ARTICLE

"I really wanted to stay in the same neighbourhood…": neighbourhood choice and satisfaction in the context of forced relocation—young people's perspectives

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Abstract

In recent decades, many Dutch municipalities have adopted policies of urban restructuring in deprived neighbourhoods. These policies lead to the forced relocation of the families living in the original social housing. As these families have priority in the housing market, the forced relocation is often seen as an opportunity to move to a better neighbourhood. However, we know little about how such a forced relocation and the new neighbourhood are experienced by the children of these families. Why are some young people satisfied with their new neighbourhood whereas others are not, and does their involvement in the decision-making process play a role in this? In this paper I show that for young people a sense of belonging is an important determinant of neighbourhood choice and satisfaction, more so than neighbourhood socioeconomic status. Moreover, limited perceived choice leads to lower neighbourhood satisfaction, but this is primarily related to actual or perceived obstacles in the housing market rather than the involvement of children in intra-family decision-making.

Keywords Belonging · Forced relocation · Housing choice · Intra-family decision-making · Neighbourhood satisfaction · Young people

1 Introduction

In recent decades, many cities in Europe and the USA have adopted policies of urban restructuring in low-income neighbourhoods. These policies have two aims. First, the demolition of low-quality social housing and the construction of more expensive dwellings is assumed to attract middle-class households and thus achieve a 'better' social mix in the neighbourhood. Such a policy of social mixing is thought to lead to lower concentrations of poverty and fewer negative neighbourhood effects (Galster et al. 2010; Uitermark 2003). Second, urban restructuring is often perceived as beneficial for the households that are forced to move, as it offers them the opportunity to move to less deprived neighbourhoods.

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For young people, such a move is assumed to lead to better access to good quality schools and to positive peers and role models (Chetty et al. 2016; Leventhal 2018; Galster and Santiago 2017).

Research on forced relocation, however, shows mixed results. Studies among adults generally show that although such a move leads to better housing conditions (Brooks et al. 2005; Doff and Kleinhans 2011; Joseph and Chaskin 2010; Posthumus 2013), it also has potential negative consequences, such as disrupted social networks and difficulties integrating into the new neighbourhood (Clampet-Lundquist 2007; Popkin et al. 2004). In a previous quantitative study by the Visser et al. (2013), we found that although 79.5% of the young people felt that they had moved to a better or much better dwelling, the results for improvements in the neighbourhood were more mixed: 45.9% felt that they had moved to a better or much better neighbourhood, while 28.7% felt that their new neighbourhood was worse or much worse than their previous one. We know little about why some of these young people were satisfied with their new neighbourhood, whereas others were not.

The first aim of this paper is therefore to provide insight into young people's experiences of their new neighbourhood after a forced relocation. Previous research into neighbourhood satisfaction after a forced move primarily focused on adults' preferences and the extent to which their preferences had been satisfied (Posthumus 2013). Previous research on young people (Visser and Tersteeg 2019; Visser et al. 2015), however, shows that they might experience their neighbourhood differently compared to adults, particularly because they often have very locally based activities and social networks, and they experience high levels of belonging to local settings. One might therefore expect that forced relocation has a more profound, or at least a different impact on young people than it has on adults. In addition, it is widely known that young people with a low socioeconomic status and an immigrant background are at highest risk of low wellbeing (Piotrowska et al. 2015; Reiss 2013; Russell et al. 2016), and a forced relocation might be an additional stress factor that has a negative impact on their wellbeing. Young people are thus a group that might be severely affected by forced relocation, and insight into their experiences might provide input for policies aimed at alleviating the negative impacts of such a relocation for this group.

The second aim of this paper is to provide insight into the ways in which neighbourhood satisfaction is related to young people's perceived neighbourhood choice. By doing so, we bring together literature on intra-family decision-making and on forced residential mobility. Studies on forced residential mobility show that displaced residents' satisfaction with their new neighbourhood is affected by the experienced extent of choice during the process (Kleinhans 2003; Posthumus 2013). Again, however, these studies only focus on adults. While similar issues may play a role for young people, as they too are embedded in the household, they also have to negotiate the neighbourhood choice within the household. This additional layer, however, is often overlooked in research on forced relocation, even though it might have an impact on young people's satisfaction with the move, as is illustrated by research on intra-family decision-making regarding 'ordinary' moves. In the context of forced relocation, however, factors like housing stress might complicate this process.

