management: selection of target groups; allocation of dwellings; stimulation of tenants' participation (Priemus et al., 1999). This chapter concludes that in both settings the introduction of new management styles implies a widening of tenants responsibilities, but in different ways. In the Netherlands, tenants' involvement is greater and regards a wide spectrum of housing management activities, which results in shifting of responsibilities from housing professionals to tenants themselves. In Italy, the broadening of tenants’ responsibilities mainly concerned fostering individual agency and accountability in relation to tenants' dwellings, e.g. capacity to maintain their dwellings properly, pay rents on time etc. As a consequence of new management strategies, the relationship between tenants and professionals changes too. A co-production relationship between professional and tenants in

the Netherlands tends to blur the distinction between the two, while a customer-like relationship in Italy put emphasis on the role of tenants as consumers of housing services.

Chapter 5, '*Active, young, and resourceful': sorting the 'good' tenant through mechanisms of conditionality*', shows that the framing of social mix in the examined projects, i.e. 'Ospitalità Solidale' and 'Majella Wonen', entails an element of conditionality, i.e. access to housing project provided that the receivers agree to participate in community-oriented and supportive actions, which is aimed to increase tenants responsibility against anti-social behaviours. Using 32 semi-structured interviews on the case studies 'Ospitalità Solidale' in Milan and 'Majella Wonen' in Utrecht, adding one focus group and participant observation for the latter, this chapter discusses new forms of governance related to allocation of dwellings and other management practices, used by professionals to sort the desirable profile of tenant to include in social mix projects. This chapter presents the different implications that the use of conditionality brought in the two cases and discusses some potential explanatory factors related to contextual elements. Finally, this chapter detects explicit connections between the promotion of responsibilisation and conditionality in social housing and the latest developments of welfare discourses at national-level (Dutch case), the Participation Society, and regional-level (Italian case), the community welfare.

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2. Towards a reframing of the concept 'social mix' in a post-crisis hyper-diverse Western Europe

A revised version of this chapter has been published as: Costarelli, I. (2017) Politiche abitative e mix sociale: quale posta in gioco per le comunità? [Social mix and housing policies: which implications for communities?], Città in Controluce, n.29/30, pp. 93-103.

Abstract

On both sides of the Atlantic, concerns about spatial concentration of socially homogeneous groups in decaying urban areas have fostered policy interest in social mix. Socio-ethnic segregation of poor populations and related 'neighbourhood effects' are considered damaging for residents' chances of social mobility, job opportunities, better education facilities, and social cohesion. Policy-makers advocate for more diversity and social mix in order to counteract such negative dynamics. The underlying assumption is that spatial propinquity between middle and lower classes has beneficial influences on the latter. This paper aims to explore the concept 'social mix' by providing a non-exhaustive literature review. It shows that, for a long time, the paradigm of social mix has relied upon two fundamental pillars: on the one hand, the fact that deprived neighbourhoods are lacking of diversity; on the other hand, the expected ability of middle-class to act as 'role model' for lower-class neighbours. Today these assumptions are under discussion. Widespread housing affordability issues affecting the shrinking middle-class along with increasing hyper-diversity in European cities seem to problematize the basic assumptions upon which the paradigm of social mix has been developed. The paper helps connecting old - and still opened - challenges of social mix with new current macro dynamics, adding to the literature potential elements useful to re-frame the traditional conceptualization of social mix.

Keywords: *Social mix, urban renewal, segregation, housing diversification, middle-class, hyper-diversity*

2.1 Introduction

Across United States and Europe, many largest cities present urban areas characterised by higher levels of socio-economic deprivation, spatial segregation and physical degradation. Bad reputation, high unemployment and crime rates, and lack of opportunities for its residents have often turned these areas into socially excluded and stigmatised places. Such dynamics are common in many Western cities, despite each of them presents its own peculiarities and are affected by these problematics at different extents (Musterd, 2005). Whether the patterns of socio-spatial concentration are comparable or not, the responses put forward by policy-making are often similar. On both sides of the Atlantic, concerns about the spatial concentration of poor populations in urban neighbourhoods have fostered the policy interest in social mix (Bolt & Van Kempen, 2013).

The idea of social mix has gained a wide consensus in very different contexts, such as United States (Joseph & Chaskin, 2010; Jourdan et. al, 2013), Canada (August, 2008; 2014), Australia (Arthurson, 2013; Arthurson et al., 2015) and Europe (Kleinhans, 2004; Bolt & Van Kempen, 2013), although transferability issue has been hardly called into question. The basic assumption is that spatial propinquity between middle-class and low-income groups is likely to improve the quality of life of the latter. Social mix is driven by the diversification of housing offer, which results in greater tenure mix. According to policy assumptions, residential proximity can help social contact and interaction, consequently fostering better chances for social cohesion and social capital. Nonetheless, this is only a partial outcome of the process. Proximity may also generate tensions among residents from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Social mix is legitimized by the presence of the so-called 'negative neighbourhood effects' (Ostendorf et al., 2001), according to which the exposure of individuals to deprived environments negatively affects their chances to succeed in a wide set of domains: from education to job opportunities. The presence of middle-class, acting as 'role models', is expected to counteract these negative influences (Kleinhans, 2004). Based on these assumptions, the category of social mix has entered urban agendas of many European countries, albeit empirical research do not always match positive policy assumptions.

Although a rich body of academic literature have dealt with the implementation of social mix in urban renewal policies in the last twenty years, the concept is much more rooted in time. Using different terms, such as 'balanced community' (Gans, 1961), 'social mixture' (Ashworth, 1954), 'social balance' (Cole & Goodchild, 2001) the idea of social mix dates back to the middle of 19th century. Throughout this long period, not only the 'geography' of social mix has changed but also the policy framework and meanings attached to it have varied according to global and local contexts.

The paper has two objectives. The first aim is to explore the concept of social mix providing a non-exhaustive literature review. In doing so, only the main aspects characterizing its origin and development will be covered with a focus on the use of social mix within urban renewal programmes in Europe. The second goal is to enrich the debate on

this topic by introducing several elements that can help connecting old - and still opened - challenges of social mix with new current macro dynamics. The paper contributes to the literature by arguing that today the traditional conceptualization of social mix (i.e. tenure mix) needs to be re-framed in light of broader ongoing societal transformations.

The paper is composed of four parts. The first section addresses the origin and the evolution of social mix starting from the seminal contribution by Sarkissian (1976). Originated in the United States and England, the concept of social mix was mainly implemented as a planning principle of new housing settlements. The main argument for mixed communities was to overcome growing social class divisions and guarantee more equality. The second part describes how social mix has shifted from planning principle of new urban developments to policy tool for combating socio-spatial segregation. The shift has occurred also in geographical terms as social mix gained a wider consensus, entering the urban renewal agenda in other European countries such as France, Sweden, and The Netherlands. The third part discusses the theoretical assumptions underpinning the ambitious goal of social mixing and the problematics it seeks to tackle. This section addresses also some empirical evidences concerning the outcomes of social mix. The literature shows that tenure mix is not a sufficient condition for social interaction as, even within residentially mixed neighbourhoods, higher classes might adopt disaffiliation strategies to distance themselves from lower classes. The fourth section argues that today the traditional idea of social mix is challenged by old and new dynamics. Firstly, once holding the key of social mix, today the middle-class is increasingly facing housing affordability issues in largest cities. The main question is whether in the current conditions, middle-class is still able to perform as 'role model' for lower classes. Secondly, the traditional dilemma about homogeneity and heterogeneity of neighbourhood composition seems to wobble in front of the growing 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2007) and 'hyper-diversity' (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013). Traditionally social mix policies have relied upon income, ethnicity and place of residence as criteria to define neighbourhood homogeneity and diversity. These categories alone seem no longer to reflect the growing complexity of urban society, challenging the capacity of policy-making to grasp internal diversity even in contexts previously considered as highly homogeneous. Apparently, from concerns about 'too much homogeneity' we are slightly moving towards discourses about 'too much diversity' in European cities. How do these changes affect the traditional paradigm of social mix?

2.2 Origin and development of a controversial concept

In her seminal paper, Wendy Sarkissian (1976) discusses the origin and the evolution of the idea of 'social mix' in town planning focusing on England and the United States. In urban planning, the concept is well rooted in time, at least concerning the Anglo-Saxon world. As she argues, the first blueprints of mixed communities date back to the Victorian England at the half of 19th century. These experiences were mainly concerning the building of new residential settlements in rural areas or villages, which embedded social mix as a planning

principle. Since then, there has been an increasing support for social mixing based upon two main rationales. On the one hand, following the romantic and conservative approach, the principle of social mix was inspired by an 'idealisation of the village' in which a mixture of all social classes contrasted with the class antagonism and degrading urban environment characterizing the new industrial cities. On the other hand, the utilitarian approach advocated for social mix as a functional way to cope with critical aspects of the new industrial city: housing shortage, over-crowding, growing income and class urban segregation (Sarkissian, 1976). Although the nature of mix pursued was mainly between different income groups and social classes, interestingly, neither the romantic nor the utilitarian thinking were advocating social mix as a means to reduce the gap between rich and poor people (Sarkissian, 1976), whereas this became the main argument for promoting social mix especially since the 1980s.

Following Sarkissian (1976), the idea of overcoming social distances through contact and proximity was developed by charitable Victorians and was contextualized within a specific framework. It encompassed the promotion of educational activities in which upper-classes trained assistants used to get in contact with poor people acting as 'role models' to improve their standards of living. Interestingly, upper classes did not move to live side by side with poor, and no reference to stable residential mix was made. A significant contribution to this approach came from the work of Octavia Hill in London whose concept of social mix "was not mix between rich and poor, so much as mix between some who had been 'educated' into raising standards and those who still remained to be uplifted" (Sarkissian, 1976, p.-236). Later on, the interpretation of social mix tended to merge these two dimensions - residential mix and social goals- with very different meanings and implications. Following Wood (1960), what has remained is a distorted version of Hill's strategy whereby, in a residentially mixed area, middle-class would behave as 'unpaid social workers' for the working class.

Afterwards, the idea of social mix stood out as a distinctive aspect of the garden city movement at the beginning of 20th century, tough the concrete implementation concerned few cases of new housing development (Cole & Goodchild, 2001; Rose et al., 2013). While, between the wars, the concept became less appealing for policy-makers, it was re-discovered in the aftermath of Second World War (Sarkissian, 1976). In England, the concepts of 'social mix' and 'balanced community' were at the core of the New Town programme based on the ambitious idea of providing local authority housing for all social classes. Far from being concretely realised, the myth of the balanced community reflected the aspiration to overcome social division and conflicts after two world wars (Cole & Goodchild, 2001).

A similar rhetoric can be found on the other side of the Atlantic. In the post war United States, the claim for more social mix was intended to ideally re-evoke a sense of unity, togetherness, freedom from social barriers (Sarkissian, 1976). Later, the idea of socially mixed neighbourhoods gained also a very strong symbolic meaning during the Cold War

period, aiming to guarantee equal opportunities for all citizens. In line with this vision, but with a very different connotation, social mix also became a strong motivation put forward by anti-racial segregation movements in the US (Sarkissian, 1976).

As highlighted, the societal and historical context strictly influenced the discourses on and the values attached to social mix. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that positions towards social mixing and reasons laying behind it might vary over time and space (Cole & Goodchild, 2001). From the late 19th century to the post-World War II, social mix could be defined as an attempt to merge different social classes within an historical framework deeply characterized by remarkable tensions caused by two World Wars and growing divisions in the new industrial cities. In order to address the further evolution of this concept, taking place since about the 1980s, we have to underline three elements. First, social mix was not implemented anymore only as a planning principle of new housing settlements, but also as a tool to struggle neighbourhood residential segregation within urban renewal programmes. Second, within this policy framework, the idea of social mix spread from Anglo-Saxon world, where it originated, to other European countries. Third, research started to provide empirical evidences around the alleged benefits of social mix, questioning the theoretical assumptions assumed by policy-makers and shedding more light on the complexity of the issue.

Based on these elements, the next section discusses how social mix has entered the housing and urban renewal agenda of many European countries, stressing the rationale underpinning public action and its main outcomes. The approach adopted focuses particularly on policy discourses and the nature of social mix as a tool to achieve higher goals.

2.3 Social mix as a tool of urban renewal policies

Since the 1980s, many Western European countries have implemented social mix within urban renewal policies dealing with residential neighbourhoods characterized by high levels of homogeneity in terms of social composition of population - working class neighbourhoods in inner cities -, physical layout of buildings - blocks of large housing estates - and tenure - social housing - (Droste et al., 2014). Many of these neighbourhoods were built after the Second World War as result of large-scale social housing investments responding to the severe housing shortage. In many largest cities, they used to accommodate the working class employed in the expanding industrial sector (Scanlon et al., 2014). In the post-World War II period, we assisted to the broadening of welfare states and consequently increase of decommodified housing stock, thanks to a remarkable state involvement in housing markets (Kadi, 2015).

As a consequence of rapid multifaceted transformations, such as the sharp decline of industrial activity in all major European hubs, increasing impoverishment of households,

physical degradation and 'filtering down'[3] processes in social housing, these neighbourhoods have been increasingly downgrading. The social fabric became more and more homogeneous with respect to socio-economic indicators (for instance high concentration of low-income households, high unemployment and crime rates) and the urban landscape increasingly deteriorating, turning these areas into segregated and left behind places. Across Europe, the concentration of disadvantaged populations presented well-defined spatial patterns affecting certain areas more than other, often social housing neighbourhoods located in urban outskirts. Policy-makers perceived such concentration as dangerous for social cohesion not only for the neighbourhood in itself but for the society as a whole (Bolt, 2009).

There is a common agreement on the fact that the neighbourhood plays a vital role in shaping individuals' identity and life-chances (Kearns & Forrest, 2001). It is perceived as both problem and solution to urban deprivation. In order to foster improvements, the neighbourhood became the spatial unit targeted by public action. *Ad hoc* area-based urban policies were designed and implemented, most of which included economic, social, and above all physical measures (Van Gent et al., 2009). Social mix had often a pivotal role in such regeneration strategies.

An overview on housing and urban renewal policies in Western Europe shows that social mix has been shaping national urban agendas of many countries such as UK (Arbaci & Rae, 2013; Tunstall, 2003), France (Lelévrier, 2013a; Blanc, 2010), The Netherlands (Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009; Ostendorf et al., 2001), Sweden (Musterd & Andersson, 2005), Germany and Finland (Bolt, 2009), Italy (Bricocoli & Cucca, 2014; Mugnano & Palvarini, 2013), and Spain (Van Beckhoven et. al., 2006). Apart from the local specificities of each national context, overall, housing diversification and tenure mix have been mostly seen as the main tool to achieve social mix (Bolt, 2009; Manley et al., 2012, Kleinhans, 2004). In many cases such diversification is achieved through large-scale demolition of old degraded (social) housing buildings being replaced by new mixed-tenure housing offer (Lelévrier, 2013b; Ostendorf et al., 2001). Such operations cause the forced relocation of social rented tenants within or outside the renewed neighbourhood.

There has been a lot of confusion generated by policy-makers' treatment of the concept 'social mix' either as a tool or an end. In the first case, housing diversification is boosted in order to achieve the expected beneficial effects of mixed neighbourhoods (i.e. social cohesion). In the second, case social mix, considered as a mere desirable state, is pursued an end in itself. Sometimes these two understandings coincided. The socio-economic mix of neighbourhood population composition is driven by the diversification of housing offer, through which well-off households are encouraged to move in former deprived areas and live in proximity with lower-class households. From a tenure point of view, social mix usually translates into closer proximity between homeowners and social rented tenants. The

[3] With this term, we intend the gradual process of quality deterioration of social housing stock, whereby better-off households leave decaying units and these are replaced by lower-income households.

former, better-off residents, are expected to act as positive 'role models' for their lower-class neighbours, improving inhabitants behaviours and attitudes (Kleinhans, 2004), and generating positive 'social externalities'[4] (Galster, 2007).

Although the term *social mix* may be related to various variables: level of education, ethnicity, and lifestyles, policy-makers mostly tend to refer to income. Depending on the dimensions considered - which often overlap -, social mix outcomes may result vague or contrasting. In this framework, policy-makers have - more or less rhetorically - invoked the alleged benefits of social mix as a tool for breaking the socio-economic homogeneity of deprived neighbourhoods. Not rarely, such socio-economic homogeneity was synonymous of ethnic homogeneity, as often lower-class immigrants tend to establish where the housing stock is cheaper or publicly subsidized -often social housing neighbourhoods targeted by urban renewal policies-. Nonetheless, by perceiving the increasing ethnic spatial concentration mainly as a concern (Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009; Bolt, 2009; Bretherton & Pleace, 2011), policy-makers had often neglected its positive role in terms of self-support strategies (Arbaci & Malheiros, 2010).

Social mix has often been translated into ethnic mix, but this has occurred in different ways according to different national and local specificities. In some cases, such in the Netherlands, the question of ethnic residential segregation has been explicitly shaping policy-makers orientation towards social mix, calling for more integration and societal cohesion (Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009). In other cases such as in France, any explicit reference to ethnic mix has remained in the background because ethnic diversity is not an official category of public action (Escafrè-Dublet et al., 2014). However, it is argued that social mix policies envisage implicitly the purpose of dispersing immigrant population against the alleged risks of communitarianism or public order issues, tacitly facilitating the return of a white population (Kirszbaum, 2008).

Within Europe the patterns of socio-ethnic segregation are fundamentally different (Arbaci 2007) and this contributes to determine the extent to which social mix policies are a priority of urban agendas. At the time in which many Central and Northern European countries were already dealing with socio-ethnic segregation issues in decaying social housing neighbourhoods through urban renewal programs, namely in the 1990s, Southern European countries started experiencing the first relevant immigration flows. Generally, social mix policies have been implemented in countries with remarkable levels of socio-ethnic segregation, significant stock of social housing and longer tradition of urban and housing policy (Bricocoli & Cucca, 2014).

The housing situation in the South of Europe is radically different. High rates of homeownership, residual stock of social housing and weak direct state intervention in housing (Allen et al., 2004) are not favorable conditions to develop social mix policies. Consequently, in these countries few traces of social mix can be found in urban and housing

[4] The mechanism of social externality occurs when "the characteristics, behaviours or attitudes of one neighborhood resident has a direct influence on (…) his or her neighbours" (Galster, 2007, p. 21).

policies. Nonetheless, in more recent times - and much later compared to other countries - the idea of social mix has been imported also to Southern European countries, such as Italy, though in a very limited cases up to now (Mugnano & Palvarini, 2013). Of course, this opens very interesting strands of research on how social mix actions are entering policy agenda in a homeownership country (Bricocoli & Cucca, 2014). While in many North European countries the objectives attached to social mix have been mainly pursued through renewal strategies of housing demolition and residential mix, in Southern Europe similar outcomes were sought through policy tools on social cohesion not directly targeting housing rather neighbourhoods and people. The Southern European vision recalls the very first experiences of social mix, which did not rely on stable residential mix to raise households' conditions (Sarkissian, 1976).

Curiously enough, almost in all countries social mix policies have been interpreted in a unidirectional way that is providing attractive housing offer for middle-class households who are encouraged to move in deprived neighbourhoods and not *vice versa*[5] (Musterd & Andersson, 2005).

The second step in the development of the notion 'social mix' highlights its geographical extension from UK and US to other European countries. Also the policy framework of its implementation has shifted, moving from new housing development to urban renewal policies. The change of approach has very important implications on meanings and outcomes. This is mainly due to the conditions in which policy-makers employ the concept of social mix. Planning a socially mixed environment before the existence of a community is very different from intervening in an established social and urban environment with the aim of creating social mix. Beside the fact that expected outcomes are not always guarantee in any cases, this means that we are dealing with two distinctive situations, which deserve two different interpretations and ways of assessment.

For the purpose of this paper, we limit the discussion on the theoretical mechanisms underpinning social mix and its empirical outcomes focusing on the 'second wave' of implementation, namely within urban renewal policies launched in Europe since the 1980s. In this framework, the idea of mixed communities became very popular among policy-makers who emphasized its potentiality for combating segregation dynamics in deprived neighbourhoods. Despite being considered a one-size-fits-all measure, national contexts and local peculiarities do matter and are relevant to catch the local understanding and use of social mix. Nevertheless, the rationale justifying social mix strategies and the goals set by policy-makers are similar everywhere. The next section is devoted to explore them.

[5] Despite the fact that upper classes are much more segregated than lower classes, but this has never been a concern for policy-makers (Musterd & Andersson, 2005). According to several authors, state-led social mix policies could be seen as a hidden strategy of gentrification (Bridge et al., 2012).

2.4 What rationale behind which problems?

Through social mix strategies, policy-makers pursue a wide set of aims: raising standards of lower classes through emulation of higher classes behaviours, increasing equality of opportunities, reducing social tensions (Sarkissian, 1976), more variety and demographic ‘balance’, improving tolerance and educational opportunities (Gans, 1961). More recently, it has been argued that residential proximity of different socio-economic groups can trigger positive outcomes in terms of increasing social capital through more interaction and social cohesion, more bridging ties between groups, better chances of integration for minority groups, more opportunities for housing careers and upgrading social mobility for the weakest residents (Bolt et al., 2010; Bolt, 2009).

Beside the fact that the goodness of these goals are sometimes questionable (Uitermark, 2003), a crucial point is whether they “can be achieved simply by requiring diverse people to live together” (Gans, 1961, p. 177). In addition, these goals all too easily assume negative effects of concentration of low-income people. While there is evidence supporting this, it also excludes the importance of strong social networks among peers.

A large body of literature have been debating around the rationale behind social mix and the problems it seeks to address, raising controversial points. Despite its success among planners and policy makers, the concept of social mix relies on very weak and fragile arguments. We can identify three main theoretical assumptions.

According to the first - and basic - assumption, there is a common belief on the fact that fostering diverse people to live together will certainly make them good neighbours, paving the way for a variety of positive goals. In line with this, homogeneity of social profiles ought to be discouraged. This argument recalls the Allport’s (1954) hypothesis, according to which social contact can help solving conflicts among different groups. Far to be proved valid, it has been argued that a forced coexistence between people who are very different or who do not share similar norms and values might result, at best, in neglect and, at worse, in conflict (Gans, 1961).

Secondly, a set of justifications supporting mixed communities involves the concepts of segregation[6]. A remarkable spatial separation of disadvantaged populations in urban neighbourhoods might result in socio-ethnic segregation. The largest tradition of segregation studies are framed into American largest metropolises (Massey & Denton, 1993) but the debate has flourished also with respect to European cities, despite the context are quite different (Musterd, 2005). In the European policy discourse, spatial segregation has been largely associated with social exclusion (Arbaci, 2007). Such shared understanding has justified the promotion of spatial dispersal and de-segregation policies (e.g. tenure mixing) as a means to foster social inclusion. Research shows that such dichotomic relationship is not

[6] Following Musterd (2005) segregation can be defined as the spatial separation of population according to socio-economic or ethnic characteristics.

always automatic nor effective to combat social exclusion, suggesting widening the view on welfare systems (Arbaci, 2007).

A third explanation legitimising social mix is the presence of the so-called negative 'neighbourhood effects' (Galster, 2012), which is strictly connected to the concept of segregation. Assuming spatial concentration of deprivation as responsible for worsening individuals' situation and undermining life chances has led policy-makers to call for more diversity in residential neighbourhoods. A more diverse environment in terms of social and economic status of its residents would enhance individuals' opportunities to get a job, combating social exclusion, discourage deviant and socially undesired behaviours, and increase sense of belonging. In order to achieve such goals, great expectations are placed upon middle-class residents and their supposed ability to act as 'role models' (Wilson, 1987; Kleinhans, 2004). However, evidences of neighbourhood effects are dubious (Ostendorf et al., 2001). Scholars highlighted that most studies providing empirical evidence for the presence of 'neighbourhood effects' suffer from methodological inaccuracy, concluding that "*if there is no solid evidence that neighbourhood effects exist, there is no evidence base for mixed tenure policies*"[7] (Manley et al., 2012, p. 166, in Bridge et al.).

Policy-makers have put forward questionable theoretical assumptions to support the discourse on social mixing. Although the concentration of deprived populations, dynamics of socio-spatial exclusion, and neighbourhood effects could be seen as reasonable justifications to launch social mix policies, policy-makers seem not to tackle the core of the problem. While the nature of the problem is mainly 'socio-economic', the suggested solution is a *'spatial'* one. Following Manley et al. (2012), concentration of poor households is more likely to be the result of restrictive residential patterns for lower-income groups who tend to establish in marginal neighbourhoods because of lower affordability in the housing market. This suggests that similar residential patterns are more connected to structural socio-economic inequalities in education, income, and employment spheres (Gans, 1961; Manley et al., 2012). Social mix policies stress the focus on (poor) individuals and (poor) urban space rather than targeting structural conditions in the welfare systems that are sources of inequalities (Arbaci & Rae, 2013). Contrarily to the expectations, nor is social mixing a proper mean to reduce existing inequalities (Gans, 1961). If concentration of poverty is the consequence - not the cause - of economic inequalities, promoting social mix means treating the symptoms instead of providing a cure for the problem (Cheshire, 2006).

In a more effective attempt to address social disparities, people-based rather than area-based actions should be encouraged (Arbaci & Rae, 2013). More emphasis should be paid to raise living conditions and life chances through increasing incomes, education and employment opportunities (Gans, 1961) or invest in individuals skills (Manley et al*.,* 2012). Spatial dispersal is not the solution to neighbourhood problems and other factors should be taken into account. The national and local welfare state, economy and labour market, local social networks might help understanding the dynamics occurring at the neighbourhood

[7] Authors precise that this does not mean that neighbourhood effects do not exist at all (Manley et al., 2012).

level and the mechanisms that govern the access to resources and opportunities (Arbaci & Rae, 2013). Beyond the neighbourhood, one must consider also individual and the broader context as significant variables (Musterd & Andersson, 2005; Ostendorf et al, 2001).

On a theoretical level, the assumptions underpinning social mix logic have been subject of strong criticisms. Concerning empirical aspects, not only social mixing hardly finds support, but also a much more complex picture does emerge. The next paragraphs discuss some of the most important findings of the literature assessing social mix policies, stressing the weakness of the above mentioned assumptions.

2.4.1 Does empirical evidence support theory? A critical appraisal

Yet in 1976, Wendy Sarkissian put in evidence some of the most critical points that would have nourished the following academic debate on social mixing. Some of them regard the unclear degree of an 'ideal mix', the question of scale, the undoubted faith in physical solution to deal with social problems, and the importance of empirical evidences.

Even earlier, Gans (1961) brought enlightening insights about the issues of scale, types and degrees of population social mix. Following his argument, extreme forms of both homogeneity and heterogeneity should be discouraged, while, with respect to certain individual characteristics, homogeneity is desirable to help avoiding conflicts and fostering positive relational opportunities. Considering the issue of scale, he distinguished between community level -where under certain circumstances heterogeneity is generally desirable- and block level -where homogeneity is more likely to encourage social relationships-. Cole and Goodchild (2001) stress the difficulty in defining an ideal balance. The paradox is that, while it is relatively easy to figure out and exclude 'undesirable' households profiles - for instance through crime reports or income levels -, it is not always as easy to define the 'desirable' ones. Which criteria should we rely on? In line with this, the literature highlights how, in general, policies tend to emphasize what deprived neighborhoods lack of instead of focusing on the conditions making other neighborhoods prosperous (Kearns & Forrest, 2001).

More recently, Galster (2007) contributed to the debate with relevant reflections about the optimal level of neighbourhood social mix, which depends precisely on which mechanism of 'neighbourhood effects' is taking place. Relying on a classification of different categories of neighbourhood effects[8], he figured out different combinations of neighbourhood mix. He concludes that there is not a unique and 'packed' recipe indicating the ideal distribution of advantaged and disadvantaged groups suitable for all neighbourhoods. The 'ideal neighbourhood mix' might envisage an equal distribution of those groups, or spatial dispersal or even segregation.

Turning the attention to the empirical evidences, despite policy-makers have trusted in social mix, many studies on the effects of similar policies provide contradictory evidences

[8] Galster (2012) identifies fifteen mechanisms of neighbourhood effects, which are clustered into four main groups: social interactive, environmental, geographical and institutional.

(Bolt, 2009; Musterd & Andersson, 2005; Arbaci & Rae, 2013; Cole & Goodchild, 2001). Research have shown the uncertain effectiveness of social mix in triggering expected positive outcomes, and have raised many critics around its implementation. In a nutshell, policy-makers' trust in social mix relies more on an unquestioned faith than on facts (Galster, 2007; Cheshire, 2009). Except for the improvement of residential environment (better neighbourhood reputation, quality of housing etc.), there are little convincing evidences concerning the social outcomes. Levels of ethnic segregation have not remarkably decreased through mixing strategies, showing the gap between policy rhetoric and real effects on residential segregation (Bolt et al., 2010). Moreover, increased neighbourhood heterogeneity did not translate necessarily into greater interaction between different socio-economic groups (Bolt, 2009; Cole & Goodchild, 2001). Differences in lifestyles, more than in tenure, seem to be extremely important in explaining the missing chances of interaction (Kleinhans, 2004). Not only social mix policies have generally failed in bringing such benefits, but, in some cases, they have also made responsible for negative outcomes such as fostering exclusion, breaking sense of community and undermining local social networks based on mutual support, solidarity and reciprocity (Cole & Goodchild, 2001; Dekker & Bolt, 2005). Other studies show how the benefits produced by social mix policies impact households in unequal and unbalanced way. Forced relocation following social mix policies brought different opportunities of upgrading housing careers to different typologies of households at different stages of their residential trajectories. Depending on residents' profiles, several factors might hinder or foster the possibility to join positive steps in their residential trajectories (Lelévrier, 2013b).

From a review of recent literature on social mix, it clearly emerges that tenure mix alone does not automatically translate into more interaction between different groups, nor better chances for social cohesion and integration. Tenure mix is not a sufficient condition for social mix (Bolt & Kempen, 2013). Even when specific frameworks for social interaction are provided (i.e. neighbourhood associations) results are not always guaranteed, as sometimes these relationships, being intrinsically artificial, are unlikely to last (Mugnano & Palvarini, 2013). Considered that tenure mix alone does not work for the stated purposes, some authors have suggested shifting the attention to other engines of socialization, such as schools or leisure centres, which gain particular relevance for the challenge of a more cohesive community and whose potentiality is often underestimated (Colomb, 2007).

To this regard, Van Eijk (2010) introduced the analytical concept of 'neighbourhoood settings' to indicate those places in/through which residents form and develop relationships. 'Neighbourhood settings' usually serve the neighbourhood population. Some examples are schools, resident's associations, community centre, playground, and park.

> *Neighbourhood settings may particularly draw together people who are more or less purposively involved in such setting: parents involved in the community school, concerned residents attending the residents' association, residents depending on inexpensive services and activities visiting the community centre*

and people with dogs and children using, respectively, parks and playgrounds. (Van Eijk, 2010, p. 477)

'Neighbourhood settings' facilitate the establishment of new networks among residents as well as they allow maintaining and developing old existing ones. In terms of social mix, networks are important as they influence individuals' formation of social capital. Van Eijk (2010) distinguishes between *local* relationships and *locality-based* relationships. The first indicates relationships with people living in the same neighbourhood but not necessarily formed in the neighbourhood (locally maintained relationships). When relationships are not only maintained in the neighbourhood (settings) but also formed within it, these are called locality-based relationships.

