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URBAN POLICY INNOVATIONS IN LOCAL WELFARE IN NIJMEGEN, NETHERLANDS

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INTRODUCTION – GENERAL VALUES

In the beginning of the 1980s, the catholic roots of Nijmegen were still strongly incorporated by the local politics - the Christian-Democratic Party (*Christen-Democratisch Appél*, or CDA) was a constant factor in the municipal coalitions. However, religious values became less important, and an activist spirit came across the city during the 1960s - with the so-called ‘Pierson riots’ in 1981, a huge violent protest by squatters and sympathizers, as the high point. Politics in Nijmegen began to lean strongly towards the left - so strongly that the city came to be known as ‘Havana on the Waal’. In fact, over the last ten years, the College (i.e. the municipal executive board, which consists of the Mayor and Aldermen) has been composed of left-wing parties. Looking at the results of the municipal elections since 1998 (Table 1), we see that the Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, or PvdA), the Socialist Party (*Socialistische Partij*, or SP), and the Green Party (*GroenLinks*, or GL) have been the main parties during the past decade. CDA, having seven council seats at the end of the 1990s, lost more than half its seats during the 2000s and currently holds three council seats. The representation of the Liberal Party (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*, or VVD) has been fairly consistent throughout the past decade, but with only four seats in the council it has not managed to break through the hegemony of the left. Instead, during the latest round of municipal elections - while the PvdA and the SP both lost council seats - the Social-Liberal Party (*Democraten ’66*, or D66) gained four seats and ended up with six council seats in total. Hence, in 2010, instead of forming a coalition between GL, PvdA, and the SP - as had been the case since 2002 - a coalition was formed between GL, PvdA, and D66.¹ And, as an interviewee remarked, still quite a few contemporary politicians in Nijmegen were the activists of the 1980s.

Table 1 - Results of municipal elections in Nijmegen, council seats per party 1998-2010

| | 1998 | 2002 | 2006 | 2010 |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|
| PvdA | 8 | 8 | 11 | 8 |
| SP | 6 | 6 | 7 | 5 |
| GL | 8 | 9 | 6 | 8 |
| CDA | 7 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| VVD | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| D66 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Other parties | 3 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| Total | 39 | 39 | 39 | 39 |

¹ See Table 2 for an overview of the main solutions proposed by these three parties for each of the policy fields and see the Appendix for the complete summaries of the party programs of GL, PvdA and SP. The choice was made to analyse these particular party programs because these three parties (PvdA, GL, and SP) have had the most impact on social welfare policies in Nijmegen during the last ten years.

Following a leftist tradition, equality and solidarity have been important values guiding the formulation of local welfare policies during the last 10 years. The aspiration has always been to have a so-called ‘undivided city’ (‘ongedeelde stad’). The Coalition Agreement of 2006-2010 (PvdA, GL, and SP), for instance, clearly stated that:

We are for one Nijmegen. A city where the whole (that one city) is more than the sum of its parts (the neighbourhoods). We stand for an undivided city. Where people talk each other’s language. [...] Not because everybody is the same. But because everybody is equal. That is why we do not allow boundaries in the city, but we want to build bridges between different worlds in Nijmegen. Only that way we stay that one undivided city. We do not allow dividing lines between Nijmegen-East and Nijmegen-West, a contrast between migrants and other residents, a contrast between the haves and the have-nots.” ... “Our starting point is solidarity. The strongest shoulders can bare the heaviest burdens and are still often able to contribute a little bit more. This way we are developing more chances for people who are less well off.

Although it looks at first sight as if Catholicism has more or less disappeared from the political arena of Nijmegen, the current orientation of Nijmegen can be traced back to the church, as one interviewee argued: “Actually you could say that there were new churches, new congregations, new religious groups being build. The communes of the 1970s could be in that respect a reaction on Catholicism and also the values and norms of Catholicism which were translated in an own form”.²

Accordingly, during the 2000s, there has been much (political and societal) support for upholding strong social policies to protect the more vulnerable segments of society. Despite increasingly restricted budgets, the municipality has sought to maintain an extended safety net for disadvantaged residents (in particular for the unemployed, but also for single mothers and migrants). Moreover, it endorsed many civil society organisations that were committed to the provision of welfare services (in the fields of unemployment, housing, as well as childcare). At the same time, though, the municipal government underlined the ideas of reciprocity and of civic responsibility:

We are social but not naïve. ... We do not accept fraud. Because the feeling of solidarity will be undermined.” ... “Nijmegen wants to be a city of solidarity - solidarity with the vulnerable people in society to support them, so that they become independent and will not end up in social and societal isolation. In order to keep this social policy affordable, we steer on the right use of facilities and we tackle abuse. We point people who have a right on amenities to their obligations too.”³

The current coalition (PvdA, GL, and D66) has not given up on the idea of wanting to be an ‘undivided city’. The predominant view is still that all people in Nijmegen should enjoy equal opportunities - regardless of where they (originally) come from and where they live within the city - and that people who are in a vulnerable position should be supported:

We keep investing in undivided, strong neighbourhoods.” ... “There is space for ‘being different’ and there are chances for everybody,

² Political historian, Radboud University Nijmegen

³ Coalition Agreement 2006-2010

*regardless of ethnic background, religion or sexual orientations.” ...
“We remain a social city. We support residents on their path
towards empowerment (‘zelfredzaamheid’) and give extra
attention to people with fewer chances.”⁴*

However, the local government now seems to be stressing the idea of reciprocity and participation - in particular participation in the labour market - even more:

*More than in the past we apply the perspective of maximal
empowerment (‘zelfredzaamheid’). Work above income and
reciprocity are important starting points. Those who receive
benefits will try hard to find a job. We no longer speak of residents
who have ‘a duty to work’, but of residents who have ‘a right to
work and support’. It is an important task of the government to
make this right to work or participation possible.”⁵*

In fact, during the last couple of years, the municipality of Nijmegen (like all other municipalities in the Netherlands) has gradually been receiving fewer means from the national government, while simultaneously it is expected to carry out more of the local (welfare) policies. As a result of the recent financial crisis, further (and rather drastic) cutbacks have been announced. In the attempt to preserve high standards of welfare for those in need, the municipality has been calling on citizens, as well as private companies for that matter, to take on a more active role in contributing to society: “[Cutbacks] force us to fundamentally think about the division of roles between government and citizens. More than ever we want to address the self-responsibility of residents, companies and institutions” (Coalition Agreement 2010-2014).

Despite these changes, as one of the interviewees mentioned: “Nijmegen has a special kind of DNA. It’s not for nothing that we had two councils that were called Havana on the Waal... That redness is still there...”

Such ‘genes’ have not only shaped the local social domain, but also local economic policy. As shown in the city report (WP3), the role of low skilled labour is very marginal in Nijmegen. Frequently, it is debated whether the municipality has to do more to attract big companies and industries to the city, in order to increase low skilled jobs. Nevertheless, most attention goes to the service sector, mainly health and education. It seems to be difficult to set up initiatives which are more ‘business-like’ (for an interesting comparison, see the reports on the city of Münster): “Just before I got here, there was some trouble around a big logistical company, to bring that to here, and especially GroenLinks said no to this, and they won the elections with that. It is just not very aimed at that. It is more about the top sectors, health, education, that is more the image which Nijmegen would like to show” (Policy advisor Work & Income).

Between 2004 and 2006, GroenLinks advocated the idea of the creative economy of Richard Florida to the city, trying to combine the strong sides of Nijmegen - a lot of highly educated citizens, many possibilities for culture (theater, music) and nature - with technological innovation. However, this philosophy was not received enthusiastically - on the contrary, people thought it did not suit Nijmegen. Especially the PvdA opposed using Florida’s assumptions, pointing at ‘real’ problems, and saying “now it is not the time for experiments with fashionable theories”. A rejection of ‘big city’ ideas seems to fit with the observation of one interviewee: “Yes, now and then it has a almost village like, has the

⁴ Coalition Agreement 2010-2014

⁵ Coalition Agreement 2010-2014

political climate an almost village like character. Everybody knows each other and there is a big... yes knowing each other, like knows like [ons kent ons]" (Political historian, Radboud University Nijmegen).