Combing these two aims leads to the following research question: Which factors influence young people's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their new neighbourhood in the context of forced relocation, and how is this neighbourhood satisfaction or dissatisfaction related to experienced neighbourhood choice and restrictions? I start with a theoretical overview of the literature on young people and forced relocation, and particularly how this impacts on neighbourhood satisfaction and belonging. This is followed by an overview of the literature on intra-family decision-making, the methodological section and the

result section. In the last-mentioned section, I analyse how young people experience their new neighbourhood after forced relocation and how different dimensions of belonging, or lack thereof, are crucial determinants of this satisfaction. Finally, I provide insight into the ways in which young people's experiences of intra-family decision-making impact on their neighbourhood satisfaction and sense of belonging.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Young people and forced relocation

Many studies have been conducted into the effects of forced relocation on young people in both the United States and Europe. Most of these studies focus on the effect of forced relocation on the social and developmental outcomes of young people and show mixed results, finding both positive and negative effects of a forced move (Chetty et al. 2016; Leventhal 2018; Galster and Santiago 2017). Although it is assumed that moving to a low-poverty neighbourhood is beneficial for educational and other developmental outcomes, the disruption associated with moving, even when the move is to a more well-off neighbourhood, can compromise young people's development (Leventhal 2018). In the Dutch context, however, Bolt et al. (2011) found no effect of forced relocation on the educational outcomes of young people. Moreover, the effects of the move can also differ by age. Chetty et al. (2016), for example, show that for children younger than 13, the effects of a move to a low-poverty neighbourhood had positive effects, whereas moving as an adolescent had slightly negative impacts. It is argued that moving during adolescence is more disruptive than it is during childhood, as adolescents have already developed extensive social and functional ties within their neighbourhood. This is why research in this specific age group is very relevant.

Whereas there is a wealth of primarily quantitative studies that focus on improvements in dwelling and neighbourhood characteristics (Gallagher and Bajaj 2007; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2000; Popkin et al. 2004; Visser et al. 2013, 2014), and consequently on the social and developmental outcomes of children and young people, fewer studies focus on young people's satisfaction with the move and their new neighbourhood. The outcomes of the few studies that focus on more subjective experiences are generally not that positive. Research by Clampet-Lundquist (2007) among 12- to 18-year-olds in a Philadelphia neighbourhood showed that it was difficult for the young people to build a new life in the new neighbourhood. They had to get used to new values and norms, organized activities were still unknown and new friends were difficult to make. Gallagher and Bajaj (2007) report similar findings. Over a period of 4 years, they followed 6- to 14-year-olds who had moved away from low-income (HOPE VI) neighbourhoods, and found that they had high levels of social isolation. Moreover, Chaskin et al. (2013) show that for young people in mixed-income communities expectations for positive social interactions were often not met, primarily because the higher-income residents felt that unsupervised youths had a negative influence on the broader community. Finally, Dutch studies (Visser et al. 2014; Bolt et al. 2011) show that young people lost friends after forced relocation and gave up several leisure activities, but were also able to develop activities and friendships again in the new neighbourhood.

Moreover, existing research on neighbourhood satisfaction shows that a sense of belonging plays an important role in feeling satisfied with the neighbourhood, and that particularly young people often express a strong sense of neighbourhood belonging (see Visser

and Tersteeg 2019; Visser et al. 2015; Koster and Mulderij 2011; Benson 2014; Laurier et al. 2002). Moreover, Karsten (2011) shows that while bridging capital for children in urban neighbourhoods has diminished in recent decades, connections with co-ethnics in the neighbourhood ('bonding capital') still play an important role in children's lives. Given these high levels of neighbourhood belonging, we would expect that forced relocation is experienced overwhelmingly negatively by young people, as it forces them to move to neighbourhoods where they might feel they do not belong. Even when the previous area is a poor or deprived area, the new area will not necessarily be a better place to live, at least in the eyes of the young people themselves.

Antonsich (2010) points to several factors that are relevant for belonging. Our study showed that of these factors, autobiographical factors (history in the neighbourhood), relational factors (knowing people in the neighbourhood) and cultural factors (being with co-ethnics in the neighbourhood) are most important for neighbourhood choice and satisfaction. In addition, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) define the concept of place attachment through four dimensions: distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy, which partly overlap with Antonsich's dimensions. In this paper I combine Antonsich's and Twigger-Ross and Uzzel's dimensions by focusing on autobiographical factors, relational and cultural factors, and self-efficacy.

2.2 Housing and neighbourhood choices

The extent to which a person is satisfied with a move and their new neighbourhood is likely to depend on the extent to which they feel they had a choice in the housing decision-making (Kleinhans 2003; Posthumus 2013; Bushin 2009). For young people, two elements of decision-making are important: the extent to which they—with their parents—are able to navigate housing market opportunities and constraints, and how they are able to influence intra-family decision-making about housing.

Like regular movers, forced movers have to deal with certain opportunities and constraints in the housing market, taking into account their own resources, preferences and restrictions (Joseph and Chaskin 2012; Kleit and Galvez 2011). While forced movers have the obligatory nature of their move in common, they generally react in different ways. In the context of forced moving, preferences will thus still play a role, albeit a less obvious one. Some households may have already decided to move for other reasons before they were served their eviction notices: for them, urban restructuring may present an opportunity (Kleinhans 2003). Moreover, even households that wanted to stay are likely to have specific preferences regarding a new dwelling and a new neighbourhood (Bolt et al. 2009). In addition, housing choices are based not only on preferences but also on constraints. Housing opportunities might be limited by household characteristics, such as household size, chronic illnesses or disabilities; by place dependence in terms of jobs or schools; or by a lack of information about the housing market, as well as by housing market processes such as increased demand for certain types of housing or housing market discrimination (Kleit and Galvez 2011).