A number of studies focuses on the behaviour of middle and upper class household, their patterns of daily interaction or distancing with respect to lower-class residents and even the role of local devices (such as neighbourhood facilities) in promoting contact or inclusion. Some of them show that, even in mixed-tenure neighbourhoods, these places are often the scenario of territorial disaffiliation strategies. Higher classes households are able to carefully control the extent to which they share space and facilities with lower classes. In doing so, they tend to distance themselves from lower-class neighbours, limiting contact and drawing symbolic boundaries (Andreotti et al., 2013; Weck & Hanhörster, 2015; Robson & Butler, 2001; Watt, 2009; Pinkster, 2014) also in relation to the use of local private or public services, such as schools (Boterman, 2013; Raveaud & Van Zanten, 2007). These studies suggest that the success or failure of social mix policies is not simply a matter of tenure and inter-group relations but also a matter of individual choices and preferences of different households. Different lifestyles, different uses of public space and neighbourhood services are only some of the factors influencing the possibility to produce social contact between different individuals. Even middle-class 'diversity-seekers', thus considered as potential resources for spreading social capital, remain confined to their own social networks and less engaged in neighbourhood life (Blokland & Van Eijk, 2010).

The possibility for social mix to succeed depends both on residents themselves and on the wider context (Bolt & Van Kempen, 2013). Having a broader look on the current societal, economic and political scenario, the situation is turning much more complex and fragmented. Since the last decade, European countries have been experiencing a number of dramatic changes in a short lapse of time. The urban agenda of many European cities have been shaped by several global dynamics, such as the pressure of financial crisis on housing markets, welfare state retrenchment, increasing polarisation and segregation and concerns for increasingly negative perceptions of diversity. Are these phenomena contributing to re-shape the concept of social mix?

In light of these considerations, the next section discusses some dynamics that are currently challenging the 'old' conceptualization as well as uses and discourses attached to the term 'social mix' in today society. It is argued that several conditions suggest the need of re-

framing the meaning of this concept. The trends identified and described below are intended to set the context for further research on social mix. The analysis takes into account a number of changes occurred in Europe at the beginning of 21th century, suggesting the need of exploring how these global dynamics impact locally on neighbourhood social mix strategies.

2.5 Making sense of old and new challenges: towards a new conceptualization of social mix?

In the previous sections, we have observed how different historical periods, geographical coordinates, and different policy frameworks influenced the understanding and the discourses attached to the notion of social mix. The existing body of literature has analyzed the issue of social mix covering many of these aspects from different perspectives. Besides a number of relevant points that are still open to debate, such as the definition of the 'right' households that are able to bring social diversity, and the questions of scale and balance, there are a number of new challenges which suggest a reframing of the ideal of social mix. We will outline such critical points in the next pages.

2.5.1 Residential neighbourhoods and network formation in the age of mobility

So far, one of the main limits in social mix debate was not to consider the increasingly mobile nature of human activities. This gap has been addressed by Gwyther (2009), who first questioned explicitly the 'sedentarist' vision of community, on which the idea of social mix is grounded, shedding light on the need to integrate a network approach for a better understanding of community formation.

Drawing from the concepts of 'community liberated' (Wellman, 1979) and 'community of interest' (Webber, 1963), she argues that social ties, networks and affiliations tend to be based more on shared interests (homophily) rather than geographical proximity. Drawing from the 'new mobility paradigm' (Sheller & Urry, 2006), she concludes that uneven chances to access mobility resources exacerbate social divisions. "Those with greater access to mobilities resources have more ability to develop communities of interests (…) based on homophily and social propinquity" (p. 154). The endowment of mobility resources is - beside economic, cultural and social capital - a further dimension that shapes individuals' networks.

Following Gwyther (2009) statement, it is urgent to tackle the assumption according to which individuals are rooted in their urban residential neighbourhood and meaningful social relations are spatially 'closed' within its boundaries. Does it still hold true in the age of 'super-mobility'[9] (Valentine, 2013)? While it may be so for certain category of residents - notably children, elderly, immigrants and disable - it might not be the same for others. The aforementioned assumption is challenged by increasing - although not evenly distributed -

[9] The term is used to indicate intensified connections between different people, cultures and spaces.

mobility opportunities for people (Sheller & Urry, 2006). For those with limited opportunities to move, it can exacerbate social exclusion and inequalities, while for those who have greater access to mobility resources, it can pave the way for new intergroup contact opportunities (Wissink et al., 2016) in nowadays 'cities of differences' (Fincher & Iveson, 2008).

Recent research started questioning the extent to which urban neighbourhoods are still relevant to the study of making of social networks (Andreotti, 2014). In Van Kempen and Wissink's words (2014, p. 100) "neighbourhood research assumes that neighbourhoods are important places to establish contacts. But contacts can also emerge elsewhere". Since people have become overall increasingly mobile, more attention should be paid on individual daily movements, the activity spaces, as well as different domains of everyday social life, for instance schools, work, transport. Authors call for a more sophisticated study of the changing role of residential neighbourhood in light of increasing mobility, online communications and transnational contacts. They wonder how these changes might shape people's everyday life as well as the kind of contacts established, including where and among whom (Van Kempen & Wissink, 2014). Following Wissink and colleagues (2016), being 'connected' has become more important than just being 'physically closed to each other'.

Based on these considerations, the analysis of individuals' contacts, social ties and types of networks established in the patterns of everyday life can contribute toward a better understanding of how mixed communities work. Much studies have been focusing on intergroup interactions 'within' mixed tenure housing developments, still little is known about households' activities 'outside' their residential space.

A growing body of research argues that, for a better understanding of segregation (and consequently social mix), we need to extend the study beyond the residential place of individuals (Wong & Shaw 2011; Wissink et al., 2016). Indeed, segregation encompasses many other domains (i.e. home, leisure, work, school, travel) whose linkages need to be unpacked and analysed over space and time[10] (Van Ham, Tammaru, 2016). In today society, one can be completely integrated in certain domains while experience segregation in others (Van Ham & Tammaru, 2016). Van Kempen and Wissink (2014, p. 101) argue that "research that starts from residential location alone, therefore, is too narrow to find out how people organize their lives, and where contacts take place". Although the place of residence still play a great role in understanding segregation, it is not sufficient and need to be integrated with new person-based perspectives and research approaches (Wissink et al., 2016; Van Ham & Tammaru, 2016).

Networked urbanism perspective, which accounts for the decentralized, diffuse and sprawling character of personal networks over the notion of 'community' (Blokland &

[10] Van Ham and Tammaru (2016) introduce a 'domains approach' to study ethnic segregation. They distinguish between 'within-domain segregation change', that is shifting levels of segregation in one domain, and 'between-domain segregation change', that is changing levels of segregation experienced by an individual moving to one domain to another with different degree of segregation.

Savage, 2008), and new streams of research in segregation studies suggests to consider a wider spatial scale of analysis than neighbourhood boundaries. Segregation researchers use to produce maps catching the geographical distribution of concerned social groups in delimited space (city, neighbourhood, region, etc.) and in fixed periods of time, relying on aggregated statistics, which are hardly able to grasp how individuals really experience segregation (Wong & Shaw, 2011). People's experiences should be examined more comprehensively, taking into account what kind of places they visit, where these are located, the time spent there, the travelling experience between these places as well as the interaction within those places (Kwan, 2013). Research ought to assume the individuals' activity spaces as the places *where* persons are engaged in meaningful social relations, which are expected to produce social capital. Wong and Shaw (2011) draw on the definition of activity space provided by Golledge and Stimson (1997), according to which an activity space is "the subset of all locations within which an individual has direct contact as a result of his or her day-to-day activities" (p. 279).

In analytical terms, linked to the notion of activity space is the concept of 'exposure' to social difference in these everyday activities. Drawing from Wissink and colleagues (2016), exposure is something that individuals 'can be deprived of' as well as something that is 'actively controlled by people'. Exposure might be linked to unequal power relations: affluent groups, more than poorer ones, are able to control such exposure through deliberate choices, 'partial exit' strategies (Andreotti et al., 2013), disaffiliation (Atkinson, 2006) or 'elective belonging' (Savage et al., 2005). In light of the above, segregation may also be defined as "a set of strategies directed toward the isolation of a social group from the rest of society" (Schnell & Yoav, 2001, p. 624).

The indicator of 'exposure' to social difference in different activity spaces combined with a careful analysis of personal social networks can contribute towards a better understanding of "the specific mechanisms through which social capital operates through people and groups crossing borders, forming borders, maintaining borders" (Blokland & Savage, 2008, p. 14). Indeed, social networks are important aspects of social capital formation. Networks have a relational nature as they are established through contacts (online and offline). They have the ability to link and separate people, which are strongly determined by power relations and structural inequalities. Ties of social capital create boundaries between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', and research should unpack how social capital is linked with the relationality of social life (Blokland & Savage, 2008). Social capital formation *shapes* and *is shaped* by segregation because spatial arrangements can affect network formations through various ways, such as appropriation of space and inclusionary/exclusionary practices of place making (Blokland & Savage, 2008). Thus, understanding whom individuals hang with, where and the intensity of these social relations can contribute to shed light on the 'making' of social capital.

2.5.2 Social rented sectors and welfare states in the aftermath of economic crisis

The 2008 economic crisis has been followed by a severe recession period with austerity and neoliberal reforms affecting the housing markets and the welfare provision in many Western European countries. Public actor has been affected by a weakening of its capacity to guarantee affordable housing, even in countries characterized by remarkable tradition of social housing like The Netherlands or Sweden (Priemus & Whitehead, 2014). Housing crisis is exacerbating social exclusion and inequality and the state is not anymore able to provide an adequate response to these needs (Garcia & Vicari Haddock, 2016). The process of welfare state restructuring affects also housing policies as it is increasingly leading to the recommodification of housing, whereby the social housing sector is playing a more residual role (Kadi, 2015). The common trend shows a reduction of social rented sector and increase of homeownership rates in Europe due also to urban renewal and tenure mix policies (Kadi, 2015; Costa et al., 2014). The GFC has exacerbated problems of housing affordability and accessibility in Europe, largely connected to the severe governmental cuts to housing budgets, but also tightening of credit, increasing difficulties to obtain mortgages, reduction in housing transactions (Mulliner & Maliene, 2013; Priemus & Whitehead, 2014; Costa et al., 2014).

Over the last two decades, social rented systems in Western Europe have been experiencing new changes in relation to the (growing) demand of social housing and to the nature, scope and organisational structure of housing providers (Walker, 2000; Mullins, 2006; Czischke et al., 2012). The scarce availability of adequate affordable housing has become a key issue all over Europe (Czischke & van Bortel, 2018). This involves a mixture of different social categories: young people, low-income and vulnerable households and, more recently, newcomers (i.e. asylum seekers). While in the past these issues were mainly concerning the most vulnerable groups, today the housing need regards a wider typology of individuals with different socio-demographic backgrounds and for different reasons, such as the fragmentation of labour market. The area of housing vulnerability has been widening and exacerbating with the financial crisis (Costa et al., 2014). Besides low-income households, housing affordability also concerns young educated professionals (Mulliner & Maliene, 2013), and skilled workers (Garcia & Vicari Haddock, 2016).

Despite these processes occur all over Europe, local policies and welfare states arrangements can mitigate the effects and determine the extent to which these general trends impact locally in Europe (Costa el al., 2014). Such effects can be greater in countries where the welfare systems are weaker (Garcia & Vicari Haddock, 2016; Kadi, 2015).

While the role of institutional players (i.e. policy makers) is still crucial to address the scarcity of affordable housing (Czischke & van Bortel, 2018), civil society is increasingly engaged in a number of alternative forms of (affordable) housing provision stemming from co-housing, cooperatives and other typologies of collective self-organised housing, including self-building (Semprebon & Vicari Haddock, 2016; Bronzini, 2017). These are all

characterised by high degrees of user participation, the establishment of reciprocal relationships, mutual help and solidarity, as well as different forms of financing and management (Mullins & Moore, 2018; Tummers, 2016). In the current societal paradigm of 'co-production', which is characterised by top-down attempts to boost inclusive societies and active citizenship[11], residents are both producers and consumers of (housing) services, marking a great difference with respect to past decades when residents were mainly seen as passive 'beneficiaries' (i.e. post war period) or as 'customers' under the influence of the 'New Public Management' in the 1980s.

The new geography of housing risk and vulnerability should be looked within the process of increasing polarization - both in terms of income and educational levels - between too rich or too poor households within cities. This common trend in Europe put at a particular disadvantaged position the middle-class, which is 'squeezed' (Jonkman & Janssen-Jansen, 2015, p. 510) between the impossibility to be eligible for social housing and the difficulties of renting or buying in the private market. According to some authors, this situation suggests re-thinking also the way we used to intend the concept of socio-spatial justice, shifting the focus from low-income to lower-middle income and middle-income households (Jonkman & Janssen-Jansen, 2015).

In terms of social mix, the crisis of middle-class is relevant for two reasons. On the one hand, growing polarisation and social inequalities increase the gap between different groups of the society, undermining the possibilities of social relations (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013). On the other hand, the difficult access to housing of the middle-class risks undermining the core element of social mix, which has relied for a long time on the supposed beneficial influences brought by the middle-class (Rose et al., 2013). Middle-class was generally occupying stable, well-paid positions on the labour market and could benefit from relatively good housing conditions and afford homeownership in cities. Are the conditions for middle-class to act as 'role models' still there? Traditionally, middle-class was the driver of social mix, assuming that in this group the forms of economic, cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) were equally distributed, while lower classes were partially or totally lacking of them. It follows that it was much easy for policy-makers to predict behaviours and attitudes of middle-class. However, in the last 40 years these conditions have radically changed. The question is about the shrinking middle-class, its difficulties in entering private and publicly-subsided housing market and the mismatch between economic, cultural and social capital, especially for those young, high-educated generations who have high social and cultural capital but limited economic resources and unstable positions in the labour market.

[11] E.g. the Big Society and Localism agendas in the UK (Czischke 2017).

2.5.3 Hyper-diversity and social mix policies

Many European cities are increasingly experiencing new and more complex forms of diversity compared to the past. With respect to ethnic groups, "the concept of super-diversity points to the necessity of considering multi-dimensional conditions and processes affecting immigrants in contemporary society" (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1050). Hyper-diversity, defined as an "intense diversification of the population, not only in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but also with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities" (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013, p. 12), suggests looking beyond fixed traditional categorization of differences based mainly on social and ethnic dimensions that have shaped public actions and discourses, especially in relation to social mix policy. It offers a more comprehensive and detailed picture of urban diversity, potentially covering a wider domain of diversity, beyond the traditional categories of social and economic status, ethnic and residential backgrounds, accounting also for work and activities spaces (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013).

Throughout the evolution of the term 'social mix', we have noticed that the social diversity claimed by policy-makers has been mainly referring to class, income, and more or less tacitly to ethnicity. The acknowledgement that European cities are experiencing new and more complex forms of diversity has important implications on policy-making and social change (Tasan-Kok et al. 2013). Adopting hyper-diversity as a conceptual tool for understanding current urban diversity would probably mean to crumble the basic assumptions of social mix policy.

If we assume that even similar groups are, one way or another, internally *diverse*, then defending the paradigm of social mix become a more critical task. In the past, the discourse on social mix - and more in general on urban renewal - has been monopolised by the dichotomy 'heterogeneity' vs 'homogeneity' in terms of socio-economic and ethnic status. Policy makers used to look at deprived neighbourhoods as homogeneous entities, designing policies that invoke diversification through external factors. This vision has often obfuscated the real internal diversity and has hindered the possibility to grasp potential resources as an asset. In the mainstream vision, social mix provides *one-directional* benefit (i.e. middle and upper classes bringing benefits to lower classes), while the notion of hyper-diversity suggest changing perspective and introducing a *bi-directional* exchange.

If on the one hand diversity can be seen an economic and social resource for European cities, on the other hand it is increasingly perceived as a risk (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013). Paradoxically, it seems that concerns about 'too much homogeneity' in deprived urban neighbourhoods have left room for discourses around 'too much diversity' threatening social cohesion. The change of paradigm is emblematic. Mixing policies have been fostered in deprived neighbourhoods arguing that their social homogeneity undermines social cohesion. Today, the same social cohesion is claimed to be at risk due to 'too much diversity'. Immigration restrictions, the crisis of refugees[12] and the fear of home-grown

[12] Interestingly, while in the past, immigration-related issues (such as ethnic segregation) have been involving European countries at different extent (i.e. North and Central European countries have experienced these

terrorism following the Islamic terrorism attacks in Paris (January and November 2015) and in Brussels (March 2016) are deeply shaping the priorities of European agenda and pushing forward more severe securitisation measures.

It seems that the degree and the kind of acceptable diversity are becoming more and more selective. From past experiences, we know that the approach of social mix has gained consensus after shocking situations for public order and security such as the riots in 2001 and bombing in 2005 in the UK (Arbaci & Rae, 2013). How will the last shocking events impact the policy discourse on social mix? Apparently, a negative connotation attached to diversity - which is a synonym of mix - is prevailing in the current debate. What will be the consequences on social mix as a policy? Whether it may become outdated or change radically in terms of its meaning, there will be significant re-framing opportunities.

2.6 Conclusion

The paper has provided a literature review on social mix, focusing on its origin and evolution as well as on the rationale underlying policy discourses. Broadly, we can define 'social mix' as a status of social balance of neighbourhood population with respect to various variables: income, education, ethnicity, lifestyles. Such balance can be a desirable condition in itself or a means to achieve higher goals. Policy-makers trust in social mix assuming that spatial proximity contributes to enhance intergroup contact with potential benefits for lowest categories, such as greater social capital.

Historically, the idea of social mix has undergone two main phases. In the first phase, which goes from the middle 1800 to the 1980s, the main reference is the Anglo-Saxon world were the concept originated (Sarkissian, 1976). In the second one, the use of this term extended also to European countries, becoming an appealing and fashionable concept for policy-makers (Bolt et al., 2010). The shift has occurred not only in geographical terms, but also in the framework in which the category of social mix entered and shaped urban agendas. While in a first phase, the notion was mainly a planning principle for new housing settlements aiming at creating socially balanced communities beyond class divisions, in a second phase social mix was adopted as a tool to reduce socio-economic segregation. It has been mainly implemented within state-led urban renewal projects tackling social exclusion and neighbourhood effects through housing diversification (Droste et al., 2014; Ostendorf et al., 2001).

With respect to both periods, empirical investigations have shown little, contrary or no support for social mixing as a way to address inequality (Arbaci & Rae, 2013). Studies stress the gap between policy expectations and scientific research (Galster, 2007), and the need to focus on other relevant variables concerning individual conditions, for instance education (Musterd & Andersson, 2005).

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problematics earlier than Southern countries), today the crisis of refugees is a common challenge for the whole Europe.

Besides contradictory empirical evidences regarding specific outcomes of social mix, broader ongoing societal transformations (i.e. consequences of the crisis on housing vulnerability and affordability, reduction of social housing stock, shrinking middle-class and increasing hyper-diversity) contributes to (re)problematize the assumptions underlying this paradigm.

This paper argues that today there might be opportunities to reframe the concept of social mix. Two factors seem to be particularly determinant. Firstly, exacerbating problems of housing affordability in largest cities affecting also middle-class do not create favourable conditions for them to continue performing as 'role model'. Secondly, in an era of hyper-diversity (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013), income and ethnic backgrounds alone are unlikely to be effective criteria for *area-based* policy design, suggesting to go beyond the classic dichotomy between population homogeneity and heterogeneity. In addition, policy discourse is apparently shifting from 'too much homogeneity' to 'too much diversity', loading the latter with increasing negative connotation. How might these dynamics overturn the traditional understanding of social mix? This paper is a first attempt to discuss how, under the current global trends, the conventional view on social mix seems to crumble. At the same time, it puts forward the need to find new perspectives and opportunities to reframe the meaning and the implications of this concept in the current post-crisis, hyper-diverse society.

This literature review contributes by providing a theoretical framework rich in critical points regarding the adaptability of the current framing of social mix in today society. When applying such macro framework, much attention should be paid to the issue of local declination of the re-framing factors of social mix. For example, the definition of middle-class, the profile of those people in housing need as well the forms of diversity might vary over countries, and local specificities might play a significant role in shaping such re-framing. Such peculiarities might be related to contextual background elements such as welfare state systems and social stratification, different understandings of diversity and institutional attitudes towards it, housing policies and different composition of the housing stock.

When dealing with diversity and social mix, it should be noticed there are always contingent issues and factors to take into account (Bolt & Van Kempen, 2013). If on the one hand social mix is widely acknowledged as important, on the other hand *how* diversity - as a proxy of social mix - is defined differs in each national and local context (Galster, 2007). Key concepts in urban and housing studies like 'segregation', 'ghettoization' but also 'social mix' have been all too easily exported from very different contexts, e.g. from US to, and within, Europe. The connotation of social mix is strongly shaped by national or local differences (Rose et al., 2013), and it does not represent a one-size-fits-all recipe producing the same outcomes everywhere. Therefore, we might wonder "to what extent does the transnational policy vocabulary actually connote common goals among urban policy actors in different local and national contexts?" (Rose et al., 2013, p. 432). Further studies that investigate the re-framing process of social mix ought to take into consideration also potential differences

and similarities between different national and local contexts, and stress the importance of transferability issue.

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3. Reframing social mix in affordable housing initiatives in Italy and in the Netherlands. Closing the gap between discourses and practices?

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Resubmitted to Cities

Abstract

European countries are facing rising demand for affordable housing by a widespread and differentiated audience. Both in Italy and in the Netherlands policy-makers and practitioners address this emerging need by implementing new social housing projects targeting diverse social groups – such as students, young households, welfare dependents, and refugees – which results in a fine-grained social mix. This paper discusses the development of these initiatives within wider trends in housing policies and in relation to the domestic debate on social mix in the two countries. Drawing on Magic Mix and Housing Sociale projects as case studies, respectively in the Netherlands and in Italy, we aim to explore and unfold the contemporary meanings and the practices attached to the idea of social mix. In so doing, this paper paves the way for a new conceptualization of social mix in the current post-crisis and hyper-diversified European scenario. We discuss traces of continuity and discontinuity between these forms of social mix and the mainstream idea of tenure mix, which has been a cornerstone of area-based urban renewal policy in many European countries. This paper contributes to the existing literature by offering insights into new practices of social mix in housing sphere.

Keywords: *social mix; Housing Sociale; Magic Mix; Italy; The Netherlands*

3.1 Introduction

Social mix has played a pivotal role within state-led integrated area-based urban renewal policies of deprived neighbourhoods in many Western European countries (Van Gent et al., 2009). Policy-makers have claimed that mixed neighbourhoods would help tackling the so-called negative neighbourhood effects which stem from the socio-spatial segregation of poor

populations (Van Ham et al., 2012). The essential philosophy of social mix assumes that increasing residential proximity between middle- and lower-classes would improve liveability, social cohesion and neighbourhood reputation. In addition, neighbourhood social mix may provide low-income residents with more opportunities to diversify their own social networks through social interaction with middle-income groups (Camina & Wood, 2009) who are supposed to act as 'role models'. However, despite being claimed as a solution for several urban problems (i.e. inequality, deprivation, social exclusion etc.) a large number of studies have questioned the presumed benefits of residential mix (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000; Bolt et al., 2010; Bond et al., 2011; Kleinhans, 2004; Musterd & Andersson, 2005).

In this paper, we put forward an original perspective on the study of social mix by relating its mainstream implementation in the context of deprived neighbourhoods with ongoing trends in housing and broader societal developments in Europe. This includes the neoliberal reconfiguration of welfare states, the effects of post-crisis austerity measures[13], the continuing shortage of affordable housing for low- and middle-income groups, along with new migration flows enlarging the already strong diversity of European cities.

Recent societal trends and political climates might provide opportunities to reframe the concept of 'social mix', marking a turning point in the current debate. In so doing, we contribute to the existing literature by connecting the current debate on social mix to on-going macro dynamics. The central argument in this paper is that a reframing process of the concept 'social mix' in housing field is on-going. However, such reframing does not stand in opposition to earlier definitions of social mix in urban planning and urban renewal policies. In line with current policies and practices of social mix, this paper adds an original conceptualization of this notion taking into account the context of new social housing initiatives addressing mixed audiences at building level. Based on empirical findings, we unfold the 'social mix' concept along five main axes: discourses, target groups, practices, institutional frame, and urban downscaling.

Previous research show that meanings and outcomes of social mix policy are strictly context-dependent (Bolt & Van Kempen, 2013; Rose et al., 2013). In order to account for contextual differences, we draw on a multiple case study approach. The paper looks at contemporary forms of social mix in Italy and in the Netherlands, where innovative, small-scale social housing projects are being developed for a variety of low-income target groups. Despite remarkable differences between these countries, especially in terms of overarching housing and welfare policies, a similar framing of the concept 'social mix' in the housing practices seems to occur. As will be discussed further on, there are a number of commonalities between examined Italian and Dutch social mix projects that makes this comparison relevant. For example: the discourses attached to social mix, the identification of vulnerable and resourceful groups as project targets, a *quid-pro-quo* mechanism regulating the access to affordable housing, and an opportunity-driven approach adopted by all housing providers. We address two research questions: *how is the concept of social mix*

[13] Including the ending of large-scale urban renewal programs targeting the social housing stock in several EU countries.

currently reframed in the context of changing urban and housing policy in Italy and in the Netherlands? What are its main features in terms of theoretical assumptions, policy frame, and target groups?

In the next section, we problematize the concept 'social mix' in light of contemporary macro political and societal transformations. The third and fourth section briefly discuss the domestic debate around social mix in the two research settings, and relate it to the on-going trends in housing sphere. The fifth section explains the research design, stressing the context-sensitive approach adopted. Finally, we discuss our findings based on case studies analysis and interviews with local stakeholders.

3.2 Towards a reframing of the concept 'social mix'?

The idea of social mix in Europe originated and developed throughout the industrial society, characterised by remarkable division between social classes and high stability of labour and housing careers (Sarkissian, 1976). In the post WWII Western Europe, flourishing welfare state and economic prosperity guaranteed relatively easy and affordable access to housing for large portions of society, especially middle-classes (Scanlon et. al, 2014). Households' residential mobility was relatively low, which facilitated the development of territorially based identities, community and neighbourhood belonging (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013).

In the post-industrial society, many of these traits started being questioned. Since the 1980s, a process of erosion of the welfare state has affected many European countries, culminating in increasing socio-economic polarisation and segregation (Tammaru et al., 2016). The growing gap between different social groups risks weakening social cohesion and hampering chances for intergroup relationships (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013).

Bearing in mind contextual specificities, overall similar trends are ongoing throughout Western Europe. Along with precarisation of the labour market, housing careers have become more flexible, contributing to reshape housing markets on both demand and supply sides (Arundel & Doling, 2017). Growing social inequality and the neoliberal turn of welfare state exacerbate the access to affordable housing for a variety of income groups, also as consequence of post-economic crisis austerity measures (Priemus & Whitehead, 2014). The reduction of affordable housing stock in largest cities affects also the 'squeezed' middle-classes (Jonkman & Janssen-Jansen, 2015), who struggle both to access social housing – due to residualization trends – and to afford rising prices on the private market rent. The precarious position of middle-classes in the housing market might depict a new scenario for – already questionable – theoretical assumptions and – unconvincing – empirical evidences of social mix policy.

A basic assumption of social mix is that poor groups living in deprived neighborhoods lack of positive role models, mainly defined in terms of social classes. Thus, the presence of middle-classes should help to activate mechanisms of distant or proximal role modeling, meaning stimulating marginalized people to emulate desirable behaviors of higher-class neighbors either by observing them from distance or by having direct social interaction

(Graves, 2011)[14]. Yet, research show that despite residential propinquity, middle-classes tend to avoid mixing with lower-class neighbours in public spaces and in other domains of everyday life (Pinkster, 2014; Watt, 2009). Indeed, social contact is much more a matter of lifestyles than simply tenure mixing (Kleinhans, 2004). In addition, role models other than neighbours, notably mass media, are able to influence individual behaviors too (Bandura, 1977).

Social mix policies in the post 1990s aim to increase neighbourhoods' diversity, mainly defined in terms of residents' income, social classes and tenure composition of the housing stock. However, a recent strand of research puts emphasis on wider forms of diversity characterizing the 21st century society, attaching this term with new meanings and bringing about broader implications. Next to 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2007), Tasan-Kok and colleagues (2013) coined the term 'hyper-diversity' to indicate an "intense diversification of the population, not only in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but also with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities" (p. 12), suggesting that income and social class alone might not be any more the only criteria for effective diversity-oriented policy design. Adopting a hyper-diversity perspective might question the basis for the definition of role model groups since an interpretation of role models primarily grounded on socio-economic criteria (i.e. income and social classes) is central to the social mix debate. In addition, policy discourse is apparently shifting from concerns about 'too much homogeneity' to 'too much diversity', loading the latter with increasing negative connotation (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013) that questions the desirability of social mixing.

The role of residential neighbourhood in shaping people's networks and social contact is object of academic debate, in light of increasing mobility and online communications opportunities (Van Kempen & Wissink, 2014). A 'sedentarist' view of social mix has dominated policy assumptions (Gwyther, 2009), which hardly accounts for social relations and interaction out of residential neighbourhoods. The different ways of experiencing social contact (i.e. through ICT) question the territorially-based character of social mix, and more broadly the effectiveness of area-based policies (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013).

In order to address similar challenges, like those aforementioned, urban and housing policymakers are tempted to copy and paste ideas, tools and policies, often without proper accountability of national and local peculiarities. Social mix is no exception, as this concept has travelled worldwide in the past (Bridge et al., 2012).

In the next two sections, we review the debate on social mix in Italy and in the Netherlands in relation to each domestic context and main trends in housing. Particular attention will be paid to address the 'local' declination of general concepts that have appeared most frequently in the literature debate on social mix, notably *discourses* (i.e. rationale, aims and institutional frame of social mix) and *practices* (i.e. scopes, target groups and means of implementation of social mix).

[14] See also the social learning theory (Bandura 1977) and the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954).

3.3 Social mix: a 'silent issue' in the Italian housing debate

With public housing stock accounting for only 5.5% and a homeownership rate of around 72% (Eurostat, n.d.), Italy is an emblematic representation of the metaphor 'housing as the wobbly pillar under of the welfare state'. As a typical Southern European housing system (Allen et al., 2004), a residual share of public housing accommodates the most vulnerable groups, while the private sector – traditionally supported by the state – has taken up the task of providing housing for more affluent groups, including low-middle income households.

Since the 2001 reform of Constitution, housing policy in Italy has been regional-based. A devolution process has transferred housing competences from the central state to regions, creating a fragmented national scenario in terms of housing policy (Mugnano & Palvarini, 2013). The reform also laid the foundations for greater involvement of third-sector organisations (foundations, cooperatives, private-social actors) in the provision of local welfare services and housing.