In the context of young people's experiences with forced relocation, it is important to consider the extent to which they can have a say in the housing decisions that are made within the household. One could argue that for a young person, a relocation is by definition 'forced', as the decision where to move to is ultimately made by the parent(s). However, studies increasingly show that children can play an active role in housing decision-making. Children are not necessarily helpless or passive in migratory processes; their roles within

some families have increasingly become more equal to those of the parents (Fass 2005; Sibley and Lowe 1992). Empirical papers on children's participation in residential decision-making, however, are rare. Exceptions are the studies by Bushin (2009) and Ackers (2000). Adopting a child-in-family approach Bushin distinguishes three different ways of involving children in decision making: parent(s) decide, parent(s) notify child; parent(s) consult child, parent(s) decide; and child participates in decision-making with parent(s). Roche (1996) defines a series of criteria essential to ensure that participation amounts to more than simply "consulting in order to persuade him or her of the rightness or inevitability of a certain outcome". These include demands that the child receives accurate information; that this is effectively communicated; that alternative strategies are fully explored; and that children are listened to and taken seriously. Both Bushin (2009) and Ackers (2000) furthermore find that the extent to which children are involved in decision-making depends on the age of the child, with older children being involved more often. Moreover, the parents who allowed for little input from their children often argued that children should be permitted a carefree childhood precluding 'adult' responsibilities such as decision-making concerning the residential location. Several parents felt that their children would, in the longer term, see the value of the move and reflect upon it positively (Bushin 2009; Ackers 2000).

3 Research design

3.1 Research city

The research was carried out in Utrecht, which is the fourth largest city in the Netherlands. There are considerable differences between its neighbourhoods in terms of socioeconomic and ethnic compositions. Around the time of the study (2009), 12% of children younger than 17 lived in families that were dependent on benefits, and 35% of children younger than 17 lived in deprived neighbourhoods (Verwey-Jonker Instituut 2008). Twenty-one per cent of the population had a non-Western background; the largest groups were people from Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese backgrounds. These residents from non-Western backgrounds were predominantly concentrated in a number of low-income neighbourhoods: in 2006, the segregation index of non-Western immigrants in Utrecht was 37.4 (Bolt et al. 2006).

At the time of this study there were 49,300 dwellings in Utrecht's social rented sector, representing 42% of the total housing stock (Municipality of Utrecht 2010). Although there was a shortage of social housing, between 2000 and 2014 the municipality's policy was to restructure deprived, often early post-WWII neighbourhoods. This meant the demolition of low-income social housing and the construction of middle-income alternatives, in order to achieve a socially mixed population in these neighbourhoods.

Since the fieldwork for this paper was carried out, there have been some changes in the policy of urban restructuring. Urban restructuring as an official government policy was abandoned in 2014, which means that the number of demolition projects has decreased in the last couple of years. Nevertheless, the demolition of social housing and the building of middle-income alternatives are ongoing in many Dutch cities: in 2016, some 7300 dwellings were demolished in the Netherlands, compared to 15,800 in 2009 (Aedes n.d.). While the number of demolitions has decreased, relocation is still an issue that many residents

have to face, as reflected by recent newspaper articles about opposition from residents to plans to demolish parts of their neighbourhood (see Groenendijk 2019; Hoekstra 2019).

3.2 The housing allocation system in Utrecht

In Utrecht, a choice-based letting system[1] is used to allocate social rented dwellings (Kullberg 2002; RIGO 2019). A list of available social rented dwellings is published in a newspaper and on the Internet, and interested households may apply for these dwellings if they meet the suitability criteria (usually household size and income). The final procedure is straightforward: the household that has been on the waiting list the longest gets the dwelling. Households that are being or have been forced to move receive a certificate of urgency that gives them priority over regular house seekers, although certain rules regarding household size and income are applied. In general, urgency certificates are valid for a year, during which time households can apply for any dwelling belonging to any housing association in the city region as long as it matches their option profile. If a household has not found an appropriate dwelling within a year, the housing association discusses with the household the dwellings that are available in an attempt to arrive at an acceptable solution to the problem. Moreover, households that feel they are unable to navigate the choice-based letting system are offered alternative housing by the housing association without having to enter the system. Housing associations are obliged to compensate households for their moving costs. The amount differs per housing association, but is generally around €6000 (€5000 in 2009). Contrary to similar projects in the USA, the original households were not intended to move back to the old neighbourhood. The moves were seen by most respondents as well as the housing association as permanent, rather than temporary.

3.3 Research group and methods

This paper is based on in-depth interviews with 22 people who were 12–21 years old[2] when they moved because their dwellings were to be demolished. In general, their parents were forced to relocate and they went with them. All relocations occurred in the period 1998–2009. Households that included children of these ages at the time of the move were identified through data from the housing associations and the municipal database. The rate of forced moves was especially high in seven areas of the city. It was therefore decided to select respondents from these seven areas, most of which are characterized by large numbers of social rented dwellings, relatively low rents and a large percentage of low-income households.

The overall research consisted of a survey of forced movers (n = 336, response rate 26.0%; for more information, see Visser et al. 2013, 2014) and the in-depth interviews,

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[1] While in the recent years some cities have shifted to other forms of allocation (lottery systems, mediation), in 2019 the majority (72%) of the social housing in Utrecht is still being allocated through choice-based letting (RIGO 2019).

[2] We chose a lower limit of 12 years of age, because at that age young people normally leave primary school and embark upon secondary education. This change is usually accompanied by a changing spatial perspective, which can influence a young person's opinions about their neighbourhood conditions. The upper age limit for our research group was set at 21, because especially among 18- to 21-year-olds there is a fair chance that at least some will have already left home and got jobs and their own homes. Again, such important changes may influence opinions on the neighbourhood situation.

which were conducted between July and November 2009. During the survey, respondents were asked whether they would like to participate in the interviews on which this paper is based. Of the forced movers, 66.4% (83 respondents) indicated that they were willing to participate. Fifty-five respondents were selected from this group such that a diverse sample in terms of gender, age, ethnic background and neighbourhood they had moved to was obtained. These potential respondents were approached by email and/or phone and asked whether they wanted to participate in a follow-up interview. Some of the potential respondents were not reachable via the email address or phone number they had provided in the survey, others indicated that they were no longer interested or did not have the time to participate in the study, and yet others did not show up at the set appointment for the interview. This resulted in a research sample consisting of 14 young females and 8 young males from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Dutch, Moroccan, Turkish, Angolan, Bosnian and Armenian). All respondents had a low socioeconomic status. The interviews were conducted in Dutch by a white, female researcher, lasted about an hour and were held at the respondents' homes.

The following topics were explored in the interviews: the respondents' experiences with the move itself; their experiences with their new dwelling and new neighbourhood in terms of physical improvements and changes in social environments; and changes in leisure activities and social ties.[3] These interviews were retrospective (the moves had taken place between 10 years and less than a year before the interview) and I am aware that retrospective interviewing can pose challenges in the form of recollection error and the re-evaluation of past experiences. Although the capacity to recall reliably generally decreases over time, the decrease also depends on the importance that the recalled information has for the respondent. Previous research has shown that individuals have well-developed capacities to recall events and circumstances that they consider significant to their personal biography, including information about their prior housing situation (Smith and Thomas 2003). During the interviews we found that participants were eager to tell stories of their past housing situations and to share their former fears and frustrations related to the forced relocation. Moreover, comparing those who had moved less than 2 years previously, between 2 and 5 years previously and more than 5 years previously did not show clear differences in their experiences with the move.

The interviews were transcribed in their entirety and then coded and analysed by NVivo, using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). The coding practices were very similar to those used in grounded theory (see Glaser and Strauss 1967). However, whilst grounded theory is used to generate a theory of phenomena that is grounded in the data, thematic analysis is used to provide an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions without having to produce a fully developed theory (Braun and Clarke 2006). In the first round, general patterns in the data were identified using the different themes in the interview topic list as point of departure, while also allowing room for themes or topics that were not on the topic list. These codes were further refined during the subsequent rounds, that is, new codes were added and existing categories were reorganized. For example, since the initial focus of the study was on neighbourhood satisfaction, in the first round different dimensions of satisfaction were coded (e.g. with the social environment, physical environment, amenities in the new neighbourhood). It emerged from this first round of coding that belonging to the neighbourhood was an important concept determining the

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[3] The complete topic list is available from the author upon request.

neighbourhood satisfaction of young people after the forced relocation. Therefore, in the subsequent rounds, the concept of belonging was further refined, moving back and forwards between the data and the theoretical literature on belonging (Antonsich 2010; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996). It turned out that certain elements of belonging—which are explained in the results sections—were mentioned in the interviews, whereas other elements of belonging (e.g. legal and economic factors as defined by Antonsich 2010) were less relevant in the analysis. Furthermore, negative case analysis (i.e. further investigating elements of the data that did not support patterns that were emerging from the data analysis) was used to strengthen or nuance the themes that emerged from the data. This was the case, for example, when coding the importance of ethnic composition for neighbourhood belonging, where it turned out that being with co-ethnics could lead to a greater sense of belonging, although there were also certain threshold effects.

A similar approach was adopted for the theme of intra-family decision making, where I started by focusing on parts that dealt with decision-making in general, then zoomed in on the interviewee's role in this process, ranking this from no involvement, via little involvement to significant involvement. Subsequently, a table was made in which the interviewees were compared based on their levels of involvement and their sense of belonging to the new neighbourhood, from which general patterns in the data were derived. The interviewees were assigned pseudonyms, which are used throughout this article to protect their privacy.