One of the most important changes affecting the Italian housing system concerns the shift towards a public-private cooperation. Besides existing public housing supply (*Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica* in Italian), which is fully provided by public housing companies or municipalities, third sector housing organisations (i.e. foundations, cooperatives or social enterprises) deliver and manage a new or refurbished supply of social rented units (known as *Housing Sociale* in Italian). Most of newly constructed Housing Sociale units are built through new financing arrangements such as the Integrated Funding System (*Sistema Integrato di Fondi*) that combines national and local funds to build new social housing (see Housing Plans 2009 and 2014).

One of the major driver of such governance shift is the need to address a widening demand for affordable housing of specific segments of population, which a dualistic housing system is unable to meet. These segments, known as grey area (*area grigia*), vary according to socio-economic and social conditions (people with unstable income, low-middle income households, single-parent households, young households, temporary workers), ethnic background (migrants), and lifestyles (students). These groups are entrapped in a limbo either because the availability of public housing is insufficient to cover their needs, or because they cannot afford rising prices in the private rental market. Such unmet housing need has been detected by third-sector housing organisations (i.e. housing cooperatives or foundations) through a (rising) number of housing projects labelled as 'Housing Sociale' (HS). We refer to HS as a set of social-oriented housing projects targeting a diversity of groups in housing need, the grey area, who lacks of adequate housing protection and struggle to find affordable homes, especially in largest cities.

The 2009 National Housing Plan formalises such new configuration of housing system, within which third-sector actors consolidated their role in providing good quality housing at affordable prices to heterogeneous groups, which would serve also as means to make local communities more cohesive (Poggio & Boreiko, 2017).

The political *discourse* around social mix in Italy is rather 'fuzzy' and unclear, especially if compared to the Dutch counterpart (see next section). The relevance of such policy tool in the Italian context might be questionable. There is a common agreement on the fact that Italian 'compact' cities can benefit from a good level of socio-ethnic mix. Low levels of socio-spatial segregation along with residual share of public housing have made the rhetoric of social mix less pervasive compared to other EU countries (Bricocoli & Cucca 2014), though it is still present. Traces of social mix can be found already in the first public housing national programme in 1949 (*Piano Fanfani*), which implicitly encouraged the residential proximity between social rented tenants and homeowners (*target groups*) (Mugnano & Palvarini, 2013). More recently, several policy tools have been deployed to diversify the social composition of public housing tenants. In 1993, a right-to-buy law (*Legge 560/1993*) entered into force creating the conditions for tenure mixing operations (*practices*) within public rented sector. This law can be considered part of a broader and longstanding strategy of demise of public housing stock by the national government.

The fragmentation of welfare and housing policy has increased the territorial divide amongst regions and cities. Within the national scenario, the Lombardy region can be considered a best practice in terms of ability to combine public-private partnerships aimed to promote social innovation in welfare and housing initiatives. In this framework, Lombardy - of which Milan is the capital - stood out as a breeding institutional ground for the development of social mix policies since the 2000s. In line with other EU countries, local authorities adopted social mix policy in the *frame* of urban renewal programmes at *neighbourhood scale* (Mugnano & Costarelli, 2015) as well as in housing policies that deliver new residential opportunities for specific *target groups*, like middle-classes (Belotti, 2017).

The Italian housing system is currently experiencing a transition phase. At institutional level, public-private partnerships strengthen the engagement of third-sector housing organisations in new practices of affordable housing solutions targeting socially mixed groups (i.e. HS).

In today's public debate, HS is presented as a versatile tool to cope with a number of social vulnerability-related issues. Improving social cohesion through community building represents one of the most commonly used *discourses,* which is associated to such housing practices. Not the least, in a country where welfare and housing were traditionally separated domains of public action (see Allen et al., 2004), the HS model aims to bridge this gap by acknowledging housing as a component of broader social policy. We will now switch our perspective to the Dutch context and debate.

3.4 A persistent ideal in a changing context: the Netherlands

The share of the social rented stock in the Netherlands is currently around 30% (Eurostat, n.d.), revealing a gradual decrease over the last 20 years. Traditionally attractive and accessible for a wide range of income groups, including middle-classes (Priemus, 2003), social housing is provided by housing associations (*woningcorporaties*), private organisations

operating within the frame of specific public law (*Woningwet*) since the early years of the 20th century. Affordable housing provision for all socioeconomic group is a cornerstone of the Dutch welfare state, classified as a crossover between conservative and socio-democratic regimes (Hoekstra, 2003). Nevertheless, the Dutch social rented sector is increasingly moving towards residualization, targeting almost exclusively low-income groups (Hoekstra, 2017). Such a shift is also a manifestation of the neo-liberal restructuring of the welfare state since the 1990s (Musterd, 2014). Besides the residualization of the social rental sector, the Dutch housing market is experiencing flexibilization and precarisation trends (for extended discussion see Huisman, 2016). In 2015 a new law entered into force (*Wet Doorstroming Huurmarkt*) allowing new forms of short-term rental contracts. The Dutch rental market discloses a mismatch between those households who benefit from a 'protected' position in the rental market and those who struggle to access it on permanent and affordable basis.

In recent years, the question of housing affordability has become more pertinent in the Netherlands and it is now back at the centre of the political discussion. This issue was first raised following the large inflow of refugees and asylum seekers in 2015. Soon after, along with recent welfare reforms of the care system and social services (Dijkhoff, 2014) and the introduction of stricter allocation rules of social housing to the lowest-income tenants (*passend toewijzen*) (Hoekstra, 2017), it became clear that a pool of people (so-called *spoedzoekers*) was also concerned by similar problems. According to recent welfare reforms, welfare dependents such as elderly, psychiatric patients and homeless people are now supposed to live independently. Several housing associations started to think about possible solutions to accommodate a plurality of social groups urgently looking for housing who differ in terms of lifestyles (students), ethnicity (status holders, migrant workers), and social conditions (young households, people with mental disorders or less invalidating problems, homeless, anti-squatters[15]). These groups face difficulties in accessing the regular rental market, either due to affordability-related problems in the private sector or long waiting lists in the social rental sector caused by strong competition. A recent Dutch research report (Van der Velden et al., 2016) introduced the term 'Magic Mix' (MM) to indicate a new typology of small-scale social housing initiatives, mainly on temporary basis, coming to the forefront in several middle-sized and large Dutch cities.

Social mix is a longstanding issue in the Dutch urban and housing policy. *Discourses* and *practices* around the notion of social mix have been cyclical, following government priorities and different urban agenda (Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009; Van der Velden et al., 2018). The idea of social mix became very dominant in policy discourses and practices throughout the 1990s in the context of urban restructuring programmes (*institutional frame*) tackling socio-spatial segregation. From 1994 onwards, the Big Cities Policy enabled 31 cities to draft physical and socio-economic measures to revitalise problematic districts. More specifically, the Urban Renewal Act (*Wet Stedelijke Vernieuwing*) of 2000 launched long-term urban

[15] Renters occupying empty buildings as live-in security guards (Huisman, 2016).

restructuring process that included demolition and reconstruction operations in post-WWII social housing districts (Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009; Kleinhans, 2012).

At the beginning of the new millennium, the debate on social mix shifted from socioeconomic to ethnic terms, as the spatial concentration of ethnic minorities was increasingly perceived as detrimental to integration (Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009). Building on the policy as carved out in the Urban Renewal Act, a slightly different policy approach (*40 Wijkenaanpak*) targeted 40 Dutch urban districts from 2007 onwards, aiming to improve social cohesion in those neighbourhoods with an over-representation of ethnic minorities and low-income households. Housing diversification (*practice*), which increases the proximity between low- and middle-income households (*target groups*), continued to play a pivotal role in the achievement of mixed post-war neighbourhoods. In this paper we explore how the ideal of social mix is been reframing since the ending of Urban Renewal Act in 2015 within the context of MM initiatives.

3.5 Research design

Previous research showed that the connotation of social mix, especially in terms of discourses and aims, is strongly shaped by contextual differences at national and/or local levels (Rose et al., 2013; Veldboer et al., 2002). Thus, a multiple case studies research in different settings (countries) allows a greater understanding of each peculiarities. Our focus is on the mobile nature of social mix concept and on its implications for policy and practices. Following McCann and Ward's (2012) approach of 'policy assemblage, mobility and mutations', we consider social mix as dynamic and mobile assemblage of ideas, assumptions and practices, which we aim to unfold in the context of affordable housing initiatives in Italy and in the Netherlands.

Considering the exploratory nature of our research questions and our available resources, we adopted a qualitative approach using four case studies (social housing projects). Social housing initiatives include two HS and two MM projects respectively in Italy and the Netherlands, chosen upon specific criteria: (1) realisation time after 2008 (outbreak of economic crisis); (2) target socially heterogeneous groups; (3) location in cities with high problems of housing affordability.

The Italian case studies are Ospitalità Solidale and Casa dell'Accoglienza. The first project consists of 24 small-sized dwellings scattered in several public housing estates situated in two neighbourhoods in Milan, i.e. Niguarda and Molise Calvairate. Dwellings are allocated at below market rent price for maximum two years to young people aged between 18 and 30 years old, who are asked to engage in supportive and solidarity activities, e.g. organizing convivial moments such as meals or gardening workshops, to the benefit of sitting public housing tenants for at least 10 hours per month. Casa dell'Accoglienza provides short-term accommodation for a variety of households in need of affordable and/or temporary housing solutions in a peripheral municipality, i.e. San Donato Milanese, located in the southeast of Milan. By entering such housing project, the most vulnerable tenants (i.e. evicted

households, welfare dependents etc.) will have the opportunity to expand their social networks and benefit from the contact with other 'resourceful' tenants (i.e. students) to overcome temporarily problematic situations.

The Dutch case studies are Startblok Riekerhaven in Amsterdam and Majella Wonen in Utrecht. Startblok Riekerhaven consists of more than 500 social housing pre-fabricated units, which are home to young people between 18 and 27 years old. Half of the tenants are asylum seekers and half are Dutch. It is assumed that the integration of newcomers in the city, especially in terms of learning new language, works better if Dutch people and asylum seekers live close to each other. In this project, all tenants are actively involved in the housing management process (self-management) for which they are responsible. The Majella Wonen project in Utrecht has been established in a residential estate that was initially set to be demolished. It consists of 70 social housing dwellings. Half of these dwellings are allocated to 'regular' tenants and half to 'vulnerable' tenants who have recently left social care institutions or shelter facilities. The aim of Majella Wonen project is to build a supportive community which can facilitate vulnerable tenants to form new social networks that will ultimately improve their social inclusion in society. Similarly to Ospitalità Solidale in Milan, also in Majella Wonen 'regular' tenants are expected to contribute to community building activities, for 16 hours per month, as part of their tenancy agreement.

Tables 1 and 2 offer a schematic description of these case studies. From a comparative overview, it can be noticed that in Italy both the scale of initiatives and the length of tenancy are far smaller than in the Netherlands. We interpret such dissimilarity as a prominent sign of distinct traditions in social housing development and diffusion of social mix strategy in the two national contexts (see previous sections).

3.5.1 Methods and analysis

Between January and September 2017, we conducted 26 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders (one hour each on average) through a snowball sampling approach. Respondents included three key informants (researchers and civil servants), 17 housing practitioners and project managers (seven in Italy and ten in the Netherlands), and six public servants (four in Italy and two in the Netherlands). We did not include tenants as potential targets of our interviews since the aim of this paper, which is part of a larger research project, was to study the concept of social mix from a practitioners and policy-makers' perspective. We were interested to explore how practitioners and policy-makers implement social mix, including the discourses, rather than exploring tenants' perceptions and opinions about living in a mixed housing project.

Interviews were taped, transcribed, and coded using Atlas.ti. Coding strategy was mainly a deductive approach deriving from the mainstream framing of the concept 'social mix' as found in the literature, that is policymakers' ambition to attract middle-class (*target groups*) 'role model' households (*discourse*) in low-income neighbourhoods (*scale*), by means of tenure diversification (*practices*) in the frame of urban renewal policy (*institutional frame*).

Accordingly, coding procedure resulted in two main domains, *discourses* and *practices*, and three sub-domains, *target groups, institutional frame*, and *urban downscaling*, which all together build up a new framing of the concept 'social mix' (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Schematic overview of concepts and domains.

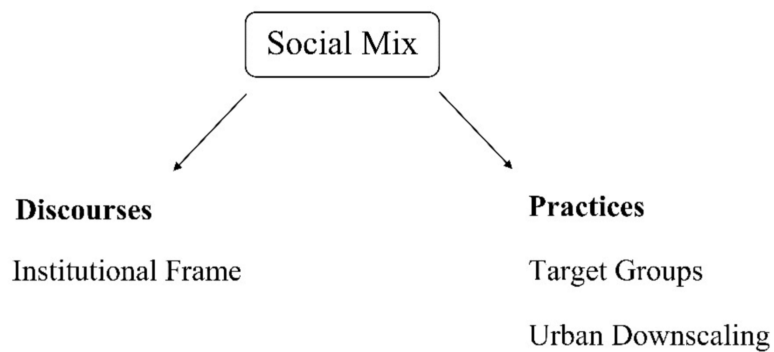

Table 1. Main features of the case studies (Housing Sociale).

Name	*Dwellings*	*Tenancy (max)*	*Target groups*	*Partners*	*Start*	*Characteristics*
Ospitalità Solidale	24	Two years	Young people (18-30 years old) mixed up with low-income, public housing tenants.	Housing cooperative DAR=CASA, associations Arci, Comunità Progetto, Municipality of Milan.	2014	Scattered social mix programme in refurbished public housing units in District 4 and 9.
Casa dell'Accoglienza	Six (three studios, three two-room apartments)	18 months	People with disability or less invalidating problems, students, elderly, low-middle income groups, single parent households.	Municipality of San Donato Milanese, cooperatives: La Strada, Consorzio SIS, Spazio Aperti Servizi.	2015	Temporary accommodation for households in urgent housing need. Two-storeys house with communal ground floor available to tenants and neighbourhood initiatives.

Source: own elaboration based on interviews transcripts

Table 2. Case studies description (Magic Mix).

Name	*Dwellings*	*Tenancy (max)*	*Target groups*	*Partners*	*Start*	*Characteristics*
Startblok Riekerhaven	565 (463 studios, 102 rooms in shared units)	Five years	Status-holders and Dutch students or workers (18-27 years).	Housing association De Key, housing organisation Socius Wonen, Municipality of Amsterdam.	2016	Two/three-storeys blocks of removable housing units where tenants are mixed door-to-door. Renters are expected to manage communal spaces and liveability-related issues by themselves.
Majella Wonen	70 social housing units	Three years	35 dwellings allocated to self-selected tenants (Portaal) and 35 dwellings to vulnerable ones (De Tussenvoorziening clients).	Housing association Portaal, social service organisation Tussenvoorziening.	Mid-2016	The community provides guidance and support to help vulnerable tenants gaining self-reliance. Tenants are mixed door-to-door.

Source: own elaboration based on interviews transcripts.

3.6 Rephrasing the concept 'social mix' in five domains

3.6.1 Discourses

Common to all examined initiatives, social mix is, above all, a by-product of affordable housing projects, which primarily seek to satisfy the housing demand of different groups. However, higher expectations are attached to the mix between vulnerable (i.e. status-holders, welfare dependents, homeless) and resourceful groups (mainly students and young people) in terms of better opportunities of social inclusion for the former.

Bearing in mind that in socially mixed communities inter-group interaction was often hampered by middle-classes' avoidance towards marginalised groups (see literature section), these initiatives put forward a new perspective. As one Dutch respondent argued:

> *We wanted to transform NIMBY to WIMBY approach (…) by appealing to people who think they can live together with fragile people and maybe give some help, it's all right for them. We appeal to a very different interest and I think that's the genius of this concept. We give different starts by appealing to positive energies and interests…so from NIMBY to WIMBY it's the most crucial idea and maybe even a strategy for our housing association because we have more and more people in similar situations. (Practitioner, Portaal)*[16]

Interestingly, social inclusion as project goal builds on the idea of self-reliance. By joining these projects on a temporarily basis, vulnerable tenants can find a supportive environment to start afresh after difficult periods of their life. This argument applies especially for those projects where vulnerable tenants used to rely on public welfare support (i.e. Majella Wonen and Casa dell'Accoglienza). In both cases practitioners aim to boost self-reliance by shaping vulnerable tenants behaviour (see Manzi, 2010). Yet, in the two contexts, this goal is pursued in different ways. In *Casa dell'Accoglienza*, project staff (including social workers) designs *ad hoc* programs during tenant(s) stay in the project as a tool to achieve desired changes:

> *Local authorities demand us to draft a training project to foster self-sufficiency (accompagnamento all'autonomia) (…) for each individual according to his/her need. Self-sufficiency means that individuals are able to leave this project on their own feet, (…) with the ability to support themselves. (Practitioner, La Strada, own translation)*

[16] In the Netherlands, due to recent reforms, municipalities and housing associations must provide accommodation to a growing number of vulnerable groups who were previously living in specific social care institutions (see Dijkhoff, 2014).

In *Majella Wonen*, greater emphasis is placed on creating mixed community (referring to the members of housing project) as a tool to provide positive role models to 'get vulnerable tenants back on track', including incentives for tenants who successfully internalize desirable norms of conduct.

> *First aim was to create a community where fragile tenants could make a better start than in 'normal' situations. We thought that this could be better for them and for people who choose to live in this Magic Mix. (…) In three years, if this is going well, vulnerable tenants will have their own regular rental contact with Portaal, and Tussenvoorziening leaves the scene. (Practitioner, Portaal)*

Although the link between social mix and (inclusive) communities is far from new in the debate (see Arthurson, 2002), we found traces of discontinuity which relate to current 'responsibilisation' and 'activation' discourses in welfare systems in many Western European countries (Peeters, 2013). Thus, the degree of inclusiveness of mixed community results from a twofold dynamic: on the one hand, the extent to which resourceful tenants are able to mobilize pro-actively individual resources to the benefits of the collectivity (*activation*); on the other hand, the extent to which boosting self-reliance through politics of responsible behaviours does effectively equal to increasing social inclusion (*responsibilisation*). The next section provides further insights on how resourceful target groups contribute to realise mentioned discourses.

3.6.2 Target groups

Early 21st century social mix policies used to target low- and middle-income residents (Kleinhans, 2004), whereas examined social mix initiatives distinguish between resourceful tenants (i.e. those in relatively advantage position like young workers or students), and vulnerable tenants (i.e. welfare dependents, low-income, and refugees). Of course there are significant differences between social groups, e.g. between refugees and people with disabilities, even though they are both considered as 'vulnerable tenants'. These differences are likely to influence the outcomes of social mix.

In both research settings, we observed that the role model idea underlying these social mix projects is built upon the differentiation between 'resourceful' and 'vulnerable' tenants. Common to all case studies is the idea that resourceful people should be willing to provide vulnerable neighbours with help, and mobilize their capabilities to contribute to the benefits of the collectivity (see previous section), in this case the housing project.

> *Resourceful residents might be a driving force for vulnerable ones. (…) They can bring a know-how, even basic things like using computers. They can be reference persons in the project for other people who haven't same skills. (Practitioner, La Strada, own translation)*

> *We still keep on mixing people and we think that is good especially for refugees and for vulnerable people. They can live together with other people and it is always good when people can meet and learn from each other, so we make living rooms where people can live, cook, chill together, watch TV or whatever (Policymaker, Municipality of Amsterdam)*

While in traditional social mix policies target groups were defined mainly along income or tenure differentiation, in these projects different criteria apply in the selection of target groups who wish to become 'a driving force' for somebody else.

While, generally, no specific criteria other than urgent need apply to the selection of vulnerable groups, in the case of resourceful residents, since they should be willing to 'act' as role models, practitioners often carefully select candidates through face-to-face interviews and/or motivation letters. Such selection is based on a combination of objective (i.e. income, age, citizenship etc.) and subjective requirements. The latter may include the endowment of personal attitudes towards social commitment, 'motivation' or 'enthusiasm to participate', meaning:

> *People must be motivated to live here with refugees, have attitudes to help persons from other countries and introduce them to Amsterdam, or are curious about how is to live with them. People who are willing to be part of a community to build up here (Practitioner, De Key).*

In our view, the reference to those subjective features echoes the concept of 'hyper-diversity' (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013), in a way that diversity – as a proxy of social mix – does not only refer to ethnicity or income levels, but includes age, life styles and personal preferences such as motivation and attitudes (which are difficult to gauge and to account).

Mixed communities are not anymore a combination of low and middle-income groups in different tenures. In our case studies, the social diversity refers to 'outsiders' on the domestic housing markets, whose demand for affordable and/or urgent housing solutions cannot be satisfied by the current supply. To a certain extent, it is by definition a fragile social mix of low-income tenants (young people seeking social housing units) and groups with other forms of social vulnerability. In such situation, some (resourceful) people can turn personal attitudes (e.g. sociability) into a sort of 'bargaining counter' to increase their chances to find affordable housing. As the next section will show, the described situation is part of a mutual obligation framework amongst future tenants and housing providers.

3.6.3 Practices

A grounding assumption in these social mix initiatives is that diversity can be a strength for meaningful relationships amongst residents. Likewise, it is evident that living side by side

does not make necessarily good neighbours as envisaged by mainstream assumptions of social mix (see theoretical section). According to our respondents, social mix is intended not only as residential proximity of different social groups, but as a sum of daily practices that enable positive encounters and community building. As a respondent argued:

> *I don't think it's a good idea when you build, put people there and then say 'good luck!' I think you have to do more. It might work but it might be possible that the atmosphere there is not OK, and you don't have any control in your complex. (Practitioner, De Key)*

Daily practices range from sport activities, movie nights, language exchange, walks to garden or cooking activities. Not the least 'it's also about little things [such as] (…) step in and say hello!' (Practitioner, Portaal). Such practices reflect the idea of 'proximal role modelling' as diverse people are expected to interact, rather than just observing each other (see literature section).

The practices of social mixing are embedded in a *quid pro quo* rationale. Selected tenants commit themselves to be involved in social-oriented activities aiming to build trust relationships and provide mutual support. The tenants can benefit from lower rent prices (compared to private rental market) or quick housing provision ('jumping' long waiting lists for regular allocation of social housing dwellings) while in return they are asked to invest a certain amount of time in social activities. A principle of conditionality, meaning the admittance to housing projects in return to solidarity activities. is common to both Italian and Dutch cases:

> *We look for tenants who will pay lower rent (...) and in return he/she will pledge his/her time to manage other tenants' necessity, such as helping old people. (Practitioner, La Strada, own translation).*
>
> *You join the project with the idea of helping and supporting each other (…) we also made an agreement…a little bit of commitment: you agree to spend like 4 hours per week on a project. (Practitioner, Portaal)*

Conditionality applies both in the selection procedure of candidates, in order to establish the endowment of needed attitudes (see previous section), and during the tenancy, to assess tenants' contribution to project objectives (i.e. through periodic meetings and interviews).

Two observations arise. First, while *quid pro quo* mechanisms are not new in other welfare domains, such as work and social benefits (see e.g. Veldboer et al., 2015), these initiatives show how similar principles are entering the housing field. They provide potential insights to explore how conditionality is reshaping the access to certain social housing opportunities within the broader paradigm shift from traditional to post welfare regimes in Western Europe. Second, social mix as a 'cure' for marginalized groups shifted from top-

down tenure differentiation strategies, usually policy-based (see Kleinhans, 2004), to bottom-up, project-based approaches to boost everyday practices of social interaction at building scale. We will now shift to the last two domains, which explore institutional and spatial dimensions of these projects.

3.6.4 Institutional frame

By 'institutional frame', we mean the set of relevant laws, policies, reforms, including actors, in which the idea of social mix is contextualized and implemented. Social mix was a fundamental element of area-based urban restructuring policies in the Netherlands (*Wet Stedelijke Vernieuwing*) (Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009; Kleinhans, 2012), and in Italy (see the National Programme of Neighbourhood Contracts - *Contratti di Quartiere*). Despite contextual differences, both policies were partly funded by central governments and applied nationwide to low-income neighbourhoods (mainly of social housing). Housing associations (HAs) in the Netherlands, and public housing companies (*Aziende Casa*) in Italy were key players in social mix policies. Public housing stock in Italy is owned either by regional public housing companies (ex-IACP) or by municipalities. In Lombardy, public housing company ALER (*Azienda Lombarda Edilizia Residenziale*) owns and manages most of the stock.

In terms of institutional frame, our cases studies suggest a paradigm shift from *policy-based* (e.g. *Wet Stedelijke Vernieuwing* and *Contratti di Quartiere*) to *project-based* approach. Both HS and MM initiatives are jointly run by *ad hoc* local-based partnerships involving housing providers (cooperatives and housing associations), public authorities (city governments), and other organisations which bring relevant expertise to the projects, such as socio-cultural associations (Italy) and/or social care organisations (The Netherlands).

The local-based character is an outcome of broader devolution processes from central to local authorities that occurred in the two countries at different timing. While devolution trends in housing and welfare field in Italy date back to early 2000s, the Dutch counterpart experienced massive devolution processes since the 2014 Social Support Act (see literature sections). Although such processes mainly concerned welfare services, these had evident implications also in housing. In the name of informal care, many care homes in the Netherlands have been progressively vacated. As far as possible, vulnerable or socially disadvantaged people, such as elderly, homeless or psychiatric patients, ought to rely on the resources provided by citizens and communities in urban neighbourhoods. In addition, parallel to the ending of Urban Renewal Act, the 2015 Housing Act re-adjusted housing associations' tasks by forcing them to stick to their core business (i.e. providing shelters only for low-income people) and by reducing their freedom to build more expensive houses for middle-income households (a cornerstone of Dutch social mix approach). In this light, it is likely that Dutch HAs will have to accommodate a growing number of socially disadvantaged and low-income people in the future (e.g. in MM projects) while limiting tenure mixing operations in neighbourhood regeneration. This implies a shift from area-based urban

renewal policies to more individual-based policies targeting vulnerable groups (see Van der Velden et al., 2018).

As mentioned earlier, in Italy, downscaling processes from central government to local authorities (*regionalisation*) date back to early 2000s. Focussing on Region Lombardy as the context of our empirical research, the last decade witnessed a greater involvement of Third Sector housing organisations in HS initiatives (see literature section). This has occurred in parallel to – and partly because of – the declining capacity of regional public housing company (ALER) to address the housing needs of diverse social groups (also due to financial limits). This provides a possible explanation of the increased tendency to establish partnerships with private housing organisations (limited or not for profit) to enlarge the provision of affordable housing for mixed audience.

> *More than 600 (public housing) units have been put into the hands of third-sector organisations to deal with social disadvantaged groups, whose needs can be addressed also through those apartments that we (public housing company) made available to these organisations. [These apartments] need some refurbishment interventions to comply with minimum standards of living so associations can do this investment can have the apartment for several years (Civil servant, ALER Milano, own translation)*

The 2016 regional housing law (*Legge 16/2016*), which will enter into force in 2018, further strengthen this development as it 'entitles private stakeholders and third-sector organisations to manage public housing units' (Civil servant, ALER Milano, own translation).

From a spatial scale perspective, the paradigm shift from post-1990s *policy-based* approach to *project-based* approach means a downscaling of the concept 'social mix' from neighbourhood(s) to building(s) level.

3.6.5 Urban downscaling

Both in the Dutch urban restructuring policy (*Stedelijke Vernieuwing*) and in the Italian National Programmes of Neighbourhood Contracts (*Contratti di Quartiere*), social mix applied to specific neighbourhoods with relatively high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Conversely, in all case studies, practitioners tend to implement social mix when opportunities arises, regardless of location. It is no coincidence that, frequently, such opportunities are vacant buildings (Casa dell'Accoglienza, Ospitalità Solidale, Majella Wonen) or empty plots of land filled with removable houses (Startblok Riekerhaven).

In today's austerity climate and cutbacks to public spending, providing affordable housing is a continuous challenge for policymakers (Mulliner & Maliene, 2013). In the Dutch situation, new construction of social housing is going very slow and in insufficient numbers to cater for the growing demand. As mentioned, recent welfare reforms left lots of empty spaces in former care homes for elderly people and this is where some HAs seek to

implement new MM projects. One of the most emblematic examples is Genderhof (Eindhoven) with almost 200 apartments converted into flexible housing for different groups. In Italy, the high number of (publicly owned) vacant dwellings is often due to mismanagement reasons (e.g. lacking maintenance or substandard for regular allocation). Until recently, this situation was not particularly problematic as many Italian households could benefit from relatively high levels of tenure security. Today, however, as a new the housing question is back at the forefront (see literature section), vacant stock represents an unused asset that could more efficiently allocated to address emerging housing needs.

The intent to maximize benefits from disposable resources to cope with unmet housing demand is clearly present in both case studies, suggesting the sharing of a 'doing more with less' philosophy. In our Dutch and Italian respondents' words:

> *Eight or nine years ago that building was set to be demolished (…) to build more middle-class dwellings. We did a step back and decided to maintain and repair it (…). We saw the opportunity to make a new mix in building that was already there. (Practitioner, Portaal)*
>
> *We already had those houses. We haven't bought them, we only had to move and renew them a little bit. So we can exploit them for nine more years. (Practitioner, De Key)*

Due to financial limits, public housing companies like ALER struggle to maintain the units in good conditions, so we look for those individuals or organisations who, even with small investment of money (10-15,000 euro), can do some maintenance work (e.g. changing doors or toilets) by themselves. In return, we offer a discount on charges. This way allows us to value our stock, which, otherwise, could not be rent due to current normative restrictions. (Civil servant, ALER Milano, own translation).

Vacancies result from very different dynamics in the two countries and produce different configurations, scales and layouts of social mix. In the Italian case studies, where vacant units could be considered as a 'structural' feature due to longstanding disregard of public housing stock, vacancies are scattered in different public housing neighbourhoods and buildings. This might results either in fine-grained social mix at building level (Casa dell'Accoglienza) or in 'pepper-potting' social mix programmes filling empty units in public housing estates (Ospitalità Solidale). Within this frame, social mix results from the matching between existing opportunities (public housing units that are made available for HS projects) and the current demand of social housing (social profile of households). It follows that 'smallest [available] units are usually allocated to singles or couples while bigger ones to larger households' (Practitioner, DAR=CASA, own translation). In that sense, Italian practitioners retain less room of manoeuvre in designing type and balance of social mix as they have to stick to broader structural conditions (e.g. available dwellings and buildings), at

least in the HS initiatives taking place in publicly owned stock (as those examined in this paper).

In the Netherlands, vacant spaces where HAs decide to launch MM projects can be considered as much more linked to circumstantial consequences of recent political reforms (i.e. healthcare), which, however, might predict more structural changes in the future. In these contexts, project managers benefit from relatively more freedom to decide to whom allocating dwellings and in which percentages (balance). As both Dutch case studies show, project managers opted for allocating units to vulnerable and resourceful categories in equal numbers (50% each) and according to a *door-to-door* configuration, pursuing the maximum spatial proximity between different groups at the smaller scale (same building, same floors).

The 'grabbing opportunities' approach, discussed above, recalls the dichotomy that we highlighted in relation to the *discourses* underpinning social mix in the examined initiatives. This refers, on the one hand, to social mix as the by-product of structural mismatches in the housing systems and, on the other hand, to social mix as an explicit strategy to foster social inclusion of the weakest component of housing projects through proximal role modelling mechanisms triggered by committed tenants. On this basis, we argue that the 'silver thread' running through all the domains that compose such reframing process of 'social mix' is the shared belief to make a virtue out of necessity.