4 Results

4.1 Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the new neighbourhood: the importance of belonging

Whereas existing research on forced relocation generally focuses on the average effects on people, and primarily pays attention to objective improvements in terms of neighbourhood socioeconomic status, crime rates or safety, our interviews revealed that neighbourhood satisfaction after their forced relocation differed substantially among the young people. Some had moved within the same neighbourhood or to a similarly deprived neighbourhood, while others had moved to a neighbourhood that scored better on socioeconomic status indicators. Regardless of the objective SES of the new neighbourhood, some young people were very positive about the move, whereas others were rather negative. While it is difficult to quantify neighbourhood satisfaction after the move, because it depends on many dimensions, about two thirds of the respondents tended to be mostly positive about the new neighbourhood while the remaining one third were predominantly negative. What is central in young people's narratives is that different dimensions of belonging seem to be more important in influencing neighbourhood choice and satisfaction than issues of neighbourhood SES and safety. While previous research (Posthumus 2013) does distinguish a small group of adults ('belongers') for whom their sense of belonging plays an important role in neighbourhood choice and satisfaction, this seems to be a more central issue for young people. Adults seemed to navigate housing and neighbourhood options more tactically. Based on Twigger-Ross and Uzzell's (1996) dimensions of place attachment and Antonsich's (2010) analytical framework for belonging, we can distinguish three dimensions of belonging that influenced young people's satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the

neighbourhood choice after forced relocation: autobiographical factors, relational and cultural factors, and self-efficacy.

4.1.1 Autobiographical factors

Autobiographical factors relate to one's history, such as personal experiences, relationships and memories that attach a particular person to a given place (Dixon and Durrheim 2004). Childhood memories usually play a key role in this context (Fenster 2005). In fact, the place where a person was born and grew up often remains a central place in the life of that individual. It emerged from the interviews that continuity played an important role in the neighbourhood choice and satisfaction, particularly for those who moved to a dwelling in the same neighbourhood. Young people referred to familiarity with the neighbourhood and knowing all the people and places there, thus referring to more emotional attachment. Some of the young people also referred to how continuity was important for their family, referring to more practical dimensions of continuity. For example, Chris (22 years old, moved in 2007 within the same neighbourhood) said the following:

> It was important for my brother and parents [to stay in the same neighbourhood]. For my parents it was more convenient: they were used to the shopping centre here, they have acquaintances here, they all live in the neighbourhood. My brother also went to the school in the neighbourhood back then, so for them it was important.

Those who were negative about the neighbourhood after the forced move referred to a lack of continuity, feeling unfamiliar in the new neighbourhood, no longer having contact with old friends and neighbours, and no longer being able to visit familiar neighbourhood places. Also some of those who had moved within the same neighbourhood said that they missed a sense of continuity, particularly because their social environment had changed as most of their neighbours had moved as well. When Busra (13 years old, moved in 2009 within the same neighbourhood) was asked if she was afraid of losing her friends, she replied: "No, I still have contact with them. I see them everyday. But still it is different, we don't live together in the same neighbourhood anymore."

4.1.2 Relational and cultural factors

Antonsich (2010) indicates that a sense of belonging to a certain place is related to relational and cultural factors. Relational factors refer to the personal and social ties that enrich the life of an individual in a given place. These ties vary from emotionally dense relations with friends and family members to weak ties, such as occasional interactions with strangers with whom we share public spaces. The interviews confirmed that one of the main reasons for young people's satisfaction with their neighbourhood choice is the fact that they had social ties in their new neighbourhood, which provided them with a sense of safety and belonging (see also Kleit and Galvez 2011; Carrillo et al. 2016). As noted by Karim (18 years old, moved in 2008 to a deprived neighbourhood):

> The new neighbourhood is much better, because I know many more people here and I have much more family here than I had there [the old neighbourhood]. Aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces. You see them more often and they drop by more often. I go and visit them more often as well. If you need help, you can reach them easily.

The other way round, several young people also indicated that the social contacts in the new neighbourhood were worse than in the old neighbourhood. Yasmin (15 years old, moved in 2009 to a less deprived neighbourhood) said that she missed the contact with other people in the neighbourhood:

> In the old neighbourhood everybody said 'Hi' to each other and we would have a chat with each other. And because you live in a multifamily dwelling, all people know each other and they share everything with each other. That was lot of fun (…). We also have a lot of acquaintances that live there. We used to see them very often, but not anymore because we live far away. I really miss that.

Moreover, she pointed to the lack of familiarity with the new neighbourhood, which prevents her from 'feeling at home':

> Perhaps it has to do with where you grew up and what your familiar environment is. I've lived here for ten years and I still don't feel I am part of [the new neighbourhood]. I have the feeling that everybody is isolated. Here you see each other and you say 'Hi', but it is not like in the old neighbourhood. There we were one big family. I really miss these social contacts.

This feeling of belonging to the neighbourhood was often also related to cultural factors. Culture not only represents a human need for differentiation but also serves a powerful social function: it gives people a common language, symbols and norms through which groups are held together (Antonsich 2010). Neighbourhoods can represent a significant source of belonging depending on the extent to which people see their own values, symbols and icons reflected around them (Kleit and Galvez 2011; Carrillo et al. 2016). The majority of our interviewees tended to find comfort by being around others who shared these values, norms and symbols. Halma (25 years old, moved in 2005 to a deprived neighbourhood), who has a Dutch–Moroccan background, illustrated this as follows:

> There a lot of things here. It is more lively, you have nice markets [selling non-Dutch products]… You only had one Turkish shop there [in the old neighbourhood], and you could not buy anything there because it was so expensive. I was, like, 'no thanks'.

The other way round, Nora (23 years old, moved in 1999 to a deprived neighbourhood), who also has a Dutch–Moroccan background, said that she thinks the composition of the residents of her new neighbourhood (which was not the neighbourhood that Halma moved to) was worse than in her old neighbourhood, namely it was too one-sided in terms of ethnic background, which hampered the formation of inter-ethnic contacts.

> I think about 60 per cent are Moroccan and 20 per cent are Turkish, and a few are Dutch people. I'm, like: you won't come into contact with each other in this way. It's too one-sided. There are some Dutch families here, but when a dwelling is vacant, someone with a non-Dutch background will move in. I think Dutch people purposely choose not to live here. [the neighbourhood] also has a bad reputation.

What is interesting here is that while for Halma being with co-ethnics was an important factor that influenced her neighbourhood choice and satisfaction, for Nora the fact that the neighbourhood ethnic composition was rather one-sided was a reason for dissatisfaction. This might be due to personal preferences, but it might also point to threshold effects: being with a certain share of co-ethnics is seen as comfortable and beneficial, whereas high concentrations might hamper inter-ethnic contact and positive experiences of neighbourhood diversity.

4.1.3 Self-efficacy

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) also point to self-efficacy as an important dimension of belonging, or place attachment. They state that self-efficacy is maintained when the environment maintains or at least does not hinder a person's lifestyle. When a person feels that he/she belongs to a certain place, the local environment will be discussed in ways that show how manageable a person feels their local environment to be, referring to the functional aspects of the environment, such as closeness to and evaluation of such facilities as shops and schools. It emerged from the interviews that several young people were positive about their new neighbourhood because of the presence of such facilities as sports or youth clubs. For example, Karim (18 years old, moved in 2008 to a deprived neighbourhood) said the following about his new neighbourhood:

> You have a sports hall here. You can go there for all types of sports: soccer, fitness… Next door you have a youth centre; you can do all kinds of fun things there. In the old neighbourhood you had a community centre, but it was not really close to us. There also was an outdoor soccer field, but you could only use it in the summer.

Other young people, however, said that the facilities for young people were worse in their new neighbourhood; this was primarily the case in neighbourhoods that were less deprived. This might be because Dutch municipalities tend to invest more in facilities in deprived areas. Yasmin (15 years old, moved in 2009 to a less deprived neighbourhood) illustrated this as follows:

> You could do sports there [in the youth club in the old neighbourhood] and other activities, and you could organize activities yourself. Like dancing. Someone just brought a CD and then we started dancing. Now [in the new neighbourhood] I don't know where the community centre is (…) I haven't heard about anything being organized in this neighbourhood.

In addition, young people's sense of self-efficacy in their neighbourhood was also linked to the relational factors discussed above. Young people who had more contacts in their new neighbourhood said that they often also experienced high levels of self-efficacy. The other way round, high levels of self-efficacy would also mean that new contacts could be made more easily.

In short, young people's satisfaction with their neighbourhood after relocation was rather mixed. On the one hand, a large share of the interviewees felt that the move was determined by positive choices: either to stay in the same neighbourhood to remain close to existing networks and a familiar environment, or to move to another neighbourhood to live close to friends and family members or to be close to the ethnic community in general. On the other hand, some young people were generally dissatisfied with their new neighbourhood. They experienced lower levels of social interaction and difficulties in making contact with their new neighbours. Moreover, they felt that the new neighbourhood lacked facilities for young people—which made it even more difficult to make new contacts. Central to young people's narratives was the importance of the different dimensions of belonging. Our interviewees seemed to be less preoccupied by objective neighbourhood factors, such as neighbourhood SES or safety scores, which was more often the case among adults (see Posthumus 2013). Moving to an 'objectively' better neighbourhood was not always experienced as an improvement by the young people.

4.2 Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood: the role of choice and constraints

As shown above, young people's experiences with the new neighbourhood after the forced relocation were rather mixed. The question that remains is whether the extent to which young people experienced neighbourhood choice after their forced relocation influenced their satisfaction with the new neighbourhood. One would expect that in the context of forced relocation, the extent to which young people themselves experience choice (i.e. opportunities for negotiation within the family) and the extent to which the households they are embedded in experience choice (i.e. opportunities for negotiation of the housing system) might result in better matched neighbourhoods and hence higher levels of satisfaction (see Posthumus 2013; Bushin 2009). Moreover, young people might be more positive about their new neighbourhood if it was the outcome of their own choices rather than something that was forced upon them.