3.7 Discussion and conclusion

The societal and historical context influences policy approaches, discourses, and values attached to the ideas of social mix and mixed community (Cole & Goodchild, 2001). Within this framework, we have investigated how the concept 'social mix' is being reframed in times of deep socio-economic transformations fuelled by austerity politics and welfare retrenchment, growing socio-spatial segregation, increasing diversification of European cities, and shortage of affordable housing.

Starting from McCann and Ward's (2012) approach of 'policy assemblage, mobility and mutations', we have conceptualised social mix as a dynamic and mobile assemblage of ideas, assumptions and practices, unfolding in the recently changed context of affordable housing initiatives in Italy and in the Netherlands. Although housing and welfare systems in these countries are remarkably different, a similar reframing of the concept 'social mix' seems to occur, which continues to be important in post-crisis social housing provision, but in different 'assemblages' from the pre-crisis context in both countries.

We empirically examined four recent affordable housing projects, respectively Housing Sociale in Italy and Magic Mix in the Netherlands, which target a mix of social groups with urgent housing needs. In so doing, we contribute to the existing literature a new post-crisis framing of the concept 'social mix' described along five domains: discourses, target groups, practices, institutional frame, urban downscaling.

In conclusion, we identify two specific aspects that have emerged from our analysis and provide clear evidence of a reframing of the concept of social mix in recent years.

Firstly, instead of attracting *middle-classes* into low-income *neighbourhoods* – a key element of the highly criticised frame of the pre-2015 social mix policy via tenure mix – the analysed initiatives aim to bring in *resourceful* tenants. Together with vulnerable tenants, they create a fine-grained social mix at *building* level. Interestingly, the adjective 'resourceful' does not refer to a better economic condition (i.e. a relatively higher income) but to the disposal of (relatively higher) socio-cultural and human capital and to the willingness to make it available to all the other tenants in the housing projects. The attribution of the 'role model' function to resourceful tenants indicates an utterly new approach in social mix discourses, recognising the importance of personal attitudes and motivation to interact with neighbours from different socio-cultural backgrounds over and beyond the differentiation in terms of tenures and income levels. In order to better understand the magnitude of such paradigm shift we should also recall that, in the 'mainstream' social mix policy, one of the main reasons why the 'role model' assumption has proved ineffective was the post-intervention lack of social contact between low- and middle-income groups, also because of different lifestyles.

Secondly, social mixing as a set of daily practices requires that tenants engage themselves in community building activities on regular basis. Although, the short-term tenancy makes it clear that these initiatives represent a temporal and/or a transitional phase in one's own housing career (one may also wonder how far these strategies are realistically addressing housing problems) warm and lasting relationships among neighbours are essential to nourish the community development process.

Notwithstanding the commendable intentions, in the long-term tenants' efforts may inevitably face high and low tides which might jeopardize the social sustainability of the project. To this regard, two key mechanisms should guarantee the presumed effectiveness of the current social mix assemblage: the relatively high *turnover* rate of residents, and the *conditionality* element, that is the mutual agreement to take part in community-oriented activities in return to affordable rents.

The high turnover constantly provides new, motivated people with opportunities to join the project. Thus, future tenants will bring fresh energies and inputs for continuing to pursue established goals, which can help to counterbalance former tenants' decreasing motivation. As for the conditionality element, previous research in mixed communities show that stimulating residents' participation in social-oriented activities can be important driver of social interaction, provided that people do not feel forced to (Mugnano & Palvarini, 2013). Thus, while this paper revealed policymakers' expectations and hopes regarding very recent projects (see Tables 1 and 2), we recommend future research to explore the assumed 'magical' consequences of such mix, especially in terms of 'project-linked' social relationships between tenants. Equally important is to better understand how different scales of social mix projects as well as differences between social groups, e.g. asylum seekers and welfare dependents, influence the outcomes of social mix projects.

In the same vein, we also stress the need to shed more light on the mechanisms adopted in order to measure tenants' efforts (i.e. contribution to project goals), and to understand what the implications are if expectations do not materialize. A *quid pro quo* system – according to which tenants exchange supportive actions in return to affordable rents – may raise issues of fairness, especially if the number of similar projects increases or ever scale up to policy level, moving beyond grabbing ad-hoc local opportunities. In a climate of overall trends towards residualization of social housing in Europe, we should critically ask whether linking the provision of (scarce) affordable housing to the endowment of subjective attitudes and willingness to take up social commitment tasks might be a just and universal prospect for the future, especially in countries with a residual share of de-commodified housing stock, like Italy.

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Appendix 1 List of respondents

#	Role	Organisation/Project	City	Period of interview	Country
1	Social worker	Cooperativa La Strada (Social cooperative)	San Donato Milanese	January 2017	Italy
2	Project manager	Consorzio Cooperativo Lavoratori (Network of cooperatives)	Milan		
3	Director	ALER Milan (Public housing company)			
4	Director	Fondazione Housing Sociale (Foundation)			
5	Project coordinator	La Cordata (Social enterprise)			
6	Vice-President	DAR Casa (Housing cooperative)			
7	Project coordinator				
8	Housing advisor	City Council Rotterdam	Rotterdam	February 2017	The Netherlands
9	Project manager	Platform 31 (Knowledge and network organisation)	The Hague		
10	Policy maker	Housing Department - City Council Milan	Milan	March 2017	Italy
11	Civil servant				
12	Project manager	Onlus Farsi Prossimo (social cooperative)			
13	Project assistant				
14	Project manager	Platform 31 (Knowledge and network organisation)	The Hague		The Netherlands
15	Consultant social housing and community development	Portaal (Housing association)	Utrecht	April 2017	
16	Advisor housing projects				
17	Practitioner	Portaal (Housing association)			

<table>
<tr><td>18</td><td>Development manager</td><td>De Key (housing association)</td><td>Amsterdam</td><td rowspan="2"></td><td rowspan="5"></td></tr>
<tr><td>19</td><td>Project Manager</td><td>Wooninc (Housing association)</td><td>Eindhoven</td></tr>
<tr><td>20</td><td>Project coordinator</td><td>Socius Wonen (Housing foundation)</td><td rowspan="2">Utrecht</td><td rowspan="4">May 2017</td></tr>
<tr><td>21</td><td>Social worker</td><td>Stichting De Tussenvoorziening (Social care organisation)</td></tr>
<tr><td>22</td><td>Policy officer representative</td><td>Aedes – Federation of Dutch social housing associations</td><td>The Hague</td></tr>
<tr><td>23</td><td>Director</td><td>Department of welfare and social housing - Region Lombardy</td><td>Milan</td><td>Italy</td></tr>
<tr><td>24</td><td>Senior policy officer</td><td>Woonbond (Dutch tenant union)</td><td>Amsterdam</td><td>June 2017</td><td rowspan="3">The Netherlands</td></tr>
<tr><td>25</td><td>Policy-maker</td><td>City Council Utrecht</td><td>Utrecht</td><td rowspan="2">September 2017</td></tr>
<tr><td>26</td><td>Policy-maker</td><td>City Council Amsterdam</td><td>Amsterdam</td></tr>
</table>

4. Exploring innovative management strategies of socially mixed communities in changing social housing contexts

Igor Costarelli, Reinout Kleinhans, Silvia Mugnano

Under review in Journal of Housing and the Built Environment

Abstract

Research suggest that social housing management, which from a professionals viewpoint is defined as those activities aimed at improving the quality of social living environment and housing, is particularly susceptible to transformations in the broader social housing sector, particularly on the demand side. Currently, in several Western EU countries residualisation is bringing a growing number of low-income and other vulnerable groups into this sector, while middle-income groups are decreasing. This twofold trend risks resulting in increasing concentration of vulnerable groups within the poorest parts of social housing stock which, from a management viewpoint, is perceived as undesirable since it arises concerns for anti-social behaviours, less care for the built environment, conflicts etc. Making residents more responsible for their communities, besides being seen as a coping strategy to avoid potential negative externalities, is also a tenet of new forms of self-organised housing. This paper deals with recent social housing projects in Milan and Amsterdam mixing vulnerable groups - refugees and low-income - and young locals. The relevance of these initiatives lies in the specific approaches to housing management: the self-management in Amsterdam and the Social Management in Milan. By means of case study analysis and interviews transcriptions, the paper aims to explore how recent transformations within two different social housing systems have contributed to develop innovative management strategies that attempt to boost individuals' self-agency in relation to tenants' dwellings (Milan case) or towards the community of tenants (Amsterdam case), resulting in changing relationships between housing providers and residents.

Keywords: *Amsterdam; housing management; Milan; mixed community; self-organisation; social housing*

4.1 Introduction

From a housing professionals' perspective, social housing management generally refers to all those activities aimed at improving the quality of social living environment in housing complexes. Until the late 1990s, housing management was an overlooked topic in academic studies (Franklin & Clapham, 1997) and most research on this subject were carried out in the UK. Following Priemus et al. (1999), housing management is strongly related to transformations in social housing, such as increasing market orientation of property management, changing demand, and increasing concentration of low-income households in

the most deprived stock. Since the 1980s, such concentration has raised concerns about the proliferation of anti-social behaviours and other management-related issues that were tackled through the policy of mixed communities (Manzi, 2010; Uitermark, 2003), meaning by increasing the share of ‘role model’ middle-class households, yet without self-evident results (Bolt & van Kempen, 2013).

Over the last two decades, social rented systems in Western Europe have been experiencing new changes in relation to the (growing) demand of social housing and to the nature, scope and organisational structure of housing providers (Walker, 2000; Mullins, 2006; Czischke et al., 2012). The scarce availability of adequate affordable housing has become a key issue all over Europe (Czischke & van Bortel, 2018). This involves a mixture of different social categories: young people, low-income and vulnerable households and, more recently, newcomers (i.e. asylum seekers). The aim of this paper is to get a deeper understanding on the consequences that such transformations have on traditional housing management strategies. To account for the differences in terms of size, housing providers and overarching housing policy framework, which characterize social housing sectors across EU (Czischke, 2009), we adopted a ‘most different systems’ approach (Przeworksi & Teune, 1970, cited in Pickvance, 2001). At country-level, we selected Italy and the Netherlands as they belong to different typologies of social housing provision. We focused on social housing projects labelled as Housing Sociale (HS) and Magic Mix (MM) respectively in Italy and the Netherlands. As the paper will show, such initiatives are partially an outcome of broader changes in social housing systems, thus providing an appropriate research context to address our aim.

While most research mentioning housing management in the context of socially mixed communities deal with different tenure and/or income groups mainly at the neighbourhood scale (Camina & Wood, 2009; Tersteeg & Pinkster, 2016; Tunstall & Fenton, 2006), this paper approaches this topic considering building-scale mix of low-income groups (i.e. young people and refugees) in social housing initiatives. Specifically we focused on the self-management (*Zelfbeheer* in Dutch) in the project Startblok Riekerhaven (Amsterdam), and on the Social Management (*Gestione Sociale* in Italian), in the project ViVi Voltri (Milan). The research questions are: how are current transformations in the context of social housing systems related to the emergence of innovative management styles, namely self-management and Social Management? How do such approaches unfold and what are the implications for residents and professionals?

This paper contributes the existing housing management literature (Franklin & Clapham, 1997; Flint 2003; 2004; Czischke, 2009; 2017) by showing different ways through which housing professionals can perform a social welfare role ‘on the spot’, namely as tenants (Dutch case) or as practitioners (Italian case). We discuss how both alternatives imply a broadening of tenant responsibility by increasing self-agency, and how such alternatives shape the relationship between housing providers and residents in different ways.

In the next two sections, we review the main themes in the literature on social housing

management in Western Europe by paying particular attention to the link between social housing management of the policy and mixed communities. Before shifting our focus to each research contexts at country- (Italy and the Netherlands) and city-level (Milan and Amsterdam), the fourth section introduces the recent debate on self-organised forms of housing provision stressing the role of users-residents in the current developments of housing management. In the fifth section, we discuss methodology and research design. The sixth section is devoted to analyse our case studies, to present our empirical findings, and to discuss implications.

4.2 What is (social) housing management

Social housing management has been defined as "the set of all activities to produce and allocate housing services from the existing social housing stock" (Priemus et al. 1999, p. 211), which can be divided into four main categories: technical, social, financial, and tenure management. For the scope of this paper, we are mainly interested in the *social management*, which includes "dealing with future and sitting tenants through marketing, information provision, communication, stimulation of tenant participation, housing allocation, selection of target groups, the conclusion, change and completion of tenancy agreements, and finally the clearance of dwellings" (Priemus et al., 1999, p. 212). Social landlords, housing associations, cooperatives, but also local housing authorities and social workers are usually responsible for most housing management activities in the social rented sector (Priemus et al., 1999).

The nature of housing management has been often contested between a business-like and a social welfare-oriented approach (Franklin & Clapham, 1997; Saugeres, 1999). The former focuses on economic efficiency and sustainability goals whereas the latter on providing care and support for tenants beyond dwellings provision. This tension originates from the dual identity of social housing organizations, that is as both private enterprises and promotors of social welfare (Flint & Kearns, 2006). A 12-EU countries comparative study showed that housing managers are pressured to adopt more of a social welfare role also to cope with increasing state withdrawal from the provision of social services (Czischke, 2009) and residualisation of social rented sectors (i.e. increasing targeting to low-income and other vulnerable groups).

Being often associated with anti-social behaviours, like crime or vandalism, the concentration of low-income and vulnerable tenants is undesirable as it raises issues of difficult housing management (Uitermark, 2003). In many countries, the policy of mixed community in deprived social housing neighbourhoods was set as a response to similar trends and problems[17] (Flint, 2006). In the next section, we explore the relationship between housing management and the mixed community policy.

[17] For extended discussion see Jupp (1999); Tunstall & Fenton (2006).

4.3 Housing management and the mixed community policy

Proposals to create 'balanced' communities can be considered as a key area of analysis of contemporary housing management (Haworth & Manzi, 1999). Such proposals date back already to the middle of 19th century in the UK thanks to the pioneering work of Octavia Hill in the fields of housing management (Franklin & Clapham, 1997) and socially mixed communities (Sarkissian, 1976).

Mixed communities were usually achieved through tenure mix interventions at neighbourhood level, namely by increasing the share of private rented housing or homeownership for middle-income groups in deprived areas characterised by predominantly social housing dwellings occupied by low-income groups (Bridge et al., 2012). Housing management constituted an underpinning rationale of the mixed community policy by promoting behavioural change and self-reliance of vulnerable tenants (cultural approach) and/or by enhancing the role of peer-group in conforming to shared social norms (social control approach) (Manzi, 2010).

However, research suggest that mixed communities need careful, thorough and preventive management strategies (Tunstall & Fenton, 2006), if they are to be successful. These include dwellings maintenance, care of common areas, cleanliness of streets (Bolt & van Kempen, 2013), investments in community development (i.e. stimulating residents to organise activities) (Camina & Wood, 2009), or participatory planning, decision-making, community events and other fair and inclusive management practices (Tersteeg & Pinkster, 2016).

Bolt and van Kempen (2013) point out that the success of social mixing policy depends also on the wider context (i.e. economic recession and residualisation processes in social rented sectors) in which this strategy takes place. In the next section, we consider the current social housing contexts in which examined mixed communities are situated, and we highlight the nexus between housing management and current trends and challenges in social housing provision in Italy and the Netherlands.

4.4 Framing (social) housing management in changing social housing contexts

Over the last two decades, facing a decrease in public funding and privatization processes, many social housing providers in EU have been defined as 'hybrid organisations' (Mullins et al., 2012) to indicate their orientation to search for new ways of doing things. In this light, they combine traditional and innovative management approaches to better balance the social welfare role (providing community support) and the core mission (providing affordable housing) (Czischke et al., 2012).

While the role of institutional players (i.e. policy makers) is still crucial to address the scarcity of affordable housing (Czischke & van Bortel, 2018), civil society is increasingly engaged in a number of alternative forms of (affordable) housing provision stemming from

co-housing, cooperatives and other typologies of collective self-organised housing, including self-building (Semprebon & Vicari Haddock, 2016; Bronzini, 2017). These are all characterised by high degrees of user participation, the establishment of reciprocal relationships, mutual help and solidarity, as well as different forms of financing and management (Mullins & Moore, 2018; Tummers 2016).

In many of these initiatives, residents are both producers and consumers of (housing) services, marking a great difference in respect to past decades when residents were mainly seen as passive 'beneficiaries' (i.e. post war period) or as 'customers' under the influence of the 'New Public Management' in the 80s. In the current societal paradigm of 'co-production', which is characterised by top-down attempts to boost inclusive societies and active citizenship[18], residents are seen as both producers and consumers (Czischke, 2017).

Following Czischke (2017), as co-production implies a full or partial cooperation between citizens and professionals in public services delivery, the degree of user participation can vary from low involvement (e.g. consultations to explore residents' preferences) to entirely self-organised and self-managed housing projects by residents. Likewise, strict cooperation between 'professionals' and 'users' provides opportunities for mutual learning and knowledge exchange eventually increasing the hybridisation levels of social housing organisations.

The next subsections will discuss changes and challenges affecting social housing in Italy and in the Netherlands, more specifically Milan and Amsterdam, from which innovative housing management styles have emerged.

4.4.1 Italy and Milan

In Italy, the public housing sector (*Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica* in Italian) represents only a residual part of the housing stock, about 5%. The main providers are public housing companies and municipalities, which are typically responsible for housing management too.

Due also to the low production of new public housing over the last 20 years, the demand for affordable housing has grown and affected a variety of social categories (so called 'grey area') including students, single parents, young people, immigrants, low-middle income people, particularly in large cities. To address such pressing challenges, recent housing policies in Italy (see Housing Plans 2009 and 2014) created a new institutional framework where Local Authorities and Third-Sector organisations, i.e. housing cooperatives and foundations, can cooperate to establish a new type of project-based social rented offer known as *Housing Sociale* that targets most of the aforementioned categories.

Compared to traditional public housing, HS is innovative in many ways. However, for the scope of this paper we only focus on the innovative aspects related to housing management: the so-called Social Management. As will be explained in the paper, Social Management

[18] E.g. the Big Society and Localism agendas in the UK (Czischke, 2017).

represents a distinctive component of HS offer as it includes tasks and activities related to both the management of housing complexes and the wellbeing of people.

HS projects are predominately located in the largest cities in the Northern part of the country[19]. In region Lombardy's capital, Milan, although public housing stock is higher than Italian average (10% vs 5%), it is not enough to meet the increasing demand (estimated 22 000 people on Municipal waiting lists). Due also to mismanagement of certain public housing estates, there are low turnover and high vacancy rates.

Because of the relatively higher numbers and levels of jobs opportunities in relation to other Italian cities, in the next ten years Milan is expected to attract an increasing share of young population (Corriere della Sera, 2016) contributing to develop the local socio-economic fabric. In light of the insufficient availability of public housing and the high prices on the private market, it is difficult for young people (households, students, temporary workers etc.) to find housing solutions at affordable prices. Thus, great expectations are placed in HS to address such emerging issue.

4.4.2 The Netherlands and Amsterdam

Established around 1860 and regulated by the Housing Act (*Woningwet*) since 1901, the Dutch social rented stock is among the largest and oldest in Europe (about 30%). The main providers are housing associations (HAs) (*woningcorporaties*), private entities working under the government legal framework through the Housing Act (Van Bortel & Elsinga, 2007). They are usually responsible for housing management.

Besides dwellings, HAs used to be engaged in a wider spectrum of non-landlord activities (NLAs) (e.g. community development activities, urban regeneration) aimed at improving liveability and social cohesion in urban neighbourhoods, including tenure differentiation (Uitermark, 2003). By engaging in NLAs as part of housing management, housing associations constitute 'agents for social change' (Czischke, 2009).

During the last decade, the Dutch social rented system has been going through several challenges. First, the inflow of refugees to the country increased the - already high - pressure onto the social housing system as HAs have to accommodate newcomers in their stock (Van Heelsum, 2017). Second, as consequence of reforms to the social welfare system (see Social Support Act in 2015) (Dijkhoff, 2014), a growing number of homeless and other welfare dependents (with social or mental indications) are entering the social rented stock. Third, the 2015 Housing Act not only set restrictions to NLAs, but set also lower thresholds to access social housing creating the preconditions for more low-income tenants to accommodate (Hoekstra, 2017; Nieboer & Gruis, 2016).

As the social housing demand changes, certain HAs have been developing new small scales initiatives, known as Magic Mix (Van der Velden et al., 2016), aimed to provide affordable housing for mixed social groups: students, status holders, young households,

[19] Discussing the reasons is beyond our scope.

people with mental disorders or less invalidating problems, homeless, migrant workers etc. Within broader discourses around the ‘Participation Society’ and ‘Do It Yourself’ democracy (Kleinhans, 2017), several MM projects are characterised by innovative management strategies inspired to tenants self-management.

Across the country, the demand for affordable housing is particularly high in big cities like Amsterdam (Czischke & van Bortel, 2018). Despite signs of residualisation, the share of social rented housing in this city, around 50%, is higher than national average (Musterd, 2014). However, a number of factors hamper the access to social and private housing sectors for different social groups, especially young people, in the Dutch capital. As an example, the high demand for a social housing unit, with waiting time on average around 11 years or, in the owner-occupied sector, stricter criteria to access mortgages introduced in the aftermath of financial crisis. Concerning one specific segment of young population, students, in recent years the city witnessed a growing number of temporary student-container complexes, enriching an already large student-housing sector (Hochstenbach & Boterman, 2015). The future population increase in Amsterdam is more and more driven by the influx of young and higher educated households (Savini et al., 2016) making housing a core issue for the city.

4.5 Methodology

HS in Italy and MM in the Netherlands could be considered concrete manifestations of changing (social) housing contexts since these projects attempt to address the housing demand of specific targets, which the current configuration of housing systems can hardly meet[20].

Drawing on Przeworksi & Teune (1970, cited in Pickvance, 2001), we adopted a combination between ‘most different’ and ‘most similar’ systems approaches. At country-level, we selected Italy and the Netherlands as they are dissimilar in terms of welfare regimes (Mediterranean vs conservative/socio-democratic) and housing systems (residual vs unitary rental markets). We expect that different overarching configurations of social housing provision and welfare policy will determine different approaches to social housing management and we are interested to explore how.

At city-level, we chose Milan and Amsterdam as, following Pareja-Eastaway and colleagues (2011), both cities are attractive for a number of young people, students and highly skilled workers who are considered as vital for the local knowledge economy. However, affordable housing for these groups is often hard to find (Milan) or to access (Amsterdam).

Within these cities, following Czischke et al. (2012) approach, we focused on those organisations that share a similar core task (providing affordable housing), and are usually responsible for housing management. This has led us to a variety of actors and institutions: housing cooperatives, public housing companies and foundations in Milan and (mainly)

[20] Background reasons for this mismatch are beyond our scope.

housing associations in Amsterdam. To narrow our gaze, we carried out explorative interviews with key informants to get a closer overview on existing affordable housing projects for mixed audience that include young people, as this is a category of interest to us (see previous section). At this stage, we purposively selected projects that looked particularly innovative in terms of management practices: Startblok Riekerhaven in Amsterdam and ViVi Voltri in Milan. Although they present several differences (see next section), these are not in opposition with our research goals.

Afterwards, we collected twenty-one semi-structured interviews (fourteen in the Netherlands and seven in Italy) with HAs project managers, housing cooperatives professionals, tenants and management staff members following a combination between purposive and snowball sampling strategies. Interviews were conducted throughout 2017 and targeted respondents who could provide us with in-depth information on the case study projects. These were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed using Atlas.ti through two coding procedures.

The first aimed to carve out contents showing the characteristics of case studies and housing providers. Building on Czischke's (2009) analysis of social housing organisations, which is structured around three main areas of enquiry, we accordingly focused on (i) missions, values and core processes of social housing organisations, (ii) contextual factors impacting organisations strategy, and (iii) responses to changes in the environment. Findings are reported in the following subsection. The second coding strategy looked at each management style adopted, as well as to the specific components, aspects and activities of social housing management with respect to each project. We followed Priemus et al. (1999) classification of *social management* in nine activities, but, for our purposes, we only focused on three: (i) stimulation of tenant participation, (ii) selection of target groups and (iii) housing allocation.

In addition to interviews, and with a similar rationale, we analysed relevant documents (websites, leaflets, and online newsletters) and notes from field observations (public presentation of the project Startblok in Amsterdam, held on 19th April 2017). The next section discusses the main research findings.

4.6 Findings

4.6.1 Case study analysis

4.6.1.1 Startblok Riekerhaven (De Key)

The Startblok Riekerhaven (Figure 1) social housing project consists in 565 removable housing units located in the neighbourhood Amsterdam Nieuw-West, realised by housing association De Key in partnership with social enterprise Socius Wonen and Municipality of Amsterdam. Started in July 2016, the maximum tenancy period is 5 years.

Aware of the difficulties faced by young people in finding an affordable house in Amsterdam, and their vital role for the city, De Key's new *mission* is focussing on this target group. Startblok is at the core of this mission. According to our respondents, two main *contextual factors* created the right conditions for Startblok to be developed. First, the 2015 Rental market Law (*Wet Doorstroming Huurmarkt*) allowed lettings on temporary basis (up to 5 years) for specific age categories (18-27 years) (*jongerencontract*). Second, following the peak of 'refugee crisis' in 2015, municipalities and HAs took up their task to provide housing for an increasing number of asylum seekers.

Facing these contextual changes, De Key launched a social mix housing project for young Dutch and refugees (mainly Syrian and Eritrean) with the goal of building a community of tenants who manage the project by themselves (*response*). De Key, owner of the houses, hired an external organisation, Socius Wonen, to organise and supervise the self-management system.

Figure. 1 Startblok Riekerhaven

4.6.1.2 ViVi Voltri (Dar=Casa)

ViVi Voltri social housing project (Figure 2) results from the cooperation between Fondo Torre SGR, Municipality of Milan, and housing cooperative DAR=Casa. Started in November 2016, it includes 113 rental dwellings, divided as follows: 56 intermediate tenure (*canone moderato*) units and 57 public rent units (*canone sociale*). The project is located in Barona, a peripheral neighbourhood in Milan and the tenancy length is 8 years (4+4 years contract).

The project is a concrete example of the new project-based housing policy in place since the 2009 Housing Plan, introducing new financing arrangements to develop HS. In our case study, property fund Fondo Torre owns the dwellings while the cooperative Dar=Casa was

assigned the Social Management. The local authority (Municipality of Milan) has also been involved in the partnership, defining the regulatory framework of dwellings allocation.

Following our respondents, since its establishment in 1991, DAR=Casa original *mission* is to provide affordable housing to low-income immigrants. However, due to the exacerbating problem of affordability in the private market and the scarcity of available public housing dwellings in Milan (*contextual factors*), throughout the last 25 years the cooperative has broadened its target audience to a wider range of social categories in housing need, included young people, adopting a social mix approach. Also to prevent potential drawbacks of social mixing (i.e. conflicts, intolerance etc.), the cooperative became expert in community development and housing management, meaning facilitating tenants participation in social cohesion activities within mixed housing complexes (*response*).

Figure. 2 ViVi Voltri

Through an analysis of organisations and projects, it is possible to grasp insights on how different endogenous and exogenous contextual factors have triggered similar shifts in housing providers' missions and responses in terms of re-definition of priority targets towards young people and increasing aspirations to build cohesive mixed communities. In the Italian case, driving factors emerged throughout long-term, 'silent' mutations of housing demand and parallel ineffectiveness of public housing system to cater for different housing needs. In the Dutch case, such factors are much more linked to the short-term effects of recent government-led housing reforms (Rental market law) and other unexpected situations (forced migrations) adding to longer-term dynamics, such as social housing residualisation and welfare retrenchment. Recent policy shifts in the rental sector (both private and social) can be looked at as part of a broader effort to draw housing associations'

operate closer to public control, which is characterising the current Dutch social rented system (Nieboer & Gruis, 2016).

Whether contextual factors owe more to structural mismatches between demand and supply of social housing (Italy) than direct consequence of policy decisions and other unpredictable dynamics (The Netherlands), it is important to focus on the challenges that these factors represent for housing organisations, in terms of improving their capacity to adopt more hybrid and flexible solutions (see Nieboer & Gruis, 2016). In this perspective, our specific focus is on housing management since, as said in the beginning, this field is particularly susceptible to broader mutations in social housing environments. The next subsection will discuss the different management approaches adopted by these organisations.

4.6.2 Management approaches

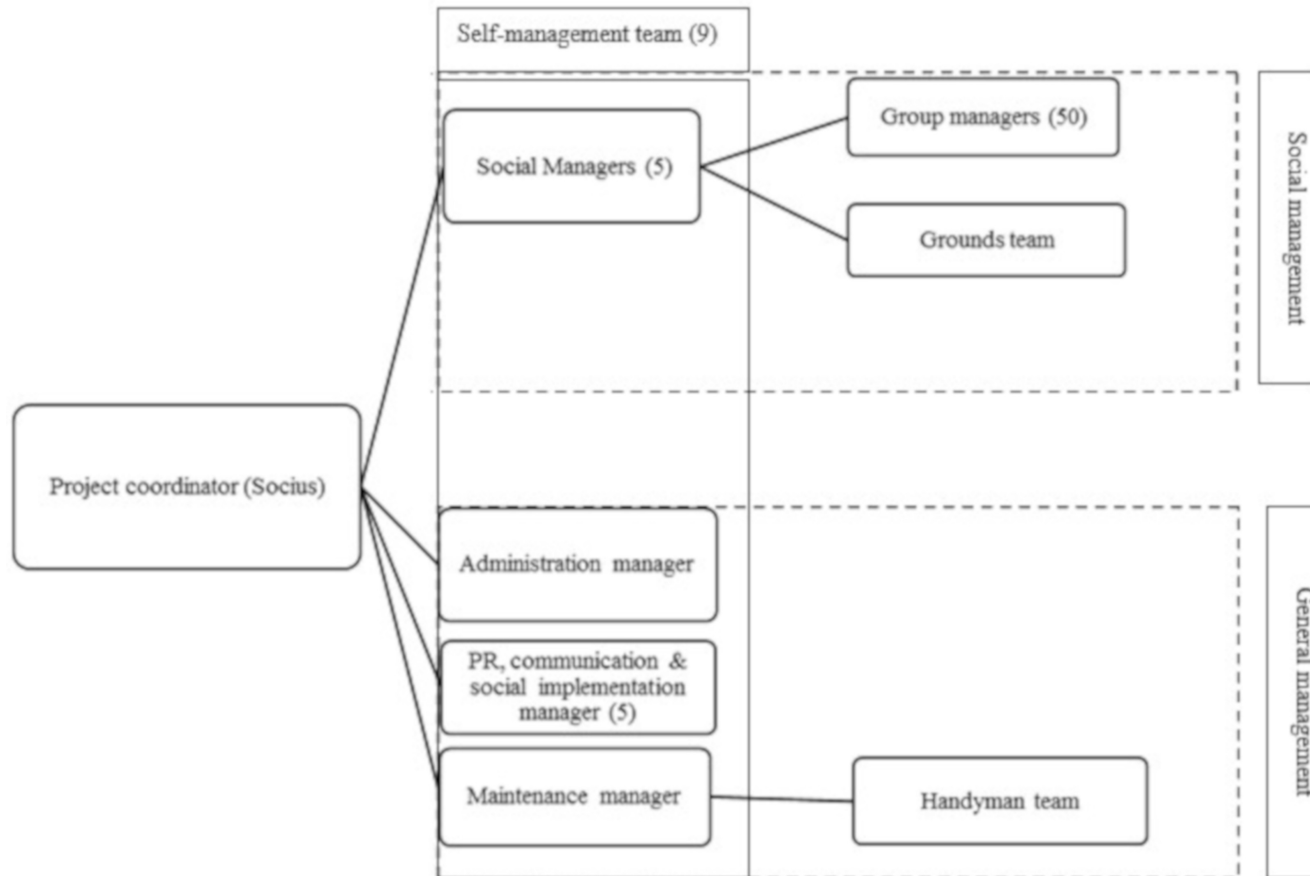
The two projects share similar aims: (1) addressing affordable housing demand of specific social groups, and (2) creating a pleasant living and housing environment where relationships amongst residents could also increase opportunities for social cohesion and integration. However, these aims are pursued through different management approaches: the self-management in Startblok and the Social Management in Voltri.