As most of the young people were part of a family, the first question to answer here is how the decision regarding where to move to was made within the family. It became clear from the interviews that it had usually been the parents who made the final decision, but that young people played an important role in influencing their parents' decisions. This is in line with previous research that emphasizes the role of children in the migration process (Fass 2005; Sibley and Lowe 1992). An example of a child's limited agency and influence is the experience of Yasmin (15 years old, moved in 2009 to a less deprived neighbourhood), who related the following:

> We found it [the dwelling] through Woningnet [website and newspaper where available housing is posted by housing corporations]. My mum said she didn't want it, but my dad said 'I want it', so [we took it]…
>
> I: And did you have any influence on the choice of dwelling and neighbourhood?
>
> No, I didn't know anything and then he [the father] came to show it to me, and I had to take a very deep breath and then I said 'Okay'. But I didn't know anything about it.

Yasmin was simply notified about the decision to move and had no say at all in the decision-making in terms of dwelling or neighbourhood choice. However, most of the young people indicated that their parents had involved them in the decision-making. In addition, what was best for the child was often passively considered by the parents without explicitly discussing it with the child, such as choosing a dwelling that was close to the child's school.[4] Some of the young people also said that they felt they did have an important say in the choice of dwelling and neighbourhood. Issues like having their own bedroom and the preference to move to a single-family dwelling with a garden were points that young people were able to discuss with their parents. For example, Busra (13 years old, moved in 2009 within the same neighbourhood) said that she had several preferences for the new dwelling and neighbourhood, which her parents had considered when searching for a new place to live:

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[4] Young people did not talk about moving to other neighbourhoods to gain access to better schools. This is probably because in the Netherlands there is free school choice and thus there are no catchment areas. Moreover, school quality is less dependent on neighbourhood quality than in, for example, the USA. Moreover, in the overall study, we found that hardly any of the young people had to move schools because of the forced relocation, which has to do with the fact that Utrecht is a relatively small city in which schools in other parts of the city are easily reached by bike or public transport.

I: Did you have any influence on your parents when they had to search for a new dwelling, like where and what kind of dwelling?

Yes. I really wanted to stay in [the same neighbourhood] and I really wanted my own room. I didn't want to live in a flat [multifamily dwelling]. I just wanted a single-family dwelling.

No relationship was found between the ethnic background of families and the extent to which parents engaged their children in decision-making.

The extent to which young people had a say in the housing decision-making also was related to the extent to which the parents themselves experienced choice. The priority status of most of the residents was initially valid for only 1 year. As a result, several of the respondents felt pressured to find a new dwelling post-haste. If no suitable dwelling was found within a few months, some of the parents panicked and tended to go for suboptimal options, because they feared becoming homeless[5] (see Posthumus and Kleinhans 2014). For example, when Yasmin (15 years old, moved in 2009 to a less deprived neighbourhood) was asked why the family chose the new dwelling and neighbourhood, she said: "because our old house was being demolished, we had to have something. It was better to move then than later." In other families, parents had little choice, as the opportunities were restricted by life events that coincided with the forced relocation, such as a divorce or conflicts with neighbours, which meant they had to move quickly. As a result, there was little opportunity to engage the children in the decision-making. Also household size limited the choice profile of the family and the neighbourhood they could move to. As many households with priority status flooded the housing market at the same time, there was a shortage of dwellings that could accommodate larger families. For them it was increasingly difficult to find a suitable dwelling. For example, Zach (17 years old, moved in 2007 to a less deprived neighbourhood) related the following:

We chose this house because we have a large family. In total we have seven children, and five live at home. Here [in the new dwelling] you just have more rooms. […]. But we didn't move here for the neighbourhood, because we don't particularly like the neighbourhood.

So does actual or perceived choice lead to a greater sense of belonging in the new neighbourhood among young people? The study by Bushin (2009) in the context of 'ordinary' migration shows that children who were able to participate in the decision-making were more aware of the complexity of decision-making processes and expressed a greater understanding of many of the factors that had influenced the migration decision. This is partly confirmed by our study: most of the young people who were negative about the move and their new neighbourhood had little say in the decision-making concerning the move, whereas the young people who were mostly positive about the move and their new neighbourhood had had levels of influence on the decision-making ranging from high to low. When looking further at the data we find that there is not necessarily a direct relationship between lack of involvement in decision-making experienced by the young person and negative attitudes towards the new neighbourhood, but that both are related to the family's actual or perceived limited choice. Our findings also show that even if young people

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[5] This fear, however, was often based on a misconception with regard to the legal powers of housing associations. Dutch housing associations cannot simply evict tenants after the expiration of their search time. The usual practice in this situation is that the housing association makes several offers of properties that suit the residents' preferences (Posthumus and Kleinhans 2014).

experience a high level of choice concerning the new neighbourhood, they might still end up in places in which they experience a low level of belonging. This might be because some of them struggle to form new contacts in the new neighbourhood (see also Visser et al. 2015).