In Startblok tenants are expected to care about the social and built environment by themselves. This is knows as *self-management* (Fig. 3), which is defined as:

> *a flexible system allowing opportunities for tenants to devise and implement their own initiatives which will help create a pleasant atmosphere and strengthen social cohesion. Self-management is split into two branches: social management and general management. Social management focuses on forming a community and social cohesion, covering everything necessary to create and maintain a comfortable, clean, safe and liveable environment. General management is responsible for all other daily affairs (quoted from website[21])*

[21] Retrieved from http://www.startblok.amsterdam/en/about-the-project/self-management/. Last access: 12 December 2017.

Figure. 3 Structure of housing management Startblok Riekerhaven. Source: authors' elaboration on website[22] and interviews transcripts[23].



[22] See https://startblokriekerhaven.nl/en/. Last access: 12 December 2017.
[23] Ciphers in brackets refer to the number of tenants involved.

In Voltri, being appointed as *Gestore Sociale* (Social Manager), the housing cooperative DAR=Casa is responsible for the management of rental dwellings, including two communal spaces used for residents and neighbourhood activities, which are aimed to develop positive relationships amongst tenants. The Social Management (Fig. 4) emphasises:

> *a peculiar management, more in tune/closer to specific needs of target groups, which may also trigger positive outcomes in terms of housing quality. (...) Besides social mix, the value we add to the project is exactly our presence in the complex which should help to facilitate contact and capitalise the exchange of resources and needs (…) Our ultimate goal is that households are able to stay in their house as long as they wish and that they live happily in this house. So all the activities made through Social Management aim at this ultimate goal. For example, the management of arrears is clearly aimed to the financial sustainability of the cooperative as this depends on tenants' rents. (Dar=Casa staff members, own translation)*

Figure 4. Structure of housing management ViVi Voltri. Source: authors' elaboration on interviews transcripts.[24]

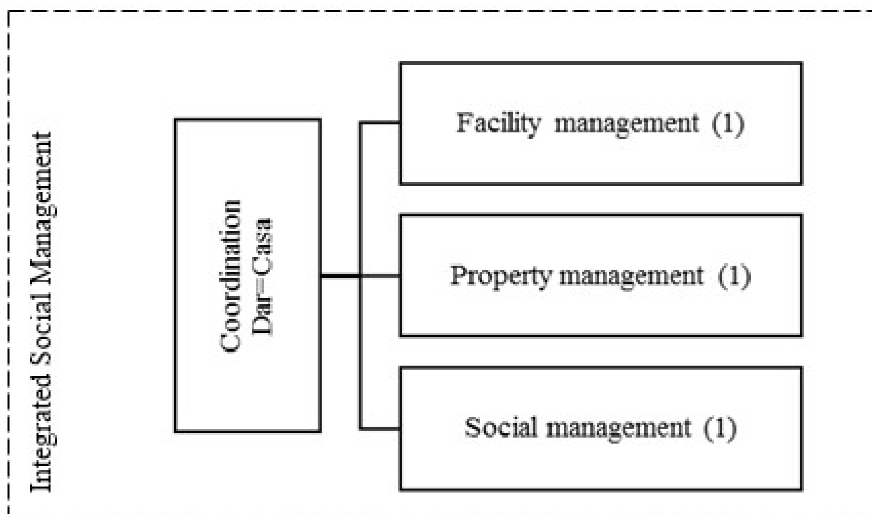


Table 1 provides a concise summary of housing management characteristics of case studies.

[24] Ciphers in brackets refer to the number of staff members involved.

Table 1. Description of management characteristics of case study projects.

Characteristics	Startblok Riekerhaven	ViVi Voltri
Management aims	More 'controllable' situation Making tenants more responsible Enabling contacts and networks formation	Improve efficacy and maintenance of dwellings Guaranteeing tenants solvency to ensure cooperative and project sustainability
Allocated staff and roles	Seventy-five tenants full- or part-time paid-workers or volunteers with 50 € discount on monthly rent	Three contact persons for each management component within housing cooperative staff
Staff duties/tasks	Group Managers: stimulating social cohesion activities in the hallways Social Managers[25]: interacting with group managers for hygiene, safety and liveability issues Grounds team: cleaning outside and practical duties	Facility Manager (referente alloggio): technical maintenance of dwellings; relationships with external providers, owners, tenants Property Manager: administrative tasks (purchases, accounting, contracts stipulation) Social Manager (accompagnamento sociale): individual counselling to support tenants, establishing trust relationships with tenants to prevent them falling into arrears, management of communal spaces
Conditions/ behavioural rules	Only tenants can apply for job positions in self-management system Based on tenants consultations, Social Manager chooses the group manager Management team undergoes specific job training (on cultural diversity issues)	Agreement (Patto di convivenza) enclosed to signed rental contract, stating rules and behaviours to follow Specific rules apply for the use of communal spaces
Accountability	Monthly registration of working hours and performed tasks Report writing (i.e. turnover rate, behaviours, activities etc.) submitted to Socius and De Key Collective and individual monthly meetings among teams and Socius coordinator Feedbacks between group and social managers (problems, support etc.)	Facility manager visits households once a year (or more if need) to check the state of maintenance of dwelling and to provide them with advises on technical and/or behavioural issues Rent payments are checked on weekly basis Coordination meetings

Source: Authors' elaboration on interviews transcripts.

[25] Both status-holders and Dutch tenants.

4.6.3 Management activities

As discussed earlier, we now focus on three themes: selection of target groups, housing allocation, and stimulation of tenant participation (Priemus et al., 1999). Given the significance of 'users involvement' assumed in recent affordable housing scenario (see section 4), we will devote particular attention to the latter kind of activity.

4.6.3.1 Selection of target groups

The selection of target groups is relevant to social management since it defines the social profiles that are going to be part of the housing project. In our case studies, such selection follows a social mix logic, coinciding with tenure mix in the Italian case. Accordingly, in both cases it is possible to identify, broadly, a vulnerable and a resourceful group (see table 2).

The selection of these groups is based on a combination of two criteria: an 'objective', referring to income and age (plus nationality-legal status and gender in the Dutch case), and a 'subjective', referring to personal characteristics, efforts or actions undertaken by residents with the aim to join the social housing project. While the objective criterion helps to address the first project goal (i.e. addressing housing demand of certain social groups), the second (i.e. stimulating positive relationships to build cohesive mixed communities) is reached through a careful selection of residents adding a subjective criterion. This is particularly clear in the Amsterdam case study. Besides complying with age and income criteria, to join Startblok young people with Dutch background have to show the right motivation towards project goals, which is assessed through motivation letter, personal interviews, and the participation to informative meetings. The latter is a crucial point for the debate on fine-grained social mix.

> *We thought: let's [make them] meet each other before they [start] living here. So, in April 23rd we had the first meet-up with 500 people here in Amsterdam with all the guys who were going to stay here (...). It was very warm and welcome day, the atmosphere was very OK. Afterwards, we had another introduction day, there, you [could] meet people of your living group and in the end of June we had some last days for more practical things, like: how are we going to manage if you need a bed or what you have to do if you have something in your apartment.... (De Key, project manager)*

Getting people to know each other, as part of the whole selection procedure, is expected to prevent and avoid negative externalities that would otherwise be too late or too difficult to control as it is shown by Tersteeg and Pinkster (2016) in a tenure mix project in Amsterdam. The authors stress that housing managers should provide adequate information to tenants about what kind of situation they are going to experience.

While the implementation of subjective criterion (i.e. motivation) has successfully led to the selection of desired target groups, a similar criterion applied to a restricted number of

households (only four) in Voltri did not succeed, as no ‘motivated’ households applied for these dwellings by submitting a proposal of socially-oriented activities.

Table 2. Scheme of the criteria used to select target groups.

Project	Groups	Objective requirements applied	Subjective requirements applied	Allocated dwellings
Startblok	Vulnerable	Legal status: refugees with permit of stay Age: between 18 and 27 years old	None (if applying through COA and Municipality of Amsterdam)	282
	Resourceful	Income below the threshold for social housing Age: between 18 and 27 years old Gender: 50% male, 50% female	Motivation (selection by expression of interest, personal interviews and participation to information meeting)	283
ViVi Voltri	Resourceful	Annual income between 16,000 and 40,000 €[26]	Project proposal with list of activities and selection by interview	56
		Annual income between 16,000 and 40,000 € Age: At least one member of households below 35 years old	None	
		Annual income between 16,000 and 40,000 €		
	Vulnerable	Annual income between 7,000 and 16,000 € Subscription to public housing allocation list	Expression of interest for this project to the municipality of Milan	41 by Municipality of Milan 16 by neighbouring municipalities

Source: Authors' elaboration on interviews transcripts.

[26] The majority of households' annual income does not exceed 30,000 €.

4.6.3.2 Housing allocation

By housing allocation we refer to the rationale guiding project managers during the matching of dwellings and tenants. Housing allocation strategy is relevant in social mix terms as it determines distance and proximity between different social groups. Likewise, space provides the context for facilitating social interaction. Indeed, design and scale of implementation (e.g. neighbourhood, block or street level) are critical issues in social mix strategies as they can facilitate or hamper social interaction (Arthurson, 2010). For example, Jupp (1999) found that the most significant way in which different tenure groups get to know each other is by living next door.

We found very different allocation rationales. In Startblok, professionals opted for implementing a door-to-door mixing strategy. The housing complex consists in mainly studios: “one is for refugee and the next for Dutch, then another refugee, one-by-one, and so on….” (De Key, project manager). An underlying thinking is that the greatest spatial proximity between different groups, the higher chances to get different people to interact each other.

A different housing allocation strategy was set in the Milan case study. ViVi Voltri consists in two adjacent buildings: one is entirely for intermediate rental tenants, allocated through a public call-based system, while another is for public rental tenants, allocated on a need-based criterion, which prioritizes households with minors according to the allocation list of Municipality of Milan. This resulted in two juxtaposed buildings separated along tenure, income and ethnic lines as the public housing priority households were mainly large-sized households mainly from North African countries. Not only housing allocation criteria led to spatial arrangements that accentuate existing social differences but also delineated an overcrowding situation, which questions tenants wellbeing. In fact, “in the two-room apartments, it [municipality] has put households with three or four members and in the three-room apartments those with five and six members” (Dar=Casa staff member, own translation). Considering tenants wellbeing as one of the scopes of Social Management, such housing allocation strategy does not apparently support it. A better integration of tools and arrangements typical of public housing logic within such new social rented offer could help overcoming similar shortcomings that are potentially problematic for housing management.

4.6.3.3 Stimulation of tenant participation

Providing affordable housing opportunities to diverse social categories in the same complex (first aim of management) does not automatically lead to better opportunities for increasing cohesion and integration (second aim of management). Social interaction and encounters amongst residents should be somehow stimulated. Tenants’ involvement in management practices and activities can help to this scope by shaping inclusive - or hostile - residential environments (Roberts, 2007).

In the two case studies, there are remarkable differences in the underlying premises for residents' involvement, which are reflected in different degrees of tenant participation within housing-related services. In Startblok, tenants are directly involved in all aspects of the management process - from communication, to rent administration and selection of future tenants - envisaging residents as both producers and consumers of housing services (see section 4.4). Several responsibility for management activities moved from the housing provider to the tenants, either volunteering or working. In the latter case, it took the form of professionalization. Tenants have the opportunity to take up management-related tasks and decisions concerning Startblok as a job, and they are paid for it. In this light, we can narrow the category 'residents-users' (mentioned in section 4.4) down to a new subcategory called 'residents-workers', implying a blurrier distinction between professionals and residents.

Respondents seem to appreciate the commitments deriving from these obligations, attaching this new role with different meanings. One argued: "yes they give us responsibility but it's pretty good because we know what we need in the project and they don't live here and thus don't see" (Tenant-Worker, Startblok). For others, being involved as workers helps to develop a sense of attachment that foster their motivation and the overall job quality.

> *It's our job but I think because we do it here and we live here, we also want to make it nice and (…) you want us to grow and develop. It's like a job but I think if you are starting in the management team you are of course also more integrated in the project. (…) I think it's what I really like of it. I did communication also in another job so I like it in general but doing it here makes it even more interesting (Tenant-Worker, Startblok)*

Other tenants emphasis the opportunity to "see the effects of the things you pose because your target group is also the group you are among" (Tenant-Worker, Startblok).

> *I think it's very different if you are an external team or person [who] comes here and [says]: 'ok Startblok, we will do this...yes but you don't live here, how do you know what's going on?' (…) We have language and cultural differences and because they also work in the team that we are closer to the tenants then if you are from external… (Tenant-Worker, Startblok)*

There might be a link between the promotion of self-management and policy discourses of 'Participation Society' and 'Do It Yourself' democracy, inspired to responsibilisation, active citizenship as well as a wide spreading moral exhortation to join volunteering activities in society, that are shaping the current development of Dutch welfare system (Kleinhans, 2017). The Startblok experience is close to a co-production logic as residents-users are fully involved in the co-organisation and co-provision of several housing services that were typically arranged by housing managers only, e.g. rent administration, communication, cleaning of common spaces, small maintenance and technical interventions, inspection and supervision of dwellings, counselling, and selection of new tenants.

On the contrary, in Voltri professional do not expect tenants to get fully involved in the co-production of housing services, such as in management related activities. Participation is not set as a pre-condition of the project, rather as a possible, (of course) desirable outcome for the future. In this sense, professionals act as *enabler* of participation opportunities that concern the management of communal spaces (i.e. opening, closure, cleaning, scheduling of activities). Communal rooms situated at buildings ground floors are considered as 'spaces of activation' that are offered to tenants in order to let them develop activities by themselves. In this respect, tenants can make suggestions about the use of those spaces according to their specific needs, for example childcare.

A closer look at the rationale for Social Management activities provides further elements to explain the relationship between housing providers and residents. "Social management activities, for us, have positive outcomes for management in terms of both efficiency of the project and possibly as an occasion for people to develop skills and establish positive relationships where they live" (Dar=Casa staff member, own translation). The main idea of Social Management is that taking care of inhabitants (*social welfare*) will lead to better management outcomes (*business-like*). Individual counselling activities, trainings in financial budget, stimulating households' activation to solve problematic situations (e.g. financial deficit or loss of job) - known as individual training (*accompagnamento sociale*) - are offered as part of housing management ultimately as preventive measures to secure regular payment of rents, thus the financial sustainability of the project. Likewise, the mix of tenants with different levels of economic resources is functional to successful housing management as it guarantees the fulfilment of financial sustainability of the project and a more efficient management of resources.

In that sense, the new Italian social housing system aligns with other EU cases in far as an underlying reason for housing providers to engage in NLAs is "ensuring the sustainability of the company's [core] mission in terms of tenants' solvency and the better management of the estates thanks to more socially 'balanced' and integrated communities" (Czischke, 2009, p. 136). That said, it envisages residents mainly as customers or consumers, rather than producers.

4.7 Discussion and conclusion

This paper explored innovative management strategies of socially mixed communities in Italy and in the Netherlands. The self-management in the project Startblok Riekerhaven (Amsterdam) and the Social Management in the project ViVi Voltri (Milan) are manifestations of current developments in respective social housing sectors, which are characterized by reforms in housing and welfare spheres and changing profile of social housing demand. This paper revealed the structure of each management approach, tracing the contextual factors that pushed social housing providers to reshape mission and responses in relation to ongoing changes in their environment. Each housing management style has been described along its main characteristics, including aims, staff roles, rules and

accountability arrangements coupled with a closer look at three specific social management activities: target group selection, housing allocation, and stimulation of tenants' participation.

Unfolding these aspects from a comparative perspective allowed grasping a deeper understanding on the differences that characterise innovative housing management strategies in two distinct configurations of social housing provision. To this regard, we point out two conclusive remarks. The first observation relates to the longstanding dichotomy on the orientation of social management activities in between social welfare- and business-oriented aims (Saugeres, 1999; Flint & Kearns, 2006). As the need of social welfare role becomes more pressing in light of increasing inflow of vulnerable groups to social housing and parallel reduction of state support to this sector (Czischke, 2009), in both cases 'being on the spot' is essential for effective management as it allows to be more in tune with tenants needs (Franklin & Clapham, 1997). Building on Flint (2003; 2004) and Czischke (2009; 2017), we advanced this argument by presenting two different ways through which a welfare role can be performed 'on the spot': as tenants (Dutch case) or as practitioners (Italian case). We conclude that both alternatives imply a broadening of tenants' responsibility but in different ways.

In the Dutch case, responsibilisation means fostering tenants' active capacity to influence housing management processes by delivering practical duties to prevent anti-social behaviours, including the selection of new tenants, and through greater engagement in community activities (see Flint, 2003). The Amsterdam case provides clear example of "how certain housing management techniques may be closely related to the wider policy promotion of active citizens" (Flint, 2004, p. 899), to the extent that specific activities - and related responsibilities - once primarily performed by institutional actors (housing associations) have now been assigned to citizens (tenants) themselves (working or volunteering). Put in this way, the self-management might be considered as a manifestation of the dominant ideal of 'Participation Society' in the Netherlands, reflecting how citizens, in this case tenants, are stimulated and supported to do things for their communities on their own (Kleinhans, 2017).

It is worth noting that the self-management does not represent an 'exit strategy' deployed by tenants, rather it represents an organisation-led strategy aimed to turn tenants into 'agents for social change' beside housing associations, uncovering a dual identity of social housing residents "as active, entrepreneurial consumers [tenants] and also responsible, duty-owing members of communities [citizens]" (Flint, 2003, p. 625).

Besides that, another fundamental change concerns the blurrier distinction between professionals and tenants' roles. Future research could assess tenants' performances in management tasks and provide better examination of the social dynamics through which the potential of social integration is realised.

In the Italian case, housing practitioners boost tenants' responsibility by means of new tools and arrangements that increase "individual agency and accountability in relation to

housing allocation, rent payments and maintenance of properties" (Flint, 2004, p. 907). Hand-in-hand with the transition from a traditional publicly subsided housing provision to a new type of privately driven social rented sector, the accent of housing management is on residents' capacity to afford their houses, maintaining them in proper conditions, and promoting ideal conditions for positive relationships among community members. A market-based logic that envisage social housing tenants as autonomous and responsible customers seems to emerge from the new configuration of social rented sector in Italy. Accordingly, management activities are devoted to look over the financial situation of tenants-customers. We encourage future research to compare traditional management strategies within the public housing system (*Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica*) with those typical of the HS offer (Social Management) to delineate carefully the magnitude of this shift in terms of both housing management techniques and implications for tenants.

Our case studies showed that the emphasis on empowering tenants' responsibility may lay on the management of ones' own tenancies (Italian case) or towards the whole (housing) community (Dutch case), which result in different assemblages in the governance of social housing (Flint, 2003). This paves the way for a second consideration, which is the (changing) relationships between residents and housing providers (Czischke, 2017). Examined case studies showed dissimilar configurations of such relationship within two different typologies of social housing systems: a co-production relationship in the Netherlands versus a customer-like relationship in Italy. We argue that this relationship could be better understood through a closer examination of the selection criteria of target groups and through the different underlying premises of participation (i.e. a pre-condition in Startblok vs a desirable outcome in Voltri). While both approaches combine objective (age, income etc.) and attitude-based (motivation, active engagement etc.) criteria, the latter seem comparatively of greater importance in the Dutch case than in the Italian. This suggests that management approaches inspired to co-production and participation are more likely to rely on new criteria to select social housing tenants than in management strategies featured by market-oriented approaches. In relation to the latter, adopted criteria are functional to create the right mix of income groups that will ultimately secure the financial sustainability of the project. As for the former, the introduction of such original requirements, like attitudes, might indicate a greater willingness by social landlords to experience innovative ways to fulfill organization's core task, which connotes higher levels of hybridization as hypothesized by Czischke (2017).

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Appendix 1: List of respondents

#	Role	Organisation/Project	City	Period of interview	Country
1	Director	ALER Milan (Public housing company)	Milan	January 2017	Italy
2	Director	Fondazione Housing Sociale (Foundation)			
3	Vice-President	DAR Casa (Housing cooperative)			
4	Project coordinator				
5	Project manager	Platform 31 (Knowledge and network organisation)	The Hague	February 2017	The Netherlands
6	Policy maker	Housing Department - City Council Milan	Milan	March 2017	Italy
7	Independent researcher	N.A.	Utrecht		The Netherlands
8	Project manager	Platform 31 (Knowledge and network organisation)	The Hague		
9	Development manager	De Key (Housing Association)	Amsterdam	April 2017	
10	Tenants	Startblok Riekerhaven	Amsterdam		
11					
12	Project coordinator	Socius Wonen (Housing foundation)	Utrecht	May 2017	
13	Policy officer representative	Aedes – Federation of Dutch social housing associations	The Hague		
14	Director	Department of welfare and social housing - Region Lombardy	Milan		Italy
15	Social administrator (*sociaal beheerder*)	Portaal Housing Association	Utrecht	June 2017	The Netherlands
16	Senior policy officer	Woonbond (Dutch tenant union)	Amsterdam		
17	Tenant and project manager	Startblok Riekerhaven	Amsterdam	September 2017	
18					
19	Project Manager	Ymere (Housing association)	Amsterdam		
20		City Council Amsterdam			
21	Project coordinator	DAR=Casa (Housing cooperative)	Milan	November 2017	Italy

5. 'Active, young, and resourceful': sorting the 'good' tenant through mechanisms of conditionality

Igor Costarelli, Reinout Kleinhans, Silvia Mugnano

Under review in Housing Studies

Abstract

Governments' attempt to link the provision of welfare services to the responsible self-conduct of citizens (i.e. responsibilisation) is seen as a distinctive feature of the post-welfare state. Often, responsibilisation requires welfare receivers to comply with specific duties or behavioural patterns (i.e. conditionality). Responsibilisation strategies of social housing tenants often occurred through social mix in the context of urban renewal policies with the aim to tackle anti-social behaviours. Except for UK-based studies, little is known about other responsibilisation approaches in social housing based for example on specific allocation policies or management approaches. To fill this gap, this paper examines recent cases of tenants' responsibilisation based on conditionality, i.e. allocation provided that receivers regularly engage in supportive activities, in Utrecht (The Netherlands) and Milan (Italy). Through a set of qualitative techniques, this paper unpacks the use of conditionality and contributes by showing both innovative aspects, e.g. eligibility criteria, obligations, accountability measures, and potential pitfalls deriving from diverging expectations between tenants and professionals.

Keywords: *social housing; comparative housing; welfare state; tenants responsibilisation; social mix; conditionality*

5.1 Introduction

In many Western European democracies, the provision of welfare services is increasingly becoming conditional to the active and responsible behavior of welfare claimants and, more generally, citizens (Foucault, 1991, cited in Flint, 2003). This situation is often referred to as the new, or the post-, welfare state. Conceptualized as a welfare state service, but at the same type covering an ambiguous position within it (Malpass, 2008), social housing is seen as a proper site for examining the impacts of emerging politics of behaviour (Flint, 2004; Flint & Nixon, 2006). In Malpass' (2008) words, "changes in housing are increasingly congruent with the wider trend and trajectory of the welfare state as a whole" (p. 9). Contemporary developments of social housing governance increasingly tend to assess individuals' eligibility for social housing tenancies in relation to tenants' future conduct and their potential impact on the community (Deacon, 2004; Flint, 2002; 2004; Flint & Nixon, 2006; Manzi, 2010). Put another way, social housing governance in post-welfare states does not only require tenants to refrain from prohibited or 'anti-social' behaviour, but also requires a positive and

proactive engagement in acts of citizenship and voluntary endeavours (see Verhoeven & Tonkens, 2013). Accordingly, social landlords have introduced a number of different criteria to allocate tenancies, for example: individuals' desire to live in specific areas, their potential contribution to a stable community, and their likely levels of involvement and participation within the community (Flint, 2003; 2004). Social housing professionals are also required to set specific frameworks, develop structures and draw proper boundaries to facilitate tenants' exercise of self-regulation and self-responsibility (Flint, 2004).

Social housing in the new welfare state is characterized by a widening of tenants responsibility (Flint, 2004) and growing *conditionality*, a principle holding that "eligibility to certain basic, publicly provided, welfare entitlements should be dependent on an individual first agreeing to meet particular compulsory duties or patterns of behaviour" (Dwyer, 2004, p. 269). A main goal of welfare conditionality is to reassert and strengthen the responsibilities and obligations of welfare recipients, whether they are job seekers, parents or tenants (Deacon, 2004). Responsibility and conditionality assume increasing individual agency and accountability beyond traditional aspects of housing allocation (e.g. rent payments and basic maintenance of properties) to include a greater involvement in community activities and proactive responses to discourage anti-social behaviors.

Across Europe, many social landlords used to implement social mix, i.e. increasing the share of middle-class 'role models' (especially homeowners), as a strategy to spread desirable norms of behaviour and shared values among social housing tenants (Graves, 2011; Koster, 2015; Uitermark, 2003), particularly in the context of urban regeneration of most deprived social housing neighbourhoods. With the ending of many urban regeneration programmes throughout Europe due to both questionable results (Bond et al., 2011) and post crisis retreat of governments from deprived neighbourhoods (Zwiers et al., 2016), social landlords are implementing social mix in a new and different framing, as this paper will show, whereby conditionality represents a key principle of tenants' responsibilisation strategy through social mixing.

The existing strand of literature covering the topic of responsibilisation of social housing tenants in the new welfare state is largely drawing on UK-based studies (Flint, 2002; 2003; 2004; 2006; 2015; Flint & Nixon, 2006; Haworth & Manzi, 1999; King, 2006; Manzi, 2010). To fill this gap this paper takes in consideration current developments in two other EU countries: Italy and the Netherlands. Building on Borghi and van Berkel's (2007) comparative paper on Italian and Dutch welfare activation policies in labour and social care, which connoted common shift towards a 'more active welfare state' (see also De Leonardis, 2011; Tonkens, 2011), we expand their contribution by considering on-going trends within social/public housing sectors.

As Stephens (2011) argued, dealing with housing research inevitably means taking into account wider socio-economic structures and institutions, including welfare systems. Adopting a 'most different systems' approach (Przeworksi & Teune, 1970, cited in Pickvance, 2001), we investigated how emerging mechanisms of conditionality, as part of broader

social/public tenants’ responsibilisation strategies, operate in two different configurations of housing and welfare regimes. Concerning welfare regimes, we focused on the Netherlands, a cross-over between conservative and socio-democratic regime (Hoekstra, 2003) and Italy, a conservative welfare regime incorporated to the Mediterranean cluster (Allen et al., 2004; Castles & Ferrera, 1996). Having conceptualized housing as a welfare state service (Malpass, 2008), the choice of these countries is also indicative of different degrees of state involvement in publicly subsided housing provision (social or public housing) as part of broader welfare arrangements.

This paper aims to better understand how specific conditionality-based forms of governance, which are related to practices of allocation and management activities, shape housing professionals’ attempts to promote tenants’ responsibilisation, in the context of two different configurations of welfare and housing systems. The research question is: *how are the concepts of responsibilisation and conditionality shaping recent approaches to the allocation and management of social housing in Italy and in the Netherlands?* To address this question, we describe and compare two social/public housing projects located in the cities of Utrecht (The Netherlands) and Milan (Italy) inhabited by a fine-grained mix of welfare dependents and other social groups, mainly young people (students and workers).

The paper is structured as follows. The first section provides a theoretical framework about the main traits of politics and governance in post-welfare states with a focus on the development of concepts like responsibilisation and conditionality in social housing. A specific subsection discusses social mix as a tenants’ responsibilisation strategy in the context of urban renewal policies predominantly based on neighbourhoods physical restructuring, serving as a theoretical connection with the practices of social mix examined in this paper. In the second section, a comparative framework discussing the link between welfare and housing systems is presented with specific subsections addressing such relationship in Italy and the Netherlands. The third section discusses research design including methods, data and description of case studies. The fourth section highlights and discusses our empirical findings.

5.2 Theoretical framework

5.2.1 Politics, governance and responsabilisation in post-welfare states

Across Western Europe, traditional institutions dealing with the management of social risk and social protection, notably welfare states, are increasingly relying on new rationalities - labelled as ‘positive welfare’ (Giddens, 1998), ‘enabling welfare’ (Gilbert, 2002), ‘new welfare’ (Taylor-Gooby, 2008) - that link the access to services and benefits to the active behaviour of citizens, assuming that citizens hold their own responsibilities in preventing social harms (Flint, 2003; Giddens, 1994; 1998; Peeters, 2013; Taylor-Gooby, 2002). The core objectives of new welfare state arrangements are shifting from ‘protection and indemnification’ to ‘participation, activation and independence’, bringing new normative

views and ideas on welfare dependency, reconfiguring the organizations underlying the 'traditional welfare state' as well as reframing the relationships between the state and the citizens (Borghi & van Berkel, 2007; Hoggett et al., 2013; Rose, 1999, cited in Flint, 2003). In the new configuration of welfare, agency, autonomy and self-responsibility are conceptualized as basic requirements of 'good' citizenship (Flint, 2004). The idea of individuals as 'entrepreneurs of the self' emblematically describe the conditions of individuals constantly pushed to rely on personal efforts and to develop personal abilities to create one own's means for consumption (Flint, 2006).

Responsibilisation as a governmental strategy encourages citizens to do more for themselves, for their lives and for their communities compared to past realm when taking responsibility was mainly a matter of individual choice and autonomy, ultimately contributing to broader policy ambitions (Malpass, 2008; Peeters, 2013). With different labels, such as 'governance at a distance' (Rose. 2001, cited in Flint, 2003), 'meta-governance' (Nederhand et al., 2016), 'governmentality' (Foucault, 2007, cited in Peeters, 2013), 'ethopower' (Rose, 2001, cited in Flint, 2003), 'ethical self- government' (Cowan & Marsh, 2004), 'contractual governance' (Crawford, 2003), new governance strategies point to the need of shaping citizens' conducts according to uncontested values, universal beliefs, and prescribed codes of living (Rose, 2001, cited in Flint, 2003). To do so, they operate through the construction or realignment of subjects' identities as self-regulated agents, active consumers and responsibilised members of 'communities' (Flint, 2003) and through the establishment of agreements to regulate contemporary social life and behaviours. Koster (2015) uses the term 'citizenship agendas' to identify the set of "normative framings of citizenship that prescribe what norms, values and behaviour are appropriate for particular subjects" (p. 216). These can be produced by both state (public) and non-state (private) actors and operates at specific locus or territorial scales (local, national, international levels). "Citizenship agendas identify particular groups of subjects, in a particular territory, and target them for policy intervention, implying models for more and less desirable citizens and ways to transform the latter into the former" (Koster, 2015, p. 216).

Common to all these approaches is the turn to (contractual) communities as 'the touchstone of good governance' (Cowan & Marsh, 2004; Flint, 2003). Community is conceptualised as both the social territory (often coinciding with the spatial unit of the neighbourhood) and the mechanism through which subjects' self-conduct is shaped. Embedded to the notion of community is the ability to transmit norms and influence compliance to a specific moral discourse that emphases duties and responsibilities to others (Delanty, 2003; Flint, 2003) but also attractive ideas of mutual aid and positive socialisation (Cowan & Marsh, 2004). Reflecting the neo-liberal motif 'rule without ruling', it "enables individuals to be governed through their associations" (Cowan & Marsh, 2004, p. 846). The next section discusses how concepts of community and neighbourhood are related to those of responsibilisation and conditionality within social housing in the new welfare state.

5.2.2 Responsibilisation of social housing tenants and conditionality in post welfare states

Social housing tenants in post-welfare regimes are increasingly assumed as autonomous, empowered and responsible individuals rather than passive welfare recipients (Flint, 2003). In post-welfare context, concepts like ‘responsibility’ and ‘conditionality’ are coupled with a general feeling that ‘fairness and expectation’ should come before ‘need and rights’ (Flint, 2015). Within this particular context, three foci on the notion of responsibility will be studied in this paper: responsibility as agency, responsibility to community, and responsibility as self-regulation (Flint, 2004). The first focus envisages tenants as empowered agents, capable of contributing to the goals of the housing organization. To this scope, new and intensive regulatory roles and responsibilities for housing managers may be required, for example to develop structures, framework and boundaries within which tenants exercise self-regulation serving housing agencies’ goal of governing *through* the conduct of their tenants. The second focus, responsibility to community, assumes a re-definition of tenants’ identities: from *consumers* with a focus on their rights, typical of the 1980s and early 1990s, to *citizens* with a focus on their duties and moral obligations deriving from being members of local communities. This shift implies a widening of responsibilities beyond the self-regulation of individual tenancies to include the self-regulation of their own behaviours in line with norms and values that are not detrimental to the communities they belong to. Similar to the previous case, new roles are attributed to social housing agencies in developing strategies beyond their core tasks (i.e. provision of affordable housing). In the third conceptualization of responsibility, as self-regulation, responsibilisation beyond individual tenancies means, for tenants, increasing their role in the wider processes of housing management, including the stimulation of tenant participation (Priemus et al., 1999). While fostering opportunities for tenant engagement is usually considered as desirable behavioral conduct (somewhat an *end* in itself), in the new governance of social housing promoting such opportunities is seen a *means* to co-opt responsible tenants within wider governance structures and processes, which might also result in power shifts from housing officers to tenants themselves.

A conceptual distinction exists between attributing causal responsibility for one’s own action (*ex post* accountability) and designating responsibility as *ex-ante* virtue for the prevention or resolution of undesirable events (King, 2006; Peeters, 2013). New forms of social housing governance seems to be stressing the second interpretation of this concept. In a similar vein, such conceptual distinction stresses another differentiation between *obligations* within tenancy agreements (e.g. timely rent payments), and *desirability*, meaning a moral exhortation of tenants expressed through policy discourses or housing management techniques (Flint, 2004). Again, it seems that the new politics of behaviour in housing seems to stress the latter over the former. In fact, while obligations and other punitive measures undertaken by housing managers to sanction inappropriate behaviours have always existed within tenancy agreements, and continue to exist, rewarding mechanisms that incite tenants

to assume positive conducts are increasingly assuming a central role within new forms of governance in social housing.

Similar to responsibility, the notion of conditionality has affected recent developments in welfare policy and housing, especially in the UK (Dwyer, 2004; Haworth & Manzi, 1999). Quoting Deacon (1994), Dwyer affirms that "a principle of conditionality holds that eligibility to certain basic, publicly provided, welfare entitlements should be dependent on an individual first agreeing to meet particular compulsory duties or patterns of behaviour" (2004, p. 269). Following Deacon (2004), the theoretical justifications for conditionality in welfare fall into three main categories: contractualist, paternalistic, and mutualist. While *contractualist* positions claim that "it is reasonable to use welfare to enforce obligations where this is part of a broader contract between government and claimants. If the government keeps its part of the bargain, then the claimants should keep theirs" (p. 915). Essential to the *paternalistic* view is the exercise of authority, direction and surveillance on welfare dependents assuming that they lack of agency and self-control over their lives. The *mutualist* explanation for conditionality derives from communitarian theories and assumes that individuals hold commitments and responsibilities regardless from the claims made upon governments. In that light, mutualism differs from contractualist as it tends to emphasis duties to each other and responsibilities, which are not necessarily related to 'a bargain between individuals and governments' (Sacks, 1997, cited in Deacon, 2004). The main difference between contractualist and paternalist arguments is the reciprocity element (Deacon, 2004). While reciprocity is absent in the paternalist argument, in the contractualist argument beneficiaries meets or are expected to meet certain requirement right because they acknowledge that the government is also doing something for them. In a similar vein, Dwyer (2004, quoting White, 2000) added that a reciprocity principle is related to a wider understanding of distributive justice. In his words: "people are essentially 'Homo reciprocans' (i.e. co-operative beings willing to accept that it is legitimate that they be asked to make certain contributions, provided others do likewise)" (p. 278). A contractualist view of welfare would also prevent 'freeloaders' from exploiting 'fellow citizens'.

5.2.3 Addressing anti-social behaviours through social mix on neighbourhood level

In a context of neoliberalism, in countries such as the Netherlands and the UK, social mix became an element of local citizenship agenda, which consisted in promoting the behaviours of 'good' citizens - typically envisaged as middle-class homeowners, self-responsible, and active in policy-making - as opposed to 'bad' citizens - notably social housing unemancipated tenants, lacking of autonomy and 'pulling down' the neighbourhood (Koster, 2015; McIntyre & McKee, 2012). Through policy discourses and interventions, e.g. the creation of mixed-tenure neighbourhoods, state (i.e. governments) and non-state actors (i.e. social landlords) have produced citizenship agendas targeting specific urban subpopulations (i.e. social

housing tenants) in deprived neighbourhoods in light of their (presumed) anti-social behaviours.

Anti-social behaviours are central to the claim for increasing tenants' responsibility (Dwyer, 2004). Shaping behaviours of tenants in a way that they can perceive themselves as responsible for their actions is assumed to reduce neighbourhood social problems (Manzi, 2010). The neighbourhood has indeed emerged as the site where civility is to be 'enacted and regulated' through the roles of communities and proactive acts of citizenship (Flint & Nixon, 2006).

In this light, in the 1990s and early 2000s, in several EU countries anti-social behaviours (e.g. nuisance, vandalism, crime, etc.) started being tackled through social mix strategies on the neighbourhood level, often in the framework of urban renewal policies adopting predominantly physical measures like demolition and rebuilding (Kleinhans, 2004). Increasing the degree of social mix was meant to promote responsible conducts of most vulnerable residents (Manzi, 2010). The underpinning mechanisms were distant or proximal role modeling. In distant role modeling, behavioural change occurs by observing 'proper' behaviour from distance; whilst, in proximal role modeling, changes derives from direct social interaction with another individual, and the related transferal of 'proper' behaviour (Graves, 2011).

Parallel to the ending of large scale, state-driven urban regeneration programmes in several Western EU countries, such as the Netherlands (Uyterlinde et al., 2017), attempts to stimulated active and responsible self-conduct of social housing tenants are increasingly framed within their membership to local communities which call tenants to adopt a community-orientated conduct (Flint, 2003). In the UK, a growing number of social landlords have introduced several contractual-based mechanisms to help tenants to meet their obligations and form positive relationships within the community, such as tenant reward schemes, 'sensitive letting policy' (regulating access to housing on the basis of tenants potential contribution toward the community), or 'letting committees' where tenants and housing staff jointly seek to govern the conduct of others in the name of such communities (see Flint, 2003; 2004; Flint & Nixon, 2006, Hunter, 2001, cited in Dwyer, 2004). The introduction of specific arrangements regulating social housing tenures to increase tenants' responsibilisation is congruent with recent developments in welfare entitlement, as both ultimately tend to envisage an active role of citizens in relation to local community and broader society (Flint & Nixon, 2006).

The next section will try to unpack the relationships between housing and welfare before diving into a description of the current configuration of such relationship in the two research contexts, Italy and the Netherlands.

5.3 Comparative framework

Comparative housing research used to rely on the classification of welfare regimes into social democratic, conservative and liberal, operated by Esping Andersen in the 1990s

(Malpass, 2008). With respect to this classification, both Italian and Dutch welfare systems have been defined as atypical situations in successive discussions (Arbaci, 2007; Borghi & van Berkel, 2007; Hoekstra, 2003). Italy, initially part of conservative model, has later been clustered to the Southern-European or Mediterranean model of welfare, while the Netherlands has been considered a cross-over between social-democratic and conservative models. These countries present different degrees of state involvement in publicly subsided housing provision (social or public housing) as part of broader welfare arrangements (Malpass, 2008). In Italy, such involvement is notably residual, representing only about the 5% of total housing stock, while in the Netherlands the government exercises an indirect but consistent influence in the provision of social housing. Around 30% of the total housing stock is provided by housing associations, private entities that operate in a public framework (the Housing Law) and are thus under the control of the Dutch government (Hoekstra, 2017).

In their comparative paper on welfare activation policies in Italy and the Netherlands, Borghi & van Berkel (2007) argued that both countries experienced remarkable welfare state transformation processes over the last two decades, heading them towards an ‘active welfare state’ through similar principles of new governance: decentralization, empowering of municipalities, increasing involvement of local non-state actors (in particular civil society). Despite commonalities, they point to crucial differences including fragmentation and regional differentiation, lack of central regulation in Italy and dilemmas about too much or too little central government involvement in social policies in the Netherlands (see also De Leonardis, 2011; Tonkens, 2011). In both countries, conditionality-based mechanisms have already been introduced in welfare policies and social benefits schemes against poverty and unemployment (D’Emilione, 2018; Leone, 2016; Veldboer et al., 2015).

The presence of both similar principles of new governance and large differences in terms of contexts makes a comparison between the two countries very interesting. Therefore, we now provide a deeper description of the relationship between housing and new welfare state in each national context.

5.3.1 Italy

After the 1970s, welfare services provision in Italy started being arranged through a ‘welfare mix’ model. New strategies to promote activation of recipients and participation in local policy governance were introduced based on the principles of vertical and horizontal subsidiarity. The first relates to the downscaling towards the local levels of governance (decentralization), the second refers to the boosting of self-organisation of civil society (De Leonardis, 2011). As an outcome of vertical subsidiarity, the ‘territorialization’ of welfare (Andreotti et al., 2012; Bifulco, 2016) produced different regional welfare models across Italy. Duties, responsibilities and legislative autonomy in the field of housing and other social policies were transferred from central State to Regions and Municipalities, despite a persisting strong centralization of economic resources. Horizontal subsidiarity brought about an increasing co-operation between public (state), private institutions (market) and civil

society (including third sector actors such as foundations, volunteering associations, and cooperatives) concerning public services provision (Ferrera & Maino, 2012; Kazepov, 2008).

Post-crisis, austerity-driven reforms have exacerbated above mentioned trends, especially in terms of greater involvement of non-public providers (e.g. the third sector) and reliance on public-private partnerships to provide welfare services including housing (Costa & Sabatinelli, 2011). The 2009 and 2014 Housing Acts legally enabled third sector organisations (i.e. foundations, cooperatives or social enterprises) to deliver and manage new social rented units. A sort of quasi-market system (known as *Housing Sociale* in Italian), run by private-public partnerships, was created besides existing public housing supply (*Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica* in Italian), which is provided by public housing companies or municipalities.

Within this context, a specific type of welfare mix model, known as 'Community Welfare', is emerging. Following Ponzo (2015), some of its main elements are:

(1) the combination of different actors and logics (i.e. state, market, community, and households), who establish cooperative relationships with each other;
(2) the shifting role of citizens: from consumers/users to providers/stakeholders of the organisations to whom they refer for specific public services;
(3) the framing of local community as both producer and receiver of welfare services;
(4) the high degree of reliance on resources, provided by specific configurations between State, market, community and households, available in each local context.

In this context, the Region Lombardy stood out as "the most extreme neo-liberal version of the re-organisation of welfare" (De Leonardis, 2011, p. 131). There, a growing number of community welfare practices and projects, run through partnerships between the Municipalities and/or Third Sector organisations (*in primis* foundations)[27], aim to promote the activation of citizens' individual resources and turn them into collective assets for the community they live in, especially in disadvantaged public housing neighbourhoods. To tackle the scarcity of affordable housing in largest cities, e.g. Milan, many public-private partnerships were aimed to refurbish and allocate vacant public housing units to students, single-parent households, young households, and temporary workers, thus achieving greater social mix which contributes to revitalise local social fabric. As we will argue in the research design section, this kind of community welfare practices, based on social mixing, can be considered a privileged arena to observe emerging governance rationalities aimed to increase tenants' responsibilisation.

[27] As an example, we can cite here the 'Community Welfare and Social Innovation' (Authors' translation) programme, launched by Fondazione Cariplo that is one of the main foundations in Lombardy involved in the welfare service provision as part of the local 'welfare mix' model in the Region. This programme aims to promote innovative welfare practices based on citizens' participation, and appealing to a communitarian dimension by targeting specific subgroups and territories.

5.3.2 The Netherlands

Essential to the traditional Dutch welfare state is the feeling that "'the strong' had to care for 'the weak' and that the safety net for the weak must be generous" (Brandsen et al., 2011, p. 4), which is reflected in the Dutch expression for welfare state: *verzorgingsstaat* (caring state) (*ibidem*). However, a new mode of welfare governance has been developing, which might depict the *verzorgingsstaat* as an outdated picture. Recently, the government has combined large budgetary cuts with crucial reforms in welfare and care provision assuming that the welfare state is becoming too expensive to maintain thus requiring greater citizens' involvement in the provision of care using their personal networks. This is achieved by constructing a shared responsibility and mutual interest among citizens to contribute to the '*res publica*' as well as increasing solidarity with the community. Following Peeters (2013) responsibilisation occurs 'on government's terms', that is by nudging the people to behave according to the state's view of the public interest,

> *for instance by connecting policy ambitions to presumed individual interests, by organising the opportunity structure in such a way that people are seemingly spontaneously directed towards desirable behaviour […], or by proactively "reaching out" to citizens who are at risk of showing undesirable behaviour (p. 588).*

In the white paper 'Do- It-Yourself Democracy', the Dutch government makes a case for supporting citizens-led initiatives dealing with societal issues (Kleinhans, 2017). Encouraging people to participate in society (*participatiesamenleving*) has become a real *leit motiv,* which is cross-cutting different domains. Considering the long-term care and social assistance areas as examples, through the Social Support Acts 2007 and 2015 the government has emphasized citizens' own responsibility towards their families, communities and their own wellbeing. Citizens should take up active involvement being keen to *voluntary* support people around them 'to do things independently', instead of relying on public support. When possible, social care and support with daily activities should be provided at home, informally, without a professional framework. The provision of care takes the form of a social relationship, and goes "beyond the usual care among members of the same household" (Dijkhoff, 2014, p. 287).

Recent government reforms also concerned the social housing sector in which roughly 400 housing associations (*woningcorporaties*) operate under the government legal framework of the Housing Act. They provide and manage affordable housing stock (*core function*) and are involved in non-landlord activities (NLAs), e.g. community development and urban regeneration to improve liveability and social cohesion in neighbourhoods (Brandsen et al., 2011; Czischke et al., 2012). In many of these activities, social landlords are "treating their housing stock as a means rather than an end" (Brandsen et al., 2011, p. 12) combining for example housing and health care offers, multi-functional centers, and

experimental types of tenure. The latest revision of the Housing Act (in 2015) introduced several limits to housing associations' freedom to develop NLAs besides a stricter targeting of social dwellings to the most vulnerable households, including those who leave care institutions as a consequence of above mentioned reforms to social welfare (Hoekstra, 2017). These reforms have to be seen as a step forward with respect to the development of an active welfare state, which dates back to the 1990s (see Borghi & van Berkel, 2007) and open questions regarding how housing associations will continue developing socially oriented aims/activities in a contexts of their restricted tasks and room to move.

5.4 Research design

Comparative research can focus on different levels of housing reality, i.e. *outcomes*, *mechanisms* or *contexts*, along with distinct *territorial scales* (i.e. continents, regions, cities, suburbs, estates etc.) (Lawson et al., 2010). Hantrais (1999) considers the contextualization of political, economic, social and cultural elements as an essential precondition for a deeper understanding of social phenomena as well as for successful cross-national comparison.

This paper adopts a comparative approach to achieve a deeper understanding of the variations in the *mechanisms* of conditionality within tenants' responsibilisation in two *contexts* characterised by different structural societal features, in our case coinciding with welfare and housing systems (Pickvance, 2001). The 'nation state' level is one of the most commonly used *territorial scales* in comparative housing research (Stephens, 2011) as well as in the framing of citizenship agendas (Koster, 2015). However, existing trends at national-level are under increasing influence of supra- and sub-national trends. In our case, supra-national trends relate to the global circulation of new welfare state rationalities while sub-national ones refer to the development of bottom-up practices from the city-level as part of local welfare systems (see Andreotti et al., 2012). Both in Italy and the Netherlands, city councils are assigned responsibilities in deciding how to implement national policies at the local level (decentralisation) (Borghi & van Berkel, 2007; Brandsen et al., 2011; Costa & Sabatinelli, 2011; Dijkhoff, 2014). To account for such multiple levels, we adopted a three-stage procedure for case study selection.

In the first stage, we conceptualised conditionality and tenant responsibilisation as examples of pivotal ideas within new welfare states (see sections 5.2 and 5.3) and looked at their (potential) variations within countries adopting a 'most different systems' approach (Przeworksi & Teune, 1970, cited in Pickvance, 2001). Italy and the Netherlands were chosen in light of their differences in relation to welfare and housing systems (see subsections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2), which, being indicative of structural societal features, represented our independent variables (e.g. socio-economic stratification; legal and socio-political institutions; socio-cultural norms etc.). As for Italy, we specifically focused to the Region Lombardy, where the re-organisation of welfare was connoted by high levels of individual agency and strong promotion of responsible citizenship compared to the national context (De Leonardis, 2011). The selection of cities and practices (second and third stages) was

based on a ‘most similar systems’ approach as we sought instances with most features in common linked to the independent variables, thus reducing the number of uncontrolled variables (Pickvance, 2001). Utrecht and Milan were selected as in both cities the public/social housing sectors are extremely tight which makes the competition to access affordable housing opportunities stronger while, at the same time, increasing the chances that local stakeholders will promote innovative practices to cope with the provision of housing[28]. To select relevant practices as case studies, we carried out a number of explorative face-to-face interviews with key local informants (i.e. policy-makers, professionals, researchers) coupled with desk research to sort out two or more housing projects satisfying the following conditions:

(1) Being recently developed and implemented
(2) Being embedded in the social/public housing sectors
(3) Addressing similar target groups, including welfare dependents
(4) Containing agreements in tenancy contracts to meet specific duties/behaviours (i.e. conditionality, see Dwyer, 2004).

This led us to select the projects ‘Majella Wonen’ in Utrecht and ‘Ospitalità Solidale’ in Milan, described in Table 1. Examined initiatives represent specific local-based practices within the social or public housing sector, which are not part of any national or local policy yet. According to practitioners, these projects are experimental forms of social housing characterized by ‘trial and error’ approach. They can be considered unique as, for example, the allocation of dwellings does not follow the regular allocation rules being concerned with specific segments of housing demand and supply.

5.4.1 Methods and analysis

From January 2017 to June 2018, 32 semi-structured interviews have been carried out with housing professionals (12 in Italy and 20 in the Netherlands) together with a focus group that involved four tenants of Majella Wonen in June 2017 (see appendix 2). The interviews were aimed at collecting information about aims, rationalities and outcomes of these projects from the perspective of both housing professionals and, when possible, tenants. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and integrated with personal notes from participant observation (held at the ‘Garden Activity’ and ‘Spring party’ in Majella in May 2017), informal meetings with project coordinators (during site visits) and content analysis of the following documents: official reports, media coverage and survey for application to Ospitalità Solidale (see appendix 1).

Through Atlas.ti, we analysed interviews contents using mainly a deductive and iterative approach. For example, we started from Dwyer's (2004) definition of conditionality to look

[28] As an example, in Utrecht applicants for social housing dwellings can wait up to 7 years until they get an accommodation. In Milan, the city which holds the largest public housing stock (around 10% compared to 5% at national level), more than 20 000 applicants are on the waiting lists.

for relevant compulsory duties and/or patterns of behaviours that tenants[29] had to meet, and coded them as 'commitments', 'requirements' and 'expectations'. During this process, we also added codes, like 'motivation', based on the frequency with which our respondents mentioned it. Drawing on *ex ante* and *ex post* forms of responsibility (King, 2006; Peeters, 2013), we accordingly subdivided the operating mechanisms of conditionality in two chronological steps: before and after project's start. We reframed it as *ex ante* and *ex post* conditionality, each corresponding to a specific action: the selection of tenants and the accountability process, respectively.

[29] We focused on one single target group, the 'resourceful' tenants (see Table 1), as their tenancies are explicitly regulated by an underlying mechanism of conditionality.

5.4.2 Description of case studies

Table 1. Summary of the main characteristics of case study projects.

	Majella Wonen (Utrecht)	Ospitalità Solidale (Milan)
Organisations	• Housing association ‘Portaal’ • Social care organisation ‘De Tussenvoorziening’[30]	• Housing cooperative ‘DAR=CASA’ • Association ‘Arci’ • Social Cooperative ‘Comunità Progetto’ • Municipality of Milan[31]
Launch and length of tenancy	• Mid-2016 • Max three years	• 2014 • From 6 months to 2 years
Housing complexes and dwellings information	• 70 units (mainly one-room flats) in one building owned by Portaal. • The building, classified as below-basic quality stock, slated for demolition 9 years ago. Since then, units assigned for temporary living (*anti-kraak*[32]) until the establishment of Majella project (2015). • Rent between 330 and 390 euro/month. • Garden and common room (not available yet during fieldwork period)	• 24 refurbished public housing flats (about 25 m^2 each) owned by Municipality of Milan. Before refurbishment, the units were empty as they were unsuitable for regular public housing allocation (classified as substandard) • Units are scattered in two neighbourhoods: Niguarda (11 flats) and Molise (13 flats) • Rent: 370 euro/months • Two common rooms, one per neighbourhood, available for social activities
Targets	• 35 units to self-selected tenants from Portaal (mainly single, young workers in their 30s plus a few students) and 35 units to welfare dependents (Tussenvoorziening clients: former homeless, people with soft addictions). Between 10 and 14 sitting tenants (*anti-kraak*) decided to stay when the project started. • Door-to-door mixed in each staircase	• Young people between 18-30 years old (students or workers with fixed term contracts and max income 1.500 euro/month) • They are mixed with sitting public housing tenants, mainly large size households with immigrant background, elderly (mainly single), people with social and mental indications.

[30] ‘De Tussenvoorziening’ is a social care organization, which aims to help vulnerable people with unstable housing or living conditions by providing housing and support services in Utrecht, such as shelters and assistance for homeless and other people who need social protection and reintegration.

[31] The Municipality of Milan promoted this project with the support of Youth Department and Italian Municipalities National Association (*Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani*) in the frame of Youth Local Plans – Metropolitan Cities (*Piani Locali Giovani – Città Metropolitane* in Italian).

[32] Anti-squatters: renters occupying empty buildings as security guards.

		• Mixing strategy followed an ‘opportunity-based’ criterion. Young people were assigned public housing flats according to the availability of empty flats.
Surroundings	• Blocks of social housing estates	• Blocks of public housing estates
Aim and philosophy	• Building a mixed community where resourceful tenants engage to spend 16 hours per month in social activities to create a supportive environment for vulnerable ones in return to quick access to social housing.	• Boosting social cohesion at building and neighbourhood levels by promoting social ties and solidarity relationships between tenants. Young tenants can benefit from rent at lower-price, compared to private market, in return to 10 hours per month-commitment in volunteering.

Source: own elaboration based on interview transcripts and relevant documents analysis.

Figure 1. Picture of Majella Wonen’s building, Utrecht. Source: Authors

Figure 2. Picture of Ospitalità Solidale’s building in Molise neighbourhood, Milan. Source: Authors

5.5 Findings: unpacking conditionality

In this section, the mechanism of conditionality is unfolded as *ex ante* conditionality, referring to the process of, and underlying premises for, tenants’ selection, and *ex post* conditionality, referring the strategies adopted by professionals to account for tenants’ efforts. At the core of both conceptualizations of conditionality is tenants’ commitment to dedicate a fixed amount of time to social events/activities, e.g. gathering in convivial moments such as meals in little groups, participating in different activities in working groups such as gardening, recycle workshops etc. (see Tab. 1). Activities usually result from tenants’ suggestions and ideas based on their own skills, interests, resources but can also derive from an in-depth exploration of neighbourhoods’ needs, e.g. language classes for foreigners, childcare, free food distribution for low-income populations etc., as the Milan case shows.

5.5.1 Ex ante conditionality: the selection of tenants

The process of tenants’ selection allows housing professionals to explore candidates’ motivation and verify if they hold the necessary requirements to join the project. Therefore, professionals make a preliminary assessment of tenants’ potential future conduct (see Flint, 2003) and capacity to take up expected responsibilities. The point, then, is to understand what makes candidates eligible for this project. To this regard, professionals draw on a combination of need-based and attitude-based criteria that reflect objective and subjective requirements, respectively. The former relates to socio-economic characteristics like age and income that denote candidates’ social position, in our cases mostly youths with low-income or unstable job contracts. This criterion makes candidates suitable for social housing tenancies based on bureaucratic definition of need (Flint, 2003).

In relation to the new welfare state rationalities, which encourage citizens to use personal efforts and abilities, i.e. to become ‘entrepreneurs of the self’ (Flint, 2003), the attitude-based criteria, and related subjective requirements, are particularly important for our discussion. Candidates’ personal attitudes are examined through questions like “why [do] we need you in this project?”, “what are you going to do to have a positive influence for the neighbourhood?”, “what is the motivation that makes you interested in this project?” (Conversation with Practitioners and Majella tenants, April and June 2017) or “what are the skills that you think you can share and make available to others?” (Practitioner, Milan, June 2018), “for which types of social categories (e.g. elderly, children, youths) would your actions be most useful?” (Questions contained in the survey for application to Ospitalià Solidale, authors’ translation). Respondents also reported that “one should be ready put him/herself into play. So [we] mostly look at the relational skills of the candidates [and] the interest in the project” (Practitioner, Milan, June 2018).

According to practitioners, desirable subjective requirements are those that highlight applicants’ willingness to live side-by-side with more vulnerable people in a diverse housing environment. In our respondents’ words: “we created a website and put everything there so

people can see: ‘I have to live there with homeless people’ (…). If you don’t want to live with them, you won’t [sign] yourself up for a house” (Practitioner, Utrecht, June 2017). From a professionals’ viewpoint, the desirable tenant profile holds “some skills to connect with others, and others who are different from you because here you live with elderly, children…” (Practitioner, Milan, June 2018).

From the tenants’ point of view, a closer look at candidates’ motivations allows shedding light on the reasons that pushed them to apply for the project. Besides the need of housing, which has most commonly appeared in our content analysis, we found the search of a personal fulfillment and aspiration to do volunteering “in [a] easier and more approachable way” (Tenant, Utrecht, June 2017) as the most relevant incentive.

> *First [motivation] is certainly the house, then it is the interest to do something and be helpful in a different way. Many guys told that they could have done volunteering with an association but they prefer instead to ‘live it constantly’ (…) something that you experience six months in a year or whatever your contract lasts and not an activity that you do in any volunteering association but anytime you like. It is something spontaneous and this is a motivation for today’s young people. (Practitioner, Milan, June 2018)*

> *For me it was actually an opportunity to do something good in your own neighbourhood, which you, in your normal life, maybe don’t really have the time implemented for. You really get to the point that you really do like voluntary work or whatever [but] in this way it is very natural, it’s in your own neighbourhood, you only have to knock the door on the other side of the staircase sometimes…So that’s why I decided. (Tenant, Utrecht, June 2017)*

The presence of a condition, i.e. to meet the commitment, envisages specific type of ‘contractual communities’ (Cowan & Marsh, 2004) where *expectations* and *requirements* come along with *needs* (Flint, 2015). In both projects, non-state actors, like housing associations and other third sector’s professionals, look for people with strong human and relational resources (e.g. being supportive, cooperative, open-minded), in this sense *resourceful*, as these are functional to the framing of a specific ‘citizenship agenda’, which prescribes a clear role model to be played by resourceful tenants to the benefit of vulnerable inhabitants of the project or the neighbourhood.

Role model mechanisms are typical of social mix strategies (see Kleinhans, 2004) but the way role models are defined in the examined initiatives is different from its framing in most social mix literature (see Bolt et al., 2010; Bond et al., 2011; Kleinhans, 2004). Instead of middle class homeowners with relatively higher economic capital, role models in these projects are low-income youths with unstable housing and job conditions but with high socio-cultural and human capital who are willing to share it with their vulnerable neighbours (ex-homeless or sitting public housing tenants).

Put in this way, a distinctive form of social mix is promoted where residents’ diversity is not framed as a dichotomous socio-economic and tenure differentiation (homeowners vs tenants; middle-class vs working-class; native vs immigrants), rather it has a broader sense. Our respondents have explicitly mentioned skills and motivation denoting specific attitudes and lifestyles. In this light, we can link such differentiation to Tasan-Kok and colleagues’ (2013) definition of hyper-diversity as an “intense diversification of the population, not only in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but also with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities” (p. 12). Building on this definition, our case studies show that, for several individuals, hyper-diversity assets (preferences, attitudes, skills etc.) might be used to create one owns’ means for (housing) consumption (see Flint, 2006). Resourceful tenants may have greater chances to access such affordable housing opportunities by mobilizing some hyper-diversity assets as part of their becoming ‘entrepreneurs of the self’ (Flint, 2006). In our view, a starting point to understand better how personal features might turn into hyper-diversity assets is the candidates’ housing career, more specifically the stage prior to enter the projects. As our case studies reported, most tenants had precarious living arrangements (temporary unsecure rental contracts, *anti- kraak* in Dutch), or were young adults still living in parental homes wishing to move in search of new job or study opportunity without possibility to afford it.