5 Conclusion and discussion

In the past two decades, policymakers in Western countries have adopted policies of urban restructuring with the aim of achieving a social mix in deprived neighbourhoods. These policies mean that families living in these neighbourhoods are forced to move. While several, mainly quantitative studies have focused on the effects of forced relocation on housing and the developmental outcomes of young people in these families (Gallagher and Bajaj 2007; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2000; Popkin et al. 2004; Visser et al. 2013, 2014), only a few have examined the processes underlying these outcomes. These processes are important to the understanding of why forced relocation has been found to result in both positive and negative outcomes. In particular, we know little about why some young people are satisfied with their neighbourhood after relocation whereas others are not, and how their involvement in the choice-making process plays a role in this.

In this paper, I therefore first focused on the determinants of young people's neighbourhood satisfaction in the context of forced relocation. Young people's experiences of neighbourhood choice and satisfaction were very diverse but were primarily influenced by dimensions of belonging, rather than objective neighbourhood characteristics. When we compare this with studies on adults (Posthumus 2013), we see that after forced relocation different elements are important in neighbourhood satisfaction for young people compared to adults, who generally navigate the housing market more tactically, trying to achieve the best housing and neighbourhood options in more objective terms (see Posthumus 2013).

The present research also shows that, in general, this sense of belonging was more easily found in low-SES neighbourhoods compared to higher-SES neighbourhoods, where young people were likely to feel more disconnected. This contradicts the assumption of many policymakers and researchers that moving to an objectively better neighbourhood will necessarily be an improvement for young people. At the same time, the interviews also showed that while there were indeed some young people with negative experiences who felt unable to connect with their new neighbourhood (see also Clampet-Lundquist 2007), the majority of the young people adjusted to their new neighbourhood relatively quickly and were able to develop a new sense of belonging. This was often because the young people had moved to neighbourhoods where they already knew other people or had moved to neighbourhoods to be with co-ethnics. Contrary to expectations (Anton and Lawrence 2014), there were no clear differences between young people who had moved shortly before the interview and those who had moved longer ago. These findings provide a more nuanced understanding of the effects of a forced residential move, compared to existing quantitative studies that predominantly point to negative effects (Dupere et al. 2015; Tseliou et al. 2016; Chetty et al. 2016; Leventhal 2018; Galster and Santiago 2017). In this context, however, it is necessary to recognize that the extent to which young people can take up new activities and make new friends—and thus develop a new sense of belonging—is bounded by the social climate in the neighbourhood and the neighbourhood activities and facilities. It is therefore important to assist young people and their parents when they move. Institutional actors

could be more proactive in helping families connect to their new neighbourhoods by, for example, supplying information about places that provide leisure activities.

Second, how neighbourhood satisfaction is related to young people's perceived neighbourhood choice was investigated. What is interesting here is that young people are embedded in two different contexts in which decision-making is taking place: the young person is negotiating within the family, while the family is negotiating within the housing market. The young people had been involved in the decision-making regarding the move in different ways. Although in some families the decision was made by the parents and the children were only notified, the majority of the parents involved their children in decision-making or at least let them voice their preferences, which confirms existing literature that shows that young people increasingly have a say in decision-making regarding migration and that it thus should be seen relationally (Bushin 2009; Ackers 2000; Fass 2005; Sibley and Lowe 1992). The expectation that young people would be more satisfied with their new neighbourhood if they had had more say in the decision-making process was partly confirmed by the interviews. The young people who were negative about their new neighbourhood were the ones who had been least involved in the decision-making. This, however, was related not so much to parents not wanting to involve their children, but rather to the fact that the actual or perceived choice sets of these families were limited for other reasons, such as parents panicking, having to leave the old dwelling or neighbourhood in a hurry because of other life events such as divorce or conflicts with the neighbours, or because of large family sizes. This illustrates that before parents can let their children participate in the decision-making process, they themselves must have a feeling of choice.

Given the limited experienced choice of some parents—and how this impacts on the involvement of the young people and their satisfaction with the new neighbourhood—it is recommendable to provide residents who are forced to move with counselling and a wide set of housing choices. Moreover, more information about the allocation process might at least contribute to reducing the incidence of panic and suboptimal dwelling and neighbourhood choices among those who are forced to move. Mediation and counselling during the search process is recommended, in form of actively helping displaced residents to weigh various options (see also Posthumus 2013). It is important that this counselling takes into account the special needs of the household. As the present study has shown, large families struggle to find decent housing, but this might also be the case for, for example, households with parents or children with disabilities or chronic illnesses, or households that have to move urgently because of other personal circumstances.

Finally, the findings of this study confirm that it is crucial to include individuals' subjective perceptions of their neighbourhood and the move in studies on forced relocation, and we should not rely solely on objective neighbourhood characteristics to predict the social outcomes of young people. Research and policies on neighbourhoods in general could benefit from paying more attention to what a neighbourhood really means in the lives of young people. We should also acknowledge that place can have multiple meanings, depending on the individual and the other individuals present in that place (Sykes 2011). Thus far, however, young people are hardly consulted in the process of urban restructuring, even though it can have profound impacts on their lives.

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