5.5.2 Ex-post conditionality: tenants’ accountability

Accountability refers to the evaluation process of tenants’ commitment and how this relates to expectations underlying the project objectives. While, in both cases, accountability aims to increase tenants’ self-awareness of their own efforts, the tools through which professionals seek to do it differ between the two case studies. While Majella Wonen resembles a case of ‘governing through community’, Ospitalità Solidale envisages a case of ‘realignment of governing roles and identities’ (Flint, 2004). We will explain this is more detail.

In Majella Wonen, parallel to ‘formal’ meetings between professionals and tenants, ‘informal’ meetings are set out to allow all the tenants talking in groups about participation to scheduled activities. Interviewed tenants emblematically defined them as ‘evaluation talks’ or ‘a wake-up calls’ which function is to increase tenants’ awareness about self-conduct, and to nudge tenants to meet their obligations.

> *It’s not like telling people that they are doing something wrong, but more keeping a mirror in front [of them], do you sincerely think that you are participating the way that you made a promise? And do you realize how fortunate you are to be able to be part of this group? Ultimately, it’s like [a] self-reflection [of] what people are thinking: maybe I can do a little bit more. (Tenant, Utrecht, June 2017)*

We talked indeed about motivation that has come from yourself and you have to motivate others. And you have to ask your neighbours: what’s going on? How are you feeling? (ibidem)

Informal meetings as an additional act of governance is functional to reinforce existing norms (commitment) and increase social control through the network of peers (community). As practitioners argued, “we put [the commitment] in a contract, but we cannot really control. [so] we created a network of people (…) who also check if someone is not doing so well or if someone is not doing enough for the community” (Practitioner, Utrecht, June 2017). Community, intended as the network of peers, works as a means to keep tenants motivated and as a regulatory framework of behaviours (Flint, 2003).

What it should happen is that this environment will go into your DNA…You sign up for it, so you put an effort. That effort should be inserted in your normal way of life and, in that way, you can do the same for five or 10 years. That is something to happen, to make it natural, not forcing and therefore every neighbour [who] is not participating right now, has to be influenced in a positive way and notice [that] it is fun and good to have activities with your neighbours. It is good to be active in the garden. And they will come outside and are happy. (Tenant, Utrecht, June 2017)

In Majella, the evidence suggest that the mechanism of conditionality is framed within a broader strategy of responsibilisation to community (i.e. the tenants of the housing project). According to such conceptualisation, tenants’ responsibility focuses on the duties and the moral obligations, which originate from their membership to communities (see Flint, 2004). To be part of the Majella community entails specific prescriptions and regulations stated in the ‘Majella Wonen household rules’ (see appendix 1), which all tenants of the project have to comply with. This framing of responsibility is explicitly connected to current policy discourses on the ‘Participation Society’ and recent configuration of welfare system (see Kleinhans, 2017; Peeters, 2013), revolving around the ideal of community. One tenant reported that: “since 2015[33] everything is changing and we are more focused on helping each other again and take care of your neighbourhood, your family” (Tenant, Utrecht, April 2017). According to others:

It’s rather a development that we try as a society. Not only housing associations but the government and the social institutions too. If there is some possibility that people can live by themselves in the community than that’s the better way. It’s the movement (…) trying to facilitate people who can, with some support, live in the

[33] Here the respondent is in all likelihood referring to the set of welfare reforms issued in 2015, that includes the Social Support Act but also the Housing Act (see subsection 5.3.2).

> *society instead of putting them faraway in institutions. It’s not new, but it’s developing more and more in this direction. (Practitioner, Utrecht, June 2017)*

In the Dutch case, tenants have clearly shown a strong desire and willingness to take up the tasks envisaged by practitioners. In our respondents’ words: “the tenants really want this. They want to live in a community (…), talk to each other, do things together, so they are in search of this” (Practitioner, Utrecht, June 2017).

Switching to the Italian case, Ospitalità Solidale, the ‘realignment of governing roles and identities’ is a consequence of the (unexpected) lack of tenants’ self-regulation, which was the most desirable path according to housing practitioners. As they argued, the main shift was from “an idea of self-responsibilisation and self-organisation to a more contractual [approach]” (Practitioner, Milan, June 2018), which required organizations to re-adapt their roles and ways of operating:

> *We [organisations] all expected a more spontaneous adhesion to the commitment (…). We wouldn’t have played this role but it has been explicitly requested by tenants. So we combine normative-oriented messages such as “everybody has to come to the meeting” with a work on the individual motivation. Sometimes our role is simply to push tenants to follow up the activities they suggested which didn’t have much participation (Practitioner, Milan, June 2018)*

A more interventionist management approach consisted of introducing exceptional normative tools to account for tenants’ efforts, such as the monthly self-registration of performed tasks in online-shared calendars reporting all scheduled activities. As one respondent reported, the objective is to help making one’s contribution transparent to others (and tenants themselves) and to strengthen this message: “whose burden is it? Is it my responsibility to control that you performed the activity or is it your responsibility to make time for it?” (*ibidem*). Another strategy adopted by practitioners was to appoint one contact person for each activity to be realised. He/she “is the promoter of the initiative whom I use to contact to get a feedback about the activity…to know if it went well or wrong, who was there…” (*ibidem*). Last but not least, practitioners resorted to a reduction of tenancy length, from 2 to 1 year or even 6 or 3 months, extendible prior positive assessment. “Previously we made 2-years contracts, now we make mainly 6 months contracts. In this way, every 6 months we have a meeting to evaluate the [individual] experience. Especially for less active tenants such extension works as an assessment” (*ibidem*).

As the rationale underpinning the Majella project was associated to the broader policy ambition to promote the ‘Participation Society’, likewise the rationale behind Ospitalità Solidale is in line with the ‘Community Welfare’ ideal (see subsection 5.3.1). Our respondents defined Ospitalità Solidale as a community welfare project:

> *because it attempts to trigger something starting from citizens themselves (…) on the one hand this project aims to create some resources to bring in the territory, on the other hand, it does so in a participative way, by requiring the activation of inhabitants and citizens. The latter are not passive actors rather they can express, decide, take action themselves. (ibidem)*

Within the broader frame of 'Community Welfare', the role of third sector organizations is to create the proper conditions for all beneficiaries to be empowered. The resourceful tenants, who are selected for this project, are there to support organisations' mission, namely boosting social cohesion and solidarity ties within the targeted neighbourhoods. A mission that was given by the local City Council.

The use of conditionality principle in this community welfare project is then functional to sort out specific profiles of citizens that will be assigned additional responsibilities in relation to organisations' goal (see subsection 5.3.1). In this sense, responsibilisation can be conceptualized as agency, stressing tenants' capacity to contribute to the aim of housing organisation (Flint, 2004), and indirectly government's aims. The lack of tenants' self-agency complicated this picture, suggesting that applying conditionality as a central component of responsibilisation strategy within a community welfare approach brings about new challenges and possible drawbacks.

Although exploring the reasons for such gaps is beyond our scope, based on the comparison of two projects that had different outcomes despite similar premises, we attempt to put forward one potential explanation. Dutch tenants have apparently showed a stronger community-oriented vision of their expected conduct (Flint, 2003) than Italian peers. Italian practitioner:

> *hoped that they would have easily become a group that was able to do full-planning [but], after the kick-off phase, [we] realized that this was not a group (…) it was more complicated because the reasons that aggregate people were a bit fuzzy: there was a strong need of housing and a general attitude to realise activities for a neighbourhood that was unknown to everyone, including us (Practitioner, Milan, June 2018).*

The point raised by practitioners seems to concern the process of consolidation of the tenants as a cohesive group around a shared goal, in this sense a community, as well as the imbalance between two key elements of the project: *needs* (housing) and *requirements* (commitment) (see Flint, 2015), in favour of the former.

Equally important are the territorial boundaries that define the community, i.e. the *locus* of community, which in turn determine the span of project activities. To this regard, a key to interpret the differences between the two cases is provided by the spatial scale of social mixing strategy. While in Majella resourceful and vulnerable tenants are mixed at door-to-door level suggesting an emphasis first at the estate level (though not limited to it), in

Ospitalità Solidale practitioners “do not tie to a single estate, but try to do something for the entire neighbourhood (...). There are one-to-one relationships in the building but most activities are neighbourhood-oriented (…) to do something more for it…in that sense the community” (Practitioner, Milan, June 2018). Coherently with this vision, the latter project adopted a scattered social mixing approach, ‘filling’ empty dwellings in neighbourhoods’ estates depending on their availability rather than a precise allocation strategy that tries to maximize proximity between different target groups as it intentionally occurred in Majella. For Dutch practitioners “the emphasis is first getting your community [referring to Majella Wonen tenants] right (…), [as] you get that working well (…) you know how to educate the people around them [the neighborhood]” (Practitioner, Utrecht, June 2017). For Italian practitioners, the fulfillment of project aims was complicated due to the problematic social environment of the neighbourhood:

> *When we arrived here, we found part of the population, the elderly, feeling a state of abandonment by the institutions, with legitimate needs regarding the management of the built environment (fixing doorphones, pavements etc.) (…) They told us: “What should you be doing?” Are you from the Municipality? What are you going to propose us if here everything is abandoned? (Practitioner, Milan, June 2018)*

5.6 Discussion and conclusions

This paper comparatively examined how conditionality-based mechanisms were used to increase tenants’ responsibilisation in small-scale social/public housing projects, namely Ospitalità Solidale in Milan (Italy) and Majella Wonen in Utrecht (The Netherlands), characterized by a fine-grained mix between young people (students or workers), called resourceful tenants, and socially disadvantaged people (welfare dependents and sitting public housing tenants), called vulnerable tenants. Building on earlier comparative research between Italy and the Netherlands highlighting common shifts towards more active welfare states (Borghi & van Berkel, 2007) this paper contributed to shed light on the use of common principles of new governance (e.g. responsibilisation, decentralization, active citizenship, conditionality) (De Leonardis, 2011; Tonkens, 2011) within the underexplored welfare domain of social housing. The paper particularly reveals how the concepts of responsibilisation and conditionality are mutually linked and how they are shaping recent approaches to the allocation and management of social housing in Italy and in the Netherlands.

Despite limitations regarding the ‘outsider’ nature of examined projects, meaning that they cannot be representative of the whole social/public housing systems, we found explicit connections between the promotion of such principles and latest developments of welfare

discourses at national-level (Dutch case), the 'Participation Society', and regional-level (Italian case)[34], the 'Community Welfare'.

In both cases, notions of conditionality and responsibility belong to specific citizenship agendas (Koster, 2015) promoted by non-state actors (either housing associations or third sectors organizations), which are centered around a peculiar form of social mix strategy, compared to tenure mixing interventions in the context of previous neighbourhood-based urban restructuring policy. While in both cases social mix builds on the 'positive role model' ideal, we showed that in examined projects being a 'role model' means endowing the *ability* and *willingness* to mobilize personal resources (skills, attitudes etc.) for the benefit of specific subgroups of (vulnerable) neighbours. It also means undertaking specific obligations (e.g. participating in social activities), which derive from conditionality, as precondition to be eligible for scarce social housing and join the project. In this light, the paper sheds light on new tenants' responsibilisation strategies through social mix, which rely on the potential of conditionality in nudging tenants to comply with obligations deriving from being role models.

Our findings contribute to widen existing evidence on responsibilisation and conditionality beyond UK-based studies, which largely dominate this strand of literature (Flint, 2002; 2003; 2004; 2006; 2015; Flint & Nixon, 2006; Haworth & Manzi, 1999; King, 2006; Manzi, 2010), to include the Netherlands and the regional context of Lombardy, in Italy. In this regard, our first consideration concerns the theoretical justifications for conditionality emerging from our case studies. Similarly to other UK-based experiences (Flint & Nixon, 2006), examined initiatives are grounded in a combination between mutualist and contractualist views. However, an emphasis on contractualist claims seems to be prominent since tenants' obligations, which are part of conditionality, are explicitly framed within a *quid pro quo* 'bargain' between individuals and government (or actors who are direct expression of government such as local authorities) (Sacks, 1997, cited in Deacon, 2004). On the one hand, conditionality entails benefits for committed tenants as they are allowed to access affordable housing earlier than other active house seekers, envisaging them as sort of 'privileged receivers'. On the other hand, organisations exploit tenants' resources and energies by assigning them additional responsibilities beyond basic dwelling maintenance to sustain the social infrastructure of these projects.

The study reveals that tenants and professionals clearly have different priorities and expectations. For the tenants, the need of (affordable) housing is the *end,* while for the professionals, housing is the *means*, in tandem with tenants' resources, to achieve higher welfare state goals (e.g. social cohesion and inclusion). Since the positions between the parties (tenants and professionals) are radically different, outcomes may be disparate, as the Italian case has shown. In addition, it might turn out stressful for tenants to combine housing as the site of public engagement and one own's private space (*home*). Apparently, more

[34] The national vs regional focus of welfare between the Netherlands and Italy is due to different configurations of governance discussed in the comparative framework.

pressing and binding demands are made on tenants with respect to other responsibilisation strategies centred around professionals’ assessment about past and expectations about future conduct, or about the likely levels of community involvement (see Flint, 2002; 2003; 2004), especially when it comes to account for tenants’ efforts. Further research is encouraged to assess whether an excessive pressure on tenants, as the new welfare state agents, potentially risks running out of resources (e.g. people’s energy) that are necessary to sustain the project on the long-term with paradoxical effects.

Finally, the benchmark used to account for tenants’ efforts, i.e. 10 and 16 hours per month, might result misleading since the time spent on one activity is not necessary commensurate to the social value or impact of such activity. Although conditionality helps to greater circumscribing of individual conduct, it also becomes source of ambiguities in relation to tenant participation (Flint, 2004). In our cases, tensions might arise from tenants’ attributing different values to performed activities and engagement right because of fuzzy benchmarks, possibly resulting in disappointment towards fellow neighbours. The element of reciprocity, which characterises the contractual claim of conditionality, should be considered from two perspectives: between individuals and governments (Deacon, 2004; Dwyer, 2004), but also between individuals themselves, in our cases tenants. While this paper has mainly focused on accountability as the evaluation process of tenants’ efforts in relation to professionals expectations and tools, future research could focus on the perceptions and opinions of tenants regarding the commitment and efforts made by the other tenants of the housing project. This would be important to understand whether the use of fuzzy benchmarks to mark out individual participation is likely to spread a feeling of ‘perceived unfairness’ among the most active members of the housing project.

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Appendix 2: List of respondents

<table>
<tr><th>#</th><th>Role of interviewees</th><th>Organisation/Project</th><th>City</th><th>Country</th><th>Period of interview</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>Director</td><td>ALER Milano (Public housing company)</td><td rowspan="5">Milan</td><td rowspan="5">Italy</td><td rowspan="5">January 2017</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>Director</td><td>Fondazione Housing Sociale</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>Project coordinator</td><td>La Cordata</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Vice-President</td><td rowspan="2">DAR=Casa</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>Project coordinator</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>Project manager</td><td>Platform 31</td><td>The Hague</td><td>The Netherlands</td><td>February 2017</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>Policy maker</td><td>Housing Department - City Council Milan</td><td rowspan="2">Milan</td><td rowspan="2">Italy</td><td rowspan="3">March 2017</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>Civil servant</td><td>Housing department - City Council Milan</td></tr>
<tr><td>9</td><td>Project manager</td><td>Platform 31</td><td>The Hague</td><td rowspan="8">The Netherlands</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>Consultant</td><td rowspan="2">Portaal (housing association)</td><td rowspan="6">Utrecht</td><td rowspan="4">April 2017</td></tr>
<tr><td>11</td><td>Advisor</td></tr>
<tr><td>12</td><td>Independent researcher</td><td>N.A.</td></tr>
<tr><td>13</td><td>Tenant</td><td>Majella Wonen</td></tr>
<tr><td>14</td><td>Project coordinator</td><td>Socius Wonen</td><td rowspan="7">May 2017</td></tr>
<tr><td>15</td><td>Social worker</td><td>Stichting De Tussenvoorziening</td></tr>
<tr><td>16</td><td>Policy officer representative</td><td>Aedes – Federation of Dutch social housing associations</td><td>The Hague</td></tr>
<tr><td>17</td><td>Director</td><td>Department of welfare and social housing - Region Lombardy</td><td>Milan</td><td>Italy</td></tr>
<tr><td>18</td><td rowspan="3">Tenants</td><td rowspan="3">Majella Wonen</td><td rowspan="3">Utrecht</td><td rowspan="4">The Netherlands</td></tr>
<tr><td>19</td></tr>
<tr><td>20</td></tr>
<tr><td>21</td><td>Senior policy officer and advocate</td><td>Woonbond (Dutch tenant union)</td><td>Amsterdam</td><td>June 2017</td></tr>
</table>

22	Social administrator (*sociaal beheerder*)	Portaal	Utrecht		
23	Tenants	Majella Wonen			
24					
25					
26					
27					
28	Project Manager	City Council Utrecht			September 2017
29	Project coordinator	DAR Casa	Milan	Italy	November 2017
30	Project Assistant	Comunità Progetto			June 2018
31	Project Manager				
32	Project Assistant	Arci Milano			

6. Conclusions and discussion

6.1 Introduction

Since its origin, the connotations and meanings of the concept 'social mix' have varied according to different historical epochs, geographical coordinates and policy frameworks (Sarkissian, 1976; Cole & Goodchild, 2001). In the context of urban renewal policies of the 1990s targeting deprived neighbourhoods affected by socio-economic and ethnic segregation processes, social mix generally refers to the mix of housing tenures, frequently achieved through demolition of old social housing estates and rebuilding of private rental housing or owner-occupied housing for middle classes (Arthurson 2010; Bolt 2009; Bolt et al. 2010; Kleinhans, 2004). Building on several theoretical assumptions such as the 'neighbourhood effects' thesis (Wilson, 1987), the 'contact hypothesis' (Allport, 1954), and the 'social learning' theory (Bandura, 1977), mixed community policies have been implemented worldwide as a means to provide residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods with opportunities to increase their social capital through the influence of middle-class 'positive role models' (Uitermark, 2003; Graves, 2011).

Research has shown that the outcomes of mixed communities policies depend on a number of *contextual* factors both at micro-level, e.g. quality of built environment, dwellings and common areas, presence of places for social encounters, investments in community development actions, and macro-level, e.g. economic recession and residualisation processes in social rented sectors, including residents' decision to interact, or not, with other neighbours (Bolt & van Kempen, 2013).

In light of a number of macro-trends and processes that are profoundly reshaping Western European urban societies in particular since the 21st century, this dissertation explored potential opportunities to reframe the concept of social mix beyond the 1990s framing as tenure mix neighbourhood policy. Such trends include the increasing residential segregation between rich and poor inhabitants along with rising socio-economic inequalities (Tammaru et al., 2016); the withdraw of many national governments from area-based urban restructuring policies (Zwiers et al., 2016) and parallel development of new welfare state governance strategies and principles, such as active citizenship, responsibilisation and conditionality (Peeters, 2013; Newman & Tonkens, 2011), the exacerbating housing affordability affecting a variety of diverse social groups, from young people to middle-income groups also as a consequence of shrinking social rented sectors and unaccessibility of private housing markets (Czischke & van Bortel, 2018).

This dissertation aimed to gain a better understanding of how the concept of social mix is reframing in light of contemporary macro trends and new societal challenges accounting for the role of contextual factors, in particular those related to welfare and housing systems, in determining different and/or similar patterns of such reframing process. Specifically, this dissertation looked at how the current framing of social mix is re-shaping professionals'

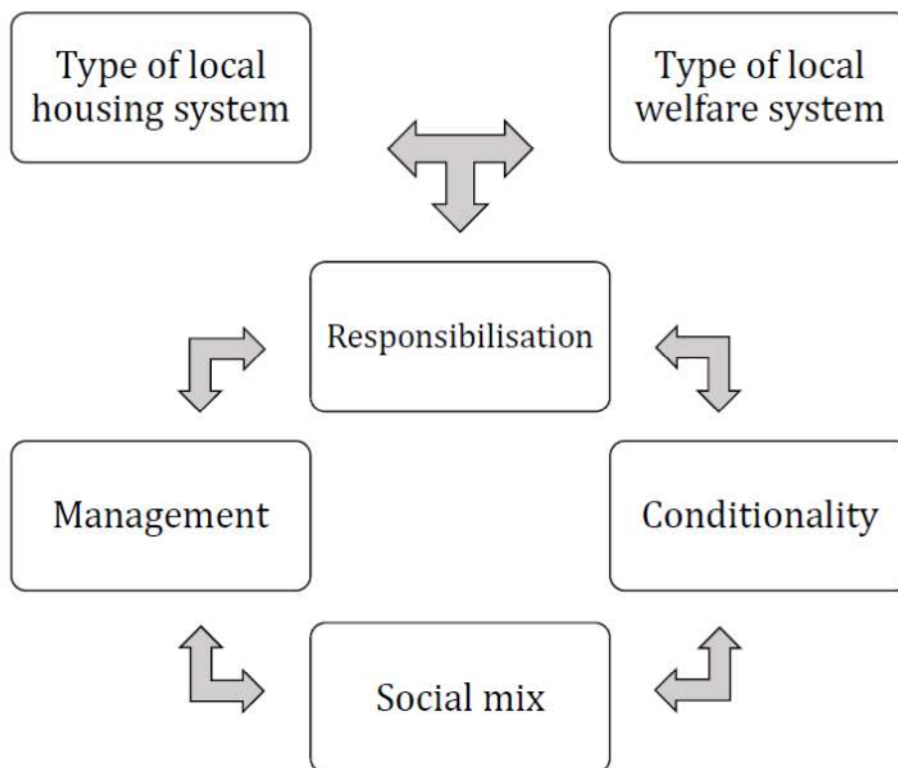
roles, strategies and missions along with the interactions between tenants and their relationships with professionals.

Adopting a most different system approach (see Przeworski & Teune, 1970), the dissertation focused on two research contexts presenting a great diversity in terms of welfare and housing systems: Italy, and more specifically the Region Lombardy and its capital, Milan, and the Netherlands, specifically the cities of Utrecht and Amsterdam. This dissertation consists of one theoretical chapter and three empirical chapters, each of them addressing specific research questions derived from the main research aim and question. The next section provides a summary of the main research findings.

6.2 Summary of the main findings

The main outcome of this dissertation is a new conceptualization of 'social mix', which differs from its 1990s-framing as tenure mix neighbourhood renewal policy. This section is devoted to explain this new conceptualization (Figure 1) and to summarise the main findings of each chapter.

Figure 1. Schematic view of the new conceptualization of 'social mix'



Starting from recent global trends and current societal transformations that are exacerbating the problem of housing affordability (see chapter 2), we have empirically observed how such macro-level dynamics have impacted at lower levels of social reality, i.e. on housing organisations' *modus operandi* and on tenants interactions. In doing so, we have

paid particular attention to the role played by different structural configurations of welfare and housing systems, in Italy and the Netherlands, relying on a country-based classification (respectively a Mediterranean welfare and dualistic market in Italy vs conservative-democratic welfare and unitary market in the Netherlands). include citizens and tenants

This study revealed that each Magic Mix and Housing Sociale project, envisaged as innovative solution to address the crisis of affordable housing, is strictly embedded in its own local territory, intended as the network of institutional and non-institutional actors, specifics of housing and labour markets (demand and supply) as well as socio-ethnic characteristics and other features of the local urban fabric. The local territories where the case study initiatives have been explored (Milan, Amsterdam, and Utrecht) presented extremely different conditions and situations compared to other Italian or Dutch cities that belong to the same welfare or housing system (according to country-based classification).

As a result of both devolution and decentralization processes of welfare state affecting both Italy and The Netherlands, the case study initiatives explored in this research highlighted a multi-sectoral governance of these projects involving partnerships mainly, if not exclusively, between local and micro-local actors both institutional and non-institutional, including citizens and tenants. Such partnerships are cross-cutting different domains (social housing, social care, social services etc.). This suggests that the response to macro level challenges, i.e. wide spreading housing affordability, is strongly shaped by the specifics of each local welfare and local housing systems, rather than the national systems. We found that the interplay between actors, institutions, practices, governance arrangements within each local housing and welfare systems determines similarities and differences regarding the solutions and the opportunities put forward to address macro challenges.

In our empirical research, we found that the local systems in Milan, Amsterdam and Utrecht converge towards the promotion of *responsibilisation* within the housing practices of social mix. The idea of responsibilisation has profoundly shaped the roles, the strategies, and the mission of professionals involved in this type of social housing provision. In addition, this idea has also re-shaped both practitioners' relationships with, and expectations from, the tenants. The provision of new social housing opportunities goes hand-in-hand with new responsibilities to be taken over by tenants (i.e. tenants' responsibilisation). Tenants' responsibilisation occurs through two specific 'devices': (1) management and (2) conditionality.

The first device, i.e. management practices, nudges directly tenants to assume new tasks and new responsibilities in relation to housing-related services, e.g. maintenance, that were previously a matter of social housing organisations (Dutch case) or provides housing providers with new tools and arrangements to make tenants fulfil their responsibilities, especially in terms of regular rent payment (Italian case).

The second device, i.e. conditionality, establishes that the allocation of social dwellings depends on receivers' agreeing to regularly participate to community building activities to the benefit of the most vulnerable tenants in the housing project. Conditionality also establishes new subjective-based requirements, e.g. personal attitudes, motivation, willingness to help others etc., that are needed to be eligible to this new social housing offer. Conditionality as a means to increase responsibilisation envisages tenants as 'entrepreneurs

of the self' (Flint, 2006), a condition where individuals are constantly pushed to rely on personal efforts and to develop personal abilities to create one own's means for consumption, in this case opportunities to access affordable housing solutions earlier than other housing seekers.

6.2.1 Towards a reframing of the concept 'social mix' in a post-crisis hyper-diverse Western Europe

Through a literature review, chapter 2 traces the origin and evolution of the concept 'social mix'. By focusing on discourses and policy framework underpinning social mix as well as its connections with broader societal and historical issues, the chapter identifies two main phases of development of this concept. This chapter has multiple research objectives. First, it explores the concept of social mix. Second, it introduces several elements to the debate on social mix. Third, it discusses how these elements can help connecting old - and still opened - challenges of social mix with new current macro dynamics.

In the first phase, from the middle 1800 to the 1980s, social mix was mainly used as a planning principle for new housing settlements in the Anglo-Saxon world (Sarkissian, 1976). From the 1980s onwards, i.e. second phase, the use of this concept extended to European countries, where it was adopted as a policy tool within state-led urban renewal to reduce socio-economic segregation in decaying urban districts through housing diversification (Bolt et al., 2010).

By discussing several ongoing societal transformations like the hyper-diversification of Western European urban society (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013), the exacerbation of housing affordability for shrinking middle-classes, and the increasingly mobile nature of human activities (Wong & Shaw, 2011), the chapter stressed the need for a new framing of social mix more in tune with the features of contemporary society and in particular post-crisis, small-scale attempts to simultaneously address issues of social housing shortage, socio-economic integration of specific target groups and an increasing emphasis on bottom-up, tailor-made solutions. The chapter also discussed the relevance of contextual elements and local peculiarities, such as welfare state systems, housing policy frameworks, institutional attitudes towards diversity, in re-shaping the ideal of social mix.

6.2.2 Reframing social mix in affordable housing initiatives in Italy and in the Netherlands. Closing the gap between discourses and practices?

Chapter 3 provides an empirical investigation of how the concept 'social mix' is being reframed in four recent affordable housing projects, specifically two Housing Sociale projects in the metropolitan area of Milan (Italy) and two Magic Mix initiatives in Amsterdam and Utrecht (The Netherlands).

By addressing the following research questions, *how is the concept of social mix currently reframed in the context of changing urban and housing policy in Italy and in the Netherlands? What are its main features in terms of theoretical assumptions, policy frame, and target groups?*, the chapter contributes the existing literature by adding a new framing

of ‘social mix’ that is described along five domains: *discourses*, *target groups*, *practices*, *institutional frame*, *urban downscaling*. Combined to the previous framing of social mix (as discussed in chapter 3), such framing reveals a persisting discourse focused on the ‘role model’ ideal combined with new *locus* of social mix (single or blocks of buildings instead of the neighbourhood), new institutional framework (from policy to practice), new target groups and new practices.

Instead of attracting *middle-classes,* the examined initiatives target low-income groups including vulnerable tenants, e.g. welfare dependents, ex homeless, and refugees; and *resourceful* tenants, whereby the adjective ‘resourceful’ does not refer to a better economic condition (i.e. a relatively higher income) but to the disposal of (relatively higher) socio-cultural and human capital and to the willingness to make it available to all the other tenants in the housing projects through a set of daily practices, e.g. community building activities. Such practices require tenants to engage in community life on regular basis following a principle of *conditionality* whereby tenants are given opportunities to access new affordable rental offer (Housing Sociale and Magic Mix projects) earlier than other housing seekers, provided that they commit themselves to take part in supportive activities that help the social integration of vulnerable tenants.

6.2.3 Exploring innovative management strategies of socially mixed communities in changing social housing contexts

Chapter 4 explores innovative management strategies of socially mixed communities in the context of social housing: self-management in the Netherlands and the Social Management in Italy, using the projects Startblok Riekerhaven (Amsterdam) and ViVi Voltri (Milan) as case studies.

The research questions that has guided this chapter is: *how are current transformations in the context of social housing systems related to the emergence of innovative management styles, namely self-management and Social Management? How do such approaches unfold and what are the implications for residents and professionals?* Common to both approaches is the belief that increasing tenants’ responsibility helps achieving a more effective housing management, but the way in which this belief is pursued by housing professionals differs in the two research settings.

The comparative approach adopted in this chapter reveals that different welfare and social housing contexts shape different strategies of tenants’ responsibilisation in housing management. Within the wider orientation of current Dutch welfare policy towards the promotion of the ‘Participation Society’ (Kleinhans, 2017), the Dutch case presents a higher degree of tenants involvement in daily management issues and a stronger responsibility regarding practical duties aimed to prevent anti-social behaviours (see Flint, 2003). There, participation is a pre-condition of the project.

In the context of the current transition from residual offer of public housing, typical of Mediterranean welfare regimes, to a quasi-market social rented market, the Italian case presents a stronger role played by professionals and practitioners in housing management, which is mainly focused on promoting new tools and arrangements to increase residents' capacity to afford their houses, and maintain them in proper conditions.

As a result of different assemblages in the governance of social housing (Flint, 2003), the two management approaches envisage dissimilar configurations of the relationship between residents and housing providers: a co-production logic in the Netherlands versus a customer-like relationship in Italy.

6.2.4 'Active, young, and resourceful': sorting the 'good' tenant through mechanisms of conditionality

Chapter 5 comparatively examines how concepts of responsibilisation and conditionality are shaping recent approaches to the allocation and management of social housing in small-scale social/public housing projects, namely 'Ospitalità Solidale' in Milan (Italy) and 'Majella Wonen' in Utrecht (The Netherlands).

With respect to previous chapter, which adopted a broader definition of housing management drawing on Priemus et al. (1999), this chapter provides an in depth examination of the principle of conditionality and its relationship with new eligibility criteria and requirements. The chapter addresses the following research question: *how are the concepts of responsibilisation and conditionality shaping recent approaches to the allocation and management of social housing in Italy and in the Netherlands?*

Both case study projects are characterised by a fine-grained social mix between young people (students or workers), called 'resourceful' tenants, and socially disadvantaged people (welfare dependents and sitting public housing tenants), called 'vulnerable' tenants. Resourceful tenants are supposed to play a 'role model' as they are expected to contribute to the social inclusion of vulnerable tenants, for example by organizing events or activities that help them to socialize with others.

The chapter discusses the potential and the limits concerning the use of conditionality, i.e. allocating housing to resourceful tenants provided that they regularly engage in supportive activities for the benefit of vulnerable tenants, as a strategy to increase 'role model' tenants' responsibilisation. In both cases, findings suggest that tenants and professionals have different priorities regarding the housing project. For the tenants, the need of (affordable) housing is the main motivation to join the project, somewhat an *end* in itself, while professionals envisage tenants' resources also as a *means* to contribute the aim of the organisation(s), i.e. social inclusion of the weakest tenants. It remains to be explored how tenants and practitioners' perspectives unfold over the long run.

6.3 Methodological considerations

This section provides a discussion about the methodology used in this research together with some reflections about collected data. Since the aim was to better understand the reframing process of the concept 'social mix', stressing the role of contextual factors, this research has adopted a context-embedded, qualitative, case study approach.

The focus on the implications that such reframing had on professionals' strategies and tenants' interactions led us to explore in depth a limited number of specific social housing projects. In this regard, examined projects are not representative of the whole social or public rented systems in the two countries, thus limiting the generalization of the results.

Building on earlier comparative housing research (Fahey & Norris 2011; Allen et al., 2004; Arbaci, 2007), we based the selection of our research contexts on Esping Andersen's classification of welfare regimes and Kemeny's classification of housing systems into dualist and unitary rental markets, applying a 'most different' system approach (see Przeworski & Teune, 1970). This resulted in the selection of Italy and the Netherlands (Mediterranean vs conservative/socio-democratic welfare systems and residual vs unitary rental markets). Within each national context, in the subsequent research design stages, we have mainly applied a 'most similar' system approach (see Przeworski & Teune, 1970) to the selection of case study areas and projects (see sub-sections 3.5.1, 4.5, 5.4.1). The similarities of characteristics eased the comparison between different instances.

Fieldwork research was carried out simultaneously in multiple sites in Italy and in the Netherlands. Starting from several explorative interviews with key informants, we have selected all our respondents, i.e. professionals, practitioners, policy makers, and tenants, by using a purposive sampling strategy and approached them mainly through a snowball approach thanks to the contacts provided by our key informants. A snowball technique has been used also in successive phases, for example when project managers facilitated us to get in contact with several tenants of the housing projects. Due to time constrains, we have not been able to reach a larger number of residents living in the housing projects, that could have brought additional information about interactions between tenants.

Professionals, practitioners and policy makers were keen to be interviewed and were also particularly curious about the cross-country comparative nature of this research project. The interviewed, especially project-managers, were impressed to know that other housing projects with similar characteristics were being implemented elsewhere. We interpret such curiosity as a sign of the far-reaching problem of housing affordability and related issues of coexistence between diverse social groups in housing complexes across EU societies. Due also to the 'experimental phase' in which many of the examined initiatives were at the time of the interviews, stakeholders and project managers were often very keen to exchange opinions and receive new inputs.

One particular aspect regarding the unit of analysis of this research, i.e. social mix housing projects, deserve to be discussed. To certain extent, both Housing Sociale and Magic Mix could be considered as 'umbrella concepts', since an array of different instances and projects are associated with these terms. In the initial stages of the research, such ambiguity made it difficult to draw a precise boundary of our research object. However, in the next research

stages, we realised that such ambiguity was indicative of the various nuances characterising our research object. We also realised that the terminologies, Housing Sociale and Magic Mix, that are used to describe this set of initiatives were also evolving rapidly. For example, the term 'Magic Mix' was first introduced in the research report by Van der Velden *et al*. (2016). Along with the growing number of initiatives launched in the Netherlands, new terms such as 'mixed living' (*gemengd wonen*) have been introduced by practitioners. In a similar vein, in Italy, at the beginning of 2000s the term 'Housing Sociale' was used to define a small number of pioneering social mixing initiatives in which Third Sector housing organisations partnership with public housing companies and local authorities to allocate public housing dwellings to the grey area. Parallel to these initiatives, with the development of a new, privately-driven social rented sector (see Housing Plans 2009 and 2014), the term Housing Sociale also connotes specific types of mixed tenure housing settlements. Recently, new terminologies such as 'collaborative housing' (*abitare collaborativo)* are being associated to projects with the characteristics of Housing Sociale, which contribute to blur the initial distinctions. Therefore, we must be aware of the fact that using such 'umbrella concepts' might generate terminological confusion. To overcome this risk, we have always tried to focus on the peculiarities of each project and explain them in details.

6.4 Discussion of research findings

This dissertation contributed to the current literature on social mix by providing a new framing of this concept (see section 6.2), which adds to the mainstream framing of social mix as tenure mixing operations on neighbourhood level in the context of large-scale urban renewal policies. This section discusses the main differences between the new framing of 'social mix' (Figure 1) and earlier framing of this concept, reflecting on their implications on professionals and tenants.

As suggested by several scholars (Cole & Goodchild, 2001 Sarkissian, 1976), the broad historical and societal framework shapes the connotations and meanings of social mix. With respect to the 1990s-framing, the current framing of social mix brings about a number of relevant changes. First, while in the 1990s-framing the concept of social mix was strictly connected to the phenomenon of residential segregation, nowadays the ideal of social mix is connected to discourses on *responsibilisation*. Paradoxically, this shift occurs during an historical phases characterised by overall increase of residential segregation between well- and worst- off populations in all major EU capitals (Tammaru et al., 2016).

Second, a prominent change regards the position of middle-classes. Besides a persisting discourse of 'role model' characterising the current framing of social mix, the latter is not attributed to middle-classes. This change is framed within broader societal trends that show rising socio-economic inequalities and polarization between the top and the bottom strata of society (Tammaru et al., 2016), 'squeezing' the middle-class, especially in terms of their accessibility to both social and private housing markets (Jonkman & Janssen-Jansen, 2015). Apparently middle-class have lost the 'social buffer' role that was envisaged in previous framings of social mix. In the new framing of social mix, such 'role model' has been assigned to new categories of low-income residents, i.e. the so-called 'resourceful tenants'. These

mainly include students, single young workers, young households with (sometimes urgent) need of housing, who are expected to play a ’role model’ for the other target groups, identified as the ‘vulnerable tenants’. The latter include welfare dependents, refugees, ex homeless, people with social or mental indications, elderly. While in other framings of the concept (see Bolt et al., 2010; Kleinhans, 2004), social mix was used to promote upwardly residential careers for middle-class residents, for example by providing opportunities to become homeowners often in the same neighbourhoods, in the current framing, social mix provides housing opportunities for low-income groups with problems of housing affordability. This change could be considered as a signal of the relevance that the issue of affordable housing has in today’s urban society, especially in largest cities.

The third change that distinguishes the reshaping process of social mix concerns the criteria applied by policy-makers and practitioners to define the ‘diversity’ to bring in the housing project, i.e. the type of social mix. While in the 1990s-framing, social mixing strategies used to define diversity mainly in terms of housing tenure (i.e. private vs social housing) and socio-economic or ethnic status of residents (middle-class vs working class, native vs immigrants), now diversity is referred to as not only ethnicity or income levels, but also age, life styles, personal preferences, attitudes and motivation. Based on such broader definition of diversity, professionals elaborated new eligibility criteria by combining objective-based requirements (income thresholds, etc.) and subjective-based requirements (motivation to live with diverse people, attitudes towards social support etc.). These new eligibility criteria can be understood through the lens of hyper-diversity concept, coined by Tasan-Kok et al. (2013), which is defined as an “intense diversification of the population, not only in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but also with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities” (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013, p. 12). This theoretical definition reflects the numerous forms of contemporary urban diversity, and denotes that such multiple forms of diversity are shaping the (examined) practices. However, new challenges emerged in relation to the discretionary character of subjective-based requirements, such as the benchmarks used to assess individuals’ motivation or attitudes or personal preferences.

In the theoretical chapter (chapter 2), we argue that one of the unanswered questions in the debate on social mix related to the definition of the ‘right households’ to bring in social diversity. In this regard, Cole and Goodchild (2001) noticed that while it is relatively easy to figure out and exclude the undesirable residents, it was more difficult to define the desirable ones. In the current framing of social mix, professionals have the opportunity to target the role models, i.e. resourceful tenants, by addressing such housing opportunities only to the tenants who are willing to establish social interaction with vulnerable people. The decision to allocate or not the social dwelling is discretionary for professionals. By sorting the ‘good’ tenants, they act as gatekeepers of the housing project.

One of the critical points raised by Bolt and Van Kempen (2013) in relation to the potential success of social mix policies at neighbourhood level was precisely residents’ willingness to establish social interaction with others and contributing to neighbourhood life. Apparently, the new framing of social mix has filled such gap by including motivation and willingness to live close to diverse people as additional, subjective-based eligibility criteria for joining the project. However, this research has shown that tenants’ motivation to commit

in supportive activities is just one of the candidates' reasons for joining the project. The main motivation was in fact the need of housing. So, it remains unclear whether these tenants would still remain genuinely willing to establish contacts with diverse people even without the possibility to access affordable housing.

The reshaping process of social mix occurred within an historical phase characterised by dramatic cutbacks to public welfare services provision and reduction of public investments in social housing, also as a consequence of post-crisis neoliberal austerity policies. Budgetary cuts to public welfare and social housing systems contributed to create or expand the size of vulnerable groups who need care and assistance (from social housing to other services for social integration). Many national governments have also stepped back from large scale urban renewal policies against segregation, which were carried out within a legal public framework and financially supported by the state (see Zwiers et al., 2016). The new role of the state is to *enable* and *support* the self-organisation of citizens rather than take direct action through policy tools. Consequently, citizens are charged with additional efforts to fill the gaps left by governments. A call for 'active citizenship' underpins new social housing projects examined in this dissertation, whereby the conceptualization of social mix as a means to increase individuals' self-responsibilisation reflects one facet of the 'new welfare state' paradigm (see Newman & Tonkens, 2011). Vulnerable tenants, are exhorted to take direct action to prevent their own social isolation dynamics, and resourceful tenants are pushed to mobilize their own resources to satisfy their own (housing) needs. For both groups, the call for 'active citizenship' entails not only opportunities, i.e. to access affordable housing solutions and live in supportive environment, but also specific commitments and obligations, which are often shadowed by the (too much) optimistic policy discourses associated to what is considered as 'innovation' (in this dissertation Magic Mix and Housing Sociale). In our case, commitments and obligations concern specific management and allocation strategies, which both aim to increase the self-responsibilisation. Professionals, i.e. the supply side of social housing, play a crucial role in promoting these strategies.

Cutbacks to public resources and retrenchment of the welfare state pushed social welfare and social housing organisations to explore new solutions to provide affordable housing and other welfare services, a process known as hybridization (see Czischke et al., 2012). The gaps left by governments pushed several organisations to seek new sources of financing (e.g. bank foundations in the new privately-driven social rented market in Italy, chapter 4), to change missions or target groups, or to form new locally-based coalitions with other organisations to address multiple problems (housing, social exclusion etc.) simultaneously. One way or another, organisations managed to respond to broader changes in their environment, i.e. social housing and welfare contexts (see chapter 4), by creating specific solutions and frameworks, e.g. Magic Mix and Housing Sociale projects, which require them greater efforts, for example to avoid potential negative externalities of 'too much' diversity. However, when it comes to deliver such solutions, the use of specific management strategies based on conditionality allow housing providers to co-opt tenants who will contribute to the organisations' goals, e.g. promoting social cohesion, integration and self-reliance, through tenants' energies and resources. In addition, housing providers envisage specific mechanisms of accountability to monitor tenants' endeavours during their tenancy, which

much more effectively nudge tenants to comply with expected behaviour (see chapter 5). Therefore, we conclude that while these new opportunities of social housing provision entails additional efforts for both professionals and tenants, the latter have to undertake greater obligations as they are assigned additional duties and tasks by housing organisations.

Apparently the changed context of social mix in hyper-diversified European societies may be linked to approaches that downplay the relevance of class-based divisions in favour of new ones related to a plurality of identities, lifestyles etc. Indeed, there are significant signs that the typical 1990s-social mix policy, which used to stress class-based differentiation between middle-class and working-class, is much less pervasive in current discourses. As we have already mentioned earlier, the new framing of social mix involves tenants who can all be considered as low-income groups (i.e. welfare dependents, refugees, young people). These groups are defined on the basis of multiple characteristics related to their socio-economic, legal, occupational and age status, rather than class status only (middle-class vs working class). While in the past the class status alone was comprehensively indicative of specific values, lifestyles, economic conditions etc., today, the policies and practices of social mix tend to categorize individuals on the basis of multiple identities, which do not primarily connote their class belonging, i.e. middle-class. Sometimes these identities overlap with each other: for example ‘student’ and ‘young people’, or ‘young refugees’ and ‘young people’.

In a similar vein, from a policy-making perspective, the shift from class-based to multiple-identity-based social mix approach might be linked to the decreased importance of the political expression of class divisions, i.e. Left and Right parties. Although we have not found explicit evidence nor reference supporting this hypothesis in our empirical material, undoubtedly in the past social mix policies have been - more or less explicitly - advocating the ‘homeowners society’ paradigm, which is typical of the neoliberal political discourse since the 1980s. This paradigm was supported by enhancing opportunities for middle-class to access the ownership housing market. In the context of social mix policy, these opportunities were usually created through tenure diversification, including demolition of social housing estates. As a result, the new ‘spaces’ for middle-income households were created at the expense of social housing dwellers, usually working class and/or ethnic minority households (see Bolt et al., 2010). In this regard, the gentrification literature considers social mix policies as a kind of ‘state-led’ gentrification strategy, which attempts to change the neighborhood population structure following politically-connoted (neoliberal) vision of urban policy (Bridge et al., 2012). From a policy-making viewpoint, middle-classes entail desirable values and norms of conduct that ought to be spread across lower class (see Graves, 2011). There is a moral underlying discourse behind the policy of mixed communities, which is central to the neoliberal rhetoric, whereby poor people are blamed for their disadvantaged status. In this regards, Koster (2015) framed tenure mixing policy as a key element of specific ‘citizenship agenda’, which tries to turn ‘bad’ citizens, i.e. passive welfare receivers (social housing tenants), into ‘good’ ones, i.e. active and responsible citizens.

The type of social mix characterizing our case study initiatives actually denotes the effects of more than 20 years of neoliberal politics in Europe, rather than a specific urban policy

strategy. Throughout the last two decades, the neoliberal trend in housing policy has promoted homeownership against supporting social housing, resulting in the privatization of a large share of the housing stock. In this sense, neoliberal-oriented housing policy has benefitted well-off households rather than the worst- off, contributing to expand social inequality and polarization by social classes. On top of that, the increasing financialisation of the housing systems in Europe is boosting the commodification of housing, diminishing its value as both social asset and people's right. The social groups included in the social mix practices examined in this dissertation can be considered as the 'victims' of longstanding neoliberal trends affecting housing and welfare systems. Indeed, also as a consequence of such neoliberal politics, today housing systems are increasingly divided between 'insiders', i.e. homeowners, private and social tenants, and 'outsides' groups, i.e. those who struggle to access the 'regular' private or social housing market. The latter include the main target groups examined in the case studies, which all belong to a grey area of the Italian and Dutch housing market, and are by definition 'low-income' categories.

What seems to be worth stressing at this point is the generational gap that such neoliberal politics have contributed to exacerbate, which clearly manifests in our social mix practices. In all examined housing projects in fact, young people (be they students, refugees or young skilled workers) play a central role in the project not only as a target group but also for the attributed 'role model' function, which derives from their presumed resourcefulness. The generational gap unfolds as we compare the situation of young people in today's configuration of the welfare state to that of previous generations who benefitted from flourishing welfare state, namely in the 60s and 70s. Not only younger generations dispose fewer welfare benefits compared to previous generations, but, as these initiatives have shown, if they need such benefits, they are required to invest additional time and energies in extra social activities on regular basis.

There are two major implications in terms of social justice – which is defined as the distribution of benefits and burdens in society (Elster, 1992, cited in Israel & Frenkel, 2018) – with respect to the changing welfare state paradigm, i.e. from need-based benefits to welfare conditionality. The first one is *between generations*, which emerges as we observe that younger generations are required to make greater efforts compared to earlier cohorts in order to access (fewer) welfare benefits. The second implication is *within generations*. Being 'resourceful' represents an asset that can make the difference in easing or hampering youngsters' chances to access such new social housing opportunities. Endowing or not specific resources can be seen as a form of inequality, which is worth deepening in order to understand how such inequality has originated and how it can be addressed. The simplest way to do so is by looking at youngsters' biography. A crucial point is to investigate how young people, who have been deemed suitable for these social housing projects, have developed those key resources (i.e. social attitudes etc.) that have allowed them to access the project. Drawing on Sen's concepts of 'capabilities', i.e the freedom of choice, and 'functionings', i.e. individuals' 'beings and doings' (Sen, 1992) may provide the necessary theoretical tools for this scope. In our case studies, the 'functionings', that is what people are and do, can be referred to applicants' resourcefulness, while 'capabilities' to their

willingness to convert such functionings into opportunities to create valuable outcomes for themselves (i.e. to obtain the needed housing solution).

Based on our evidence (see chapter 5), we can assume that many of these resources have been acquired during youngsters' leisure time (e.g. volunteering, social life, sport etc.), life events (previous co-habitation experiences, travels etc.) or education (both type of study and extra-curricular activities such as student mobility programs etc.). Understanding how young people have been able to access key opportunities for developing social attitudes, for example via publicly provided services (e.g. schools, neighbourhood centres etc.) or via privately-provided opportunities (i.e. parents paying for pupils' extra activities), or a combination of the two, would be helpful to shed light on the making of relational and human capital needed to access the new social housing initiatives. In addition, it would shed light on the roles played by both public and private institutions in distributing crucial opportunities to form such capital, thus explaining new potential patterns of inequality between youngsters endowing or not key resources to access new social housing projects.

Equally important is to understand the spatial patterns that characterise the distribution of such opportunities. Do all nations, cities, and neighbourhoods provide individuals with equal opportunities to gain such resources? Following Israel and Frenkel (2018), "capabilities emanate from the individual's social environment, the physical environment in which he or she lives, and internal and external personal endowements, such as one's mental and physical attributes" (p. 649). "Any individual's pack of capabilities is influenced by the amount of different forms of capital available to him or her." (*ibidem*, p. 658).

According to Bourdieu (1986; 1989), four forms of capital, i.e. economic, cultural, social and symbolic, are combined, reflecting a specific social topography or social order. In this sense, while in the 1990s framing of social mix, the social topography was mainly determined by the economic form of capital (i.e. middle-income groups as both targets and main players of social mixing strategies), in the current framing it is the cultural form of capital to prevail as this is 'played out' by resourceful groups to access housing solutions, and 'wanted' by practitioners for the overall projects' purposes. This shift could be seen as a further proof of a disminished importance of economic-based differentiation of target groups in recent social mix approaches. Parallel to that, it might be interesting to observe how the symbolic form of capital, which refers to the power deriving from being in a position to impose recognition, unfolds in the context of mixed housing projects. In other words, it is worthwhile to investigate the kinds of power relationships that exist between diverse groups and to deepen the process of legitimization and recognition of resourceful groups as the role models in the housing projects.

Connected to the changed frame of the welfare state, the innovative forms of social housing provision explored in this thesis also reveal the most recent transformations affecting the so-called European Social Model. Discussions about the evolution of the European Social Model have sparked the interest of scholars paying particular attention to the neoliberal turn going on in the last decades, which resulted in overall state withdraw from social policy fields such as pensions, healthcare, and unemployment benefits (Busch et al., 2013) in most EU Member States (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2015). In addition, concerns about the sustainability of the current European Social Model were raised in relation to the

declining role of middle-income groups which have been strongly impoverished after the economic crisis (*ibidem*). The 'squeezing' of middle-classes has been observed also in the housing markets with increasing problems of housing affordability and accessibility (Jonkman & Janssen-Jansen, 2015). As this thesis highlighted, the changed position of middle income groups in the housing market is also reflected in new types of social mix approach.

This dissertation has shown a convergent pattern between the Nordic and the Mediterranean social models, represented by the Netherlands and Italy respectively, in terms of problem framing (i.e. responding to wider and differentiated housing affordability issue) and type of solutions (increasing self-reliance and responsibility through specific management strategies in mixed housing projects). Although this thesis has not focused on the long-term outcomes of social mix initiatives, for example in terms of social and housing inclusion processes of tenants, it offers a thorough description of the rationales underlying some of the new types of social housing provision. In this light, this thesis brings in some interesting evidence in relation to the current shaping of social housing in the contemporary configuration of the European Social Model. Here, we will discuss two points in particular.

First, the consequences of the declining role of housing as a pillar of the welfare state provision in Europe, which undermines both people's chances to access decent standard of living and people's 'right to the city', the latter defined as the right of all inhabitants to use, occupy, produce, govern and enjoy just, inclusive, safe and sustainable cities (Garcia Chueca, n.a.). In this dissertation, we have observed that, for a large number of young people, access to affordable housing solutions is crucial to fulfil their right to the city, meaning to benefit from equal access to resources, services, goods, and opportunities of urban living environment, and to participate in the making of their city (Garcia Chueca, n.a). It is a state responsibility "to ensure an equitable social and spatial distribution of available urban resources" (*ibidem*, p. 29) and a local government's one to implement the right to the city.

Many young people wish to build up their future in cities, such as Amsterdam or Milan, which are attractive for offering all kind of job-related opportunities but, as youngsters have often limited budgets to spend on housing, the lack of affordability undermines such right to the city. On top of that, we observed that the new housing solutions set up to respond young people' desires to establish in these cities entail a certain degree of conditionality, being bounded to individuals' own personality and requirements of self-activation. It follows that the promotion of the right to the city for this social group is more and more selective and depending on practitioners' discretionary (i.e. in deciding whom allocating dwellings to). If the next European Social Model will be based on similar social housing provision, then we conclude that this cannot be consider as universal and equal for all, because subjective characteristics will count probably more than objective assessments of individuals' needs. Such type of social housing provision is likely to turn applicants as highly competitive candidates, and exacerbate social inequality along new lines, i.e. 'resourcefulness', thus questioning the social sustainability of this model.

Second theme relates to the lack of social solidarity – i.e. the cohesion of individuals within social groups (Calhoun, 2002) –that is increasingly featuring the European Union. Such lack is reflected in the growing number of xenophobic episodes, perceived threats to national and local identities, intolerance etc. As state promotes solidarity through public

policies (Stjernø, 2005) and the welfare states themselves are based on an ideal of solidarity (Ottman, 2010), then we wonder if (social) housing as a welfare state service can play a role in counteracting such negative scenario? Can (social) housing be the site of a new solidarity model? In principle, the type of social mix approach that has emerged from examined social housing projects entails a potential to spread positive attitudes towards diversity, overcome prejudices and mistrust against minority groups (e.g. refugees) by appealing to the proactive behavior of open minded and supportive people. In this light, social housing can be framed as a tool of citizenship, which is able to bring together diverse groups, diffuse shared norms and values to foster more cohesive society, promote mutual support and help for the weakest. Not the least, social housing models centered around self-management and self-organisation of tenants entail empowering opportunities for the members of the projects. Tenants are given opportunities to cooperate and decide about the management of their own living environment, which reflect important democratic values. Although this might appear as a bright future for the European society, given the recent timing of such initiatives, it is still too early to be optimistic. As a sign of the proper timing and pertinence of the discussed themes, 'Housing for the next European social model' will be the title of the next annual conference of the European Network for Housing Research (ENHR)[35].

6.5 Policy implications

Although the examined projects are not representative of the whole social or public rented systems in the two countries, the number of the initiatives sharing these characteristics is growing in a relatively short period of time. For example, in Amsterdam the promoters of the project Startblok Riekerhaven have launched a second project with similar rationale, size and target groups named Startblok Enzelhagen. The idea of mixing young locals and refugees in one social housing complex has started being developing also by other housing organisations, such as Rochdale in Amsterdam, and abroad (see for example the project Venligbolig Plus in Copenhagen or the project CURANT in Antwerp). In the area of Utrecht, stakeholders involved in some Magic Mix projects examined in this research, i.e. Majella Wonen, have launched a community of practice on mixed housing to learn from existing projects and improve the implementation of future projects.

In Italy the social rented model Housing Sociale is expanding beyond the Northern regions, where it originated, throughout all the country. Besides that, in Lombardy, the Cariplo foundation has recently financed several projects in the framework of 'Welfare in Azione' programme which is based on a community welfare approach. One of the projects that has received funding, called 'Milano 2035 – coalizione per l'abitare giovanile', addresses the topic of affordable housing in Milan and metropolitan area by providing new housing solutions for active young newcomers who will engage in the community life of the neighbourhoods where they establish. This trend suggests that in the future we will be able to find more of these social mix projects going on, and perhaps there might be some attempts to scale them up at policy level if they are deemed successful. For this reason, it is

[35] See http://enhr2019.com/.

important to provide some implications to policy-makers and practitioners based on the findings of this study.

Through Housing Sociale and Magic Mix projects, practitioners and policy-makers aim to address a number of different problematics (i.e. the issue of affordable housing, the integration of vulnerable groups, the improvement of housing management and the responsibilisation of tenants) that affect a great diversity of residents (i.e. starters, students, young workers, low-income families, asylum seekers, ethnic minority groups, and people with social and/or mental indications) simultaneously. The policy implication is that practitioners and policy-makers ought to reflect on the causes underlying the problematics affecting each target group and address each single instance separately, avoiding the use of one-size-fit-all measures and 'roll-out' approaches. Like in previous framings of the concept, social mix is seen as both an *end,* to widen opportunities for different groups to access affordable housing, and a *means* to improve integration and self-reliance.

Notwithstanding the importance of creating new opportunities in response to urgent societal challenges, most Housing Sociale and Magic Mix project are on temporary basis, which questions the effectiveness of these solutions on the long-term. In addition, most Housing Sociale and Magic Mix project are regulated by a principle of conditionality whereby the allocation of such additional housing opportunities is based on assessment of tenants' personal attitudes - such as willingness to take over management responsibilities - and specific obligations to commit in supportive actions. This means that the inclusion of 'suitable' and 'active' tenants into these housing projects involves the exclusion of other housing seekers with a similar, or potentially more urgent, housing need but lacking of necessary requirements. In this sense, it is questionable whether Housing Sociale and Magic Mix can be seen as viable solutions to address the widespread problem of housing affordability and correct the mismatches of social/public rented sectors. For example, the lack of affordable housing for students can be addressed in a more inclusive way through enhancing the student housing sector. The conditionality–based approach implemented in these projects does not reflect universalistic principles upon which many housing and welfare systems were based on, especially in the Netherlands. The policy implication of this finding is that policy-makers and practitioners have to guarantee a balanced provision of 'conditionality-based' and 'traditional' affordable housing solutions in the future.

According to the element of conditionality, dwellings are allocated provided that tenants commit themselves in community oriented activities for at least 10/16 hours per month. This benchmark might result misleading since the time spent on one activity is not necessary commensurate to the social value or impact of such activity. To avoid tensions and disappointment in the community, caused by tenants' attributing different values to performed activities as well as to discourage 'free rider' behaviours, we also recommend to clarify the benchmarks used to account for tenants commitment.

6.6 Directions for future research

We encourage future research to explore a larger number of similar social mix initiatives in other locations within examined countries, Italy and the Netherlands, as well as in other

European or non-European settings. A wider empirical evidence collected in further research settings will help to get a better understanding of the reframing process of social mix. The new conceptual model of social mix proposed and explained in section 6.2 could be used as a conceptual framework to guide the study of further case study projects. From an analytical viewpoint, the five dimensions *discourses*, *target groups*, *practices*, *urban downscaling*, and *institutional frame* that have been used to describe the reframing process of social mix, see chapter 3, could be applied as an analytical tool to enrich our understanding of the new framing of social mix. In this regard, scholars may analyse and compare different social mix housing projects by exploring what kind of discourses policy-makers and professionals promote, which groups are targeted by these initiatives, at which level social mix is realised (e.g. neighbourhood, building, staircase etc.), whether the projects envisage specific practices or other endeavours by tenants, and whether social mix projects are situated at policy or practice level.

Given the recent nature of examined initiatives, we encourage future research to adopt a longitudinal perspective to the study of these projects that would provide meaningful insights about many critical points raised in this dissertation. A focus on the type of residents' relationships is essential to shed more light on everyday life social dynamics during the project. In particular, it is important to understand better how tenants and stakeholders, e.g. project managers, deal with potential conflicts and tensions that may rise from tenants' participation in housing management or from the organisation of activities, and how these impact on the social atmosphere of such small-size housing projects.

Equally important is to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives in terms of fostering integration and inclusion of vulnerable groups. It is supposed that by joining such mixed housing projects, vulnerable tenants will find new opportunities to expand their social networks and become more self-reliant. An in-depth examination of the social ties and relationships that are established between vulnerable and resources tenants within mixed housing projects can provide further insights about how the integration and inclusion process unfolds.

In addition, it might also be useful to look at whether and how the relationships between tenants (both vulnerable and resourceful) formed during the project are maintained once their tenancy ends. It is only through a longitudinal perspective that scholar can assess the real potential of mixed housing initiatives for the social integration of the weakest groups. Likewise, it might be useful also to examine the relationships between the residents of mixed housing projects and the rest of the neighbourhood residents, including the use of local services and facilities.

Applying a longitudinal perspective to the study of these initiatives contributes towards a better understanding of the issue of social sustainability on the long-term, which has emerged in chapter 5. While at the beginning of the project, tenants' motivation and commitment to organize opportunities for encounters is likely to be high, we wonder whether envisaging housing as both the site of public engagement and one own's private

space (*home*) may create excessive stress for tenants. Social mix research has already shown that stimulating residents' participation in social-oriented activities can be important driver of social interaction, provided that people do not feel forced to (Mugnano & Palvarini, 2013). Apparently, the dividing line between 'obligations' and 'aspirations' is thin.

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1. **Costarelli, I.** (Resubmitted with minor revision). Forme variegate di mix socio-abitativo a Milano [Variegated forms of social mix in Milan]. *Autonomie Locali e Servizi Sociali*.
2. **Costarelli, I.**, Kleinhans, R. & Mugnano, S. (Resubmitted with minor revision). Reframing social mix in affordable housing initiatives in Italy and in the Netherlands. Closing the gap between discourses and practices? *Cities*.
3. **Costarelli, I.**, Kleinhans, R. & Mugnano, S. (Under Review). Exploring innovative management strategies of socially mixed communities in changing social housing contexts. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment.*
4. **Costarelli I.**, Kleinhans R. & Mugnano S. (Under Review). 'Active, young, and resourceful': sorting the 'good' tenant through mechanisms of conditionality. *Housing Studies.*
5. Mugnano, S., & **Costarelli, I**. (2018). Residential patterns of immigrants: trends and transformations in Milan. *Mondi Migranti*, *1*, 27-48.
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