This image of a village is underpinned by the role of the local media:

A very powerful party in the game is De Gelderlander (local newspaper), who actually has the monopoly on the news and also has a lot of influence on political policy. Sometimes that leads to resistance and counter movements and other groups that say: 'the image which 'de Gelderlander' displays is just a distorted image or they propogate something which is the opinion of just a few people'. The ones who have control about what De Gelderlander thinks of, what will be reported, they have a lot of influence on the direction, on the agenda of local politics.⁶

'De Gelderlander' is not the only party with a strong position - also in other fields, such as child care and social welfare, a few big organisations have a lot to say. Reflecting the 'like knows like' mentality, the bond between these organisations and local politics is close and at times very explicit: the current Alderman of Work and Income was the director of a big welfare organisation in the city, and a lot of council members do work in local civil society organisations.

Although on the one hand the image of a being a small community is carried with proud, on the other hand local politicians now and then complain that they have little to say in 'The Hague' - that is, central government. The fact that no 'Nijmegenaar' is represented in national parliament might indeed be an obstacle to political influence. However, the past few years the city has been able to attract politicians and mayors of national appeal. It looks like Nijmegen is slowly putting itself on the map as a genuine city rather than a village - for instance by celebrating its 2000th anniversary and promoting Nijmegen as the oldest city of The Netherlands. The fact that Nijmegen has only recently started paying attention to its role and major events during World War II is, according to one of our interviewees, an indication of another atmosphere has entered the city - 'a more self-conscious atmosphere'.

⁶ Political historian, Radboud University Nijmegen

Table 2 - Main solutions of GL, PvdA and SP per policy field; 2002, 2006 and 2010

| 2002-2006 | SP | GL | PvdA |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| Title | Return Nijmegen to the people | - | Future for everybody |
| Unemployment | Intensify guidance long term unemployed | Give jobseekers more responsibility by giving them a 'personal budget' | More cooperation between the private sector, educational institutions and the municipality |
| | Transform subsidised jobs into regular, fully paid jobs | Increase income of subsidised workers and give them more options for education | Use talents of unemployed people to assure work or other activities |
| | Do not 'subsidise' private companies | | Improve the position of ethnic minorities |
| Childcare | - | Increase childcare attendance, especially among migrants | Childcare facilities should increase |
| | | More attention to quality | Parents should be more involved in the development of programmes of toddler play rooms |
| Housing | More voice for habitants, e.g. through surveys | Build enough affordable housing | Build enough affordable housing, particularly for middle-incomes |
| | More affordable housing | Stimulate contact between residents | Increase involvement of residents |
| | Connect housing allocation to income in order to prevent segregation | Make neighbourhoods diverse by building various types of dwellings | |
| 2006-2010 | SP | GL | PvdA |
| Title | Neighbourhoods in the centre - social city | United city in a green environment | Chances for Nijmegen |
| Unemployment | Work for everybody, especially for youngsters | Keep investing in subsidised labour | Everybody has a right to work |
| | Stop with private reemployment companies | Realise 'participation jobs' | Regional private sector is needed for reemployment services |
| | Stop retrenchments subsidised labour | Reemployment services only for people with high chances | Create more subsidised jobs |
| Childcare | Improve broad schools | - | Every child has to go to a toddler play room |
| | | | Better spreading of toddler play rooms |
| Housing | Involve residents with their neighbourhood | Create a diverse housing stock for diverse neighbourhoods | Adjust housing allocation policy to prevent segregation |
| | More affordable housing | | Spread affordable housing |
| | Prevent segregation | | Provide enough meeting areas in each neighbourhood |

| 2010-2014 | SP | GL | PvdA |
|--------------|--|---|--|
| Title | Keep on building on our social city | Green works in Nijmegen | Nijmegen works |
| Unemployment | Work for everybody, especially for youngsters | People under 30 get offered a job or education | Everybody has a right to work |
| | A more active role for private companies in reemployment | Maintain subsidised jobs for people without chances on regular work | Maintain subsidised jobs through 'work corporations' |
| | No dismissals among current subsidised employees | Everybody participates, e.g. through volunteering | Set up a youth unemployment plan |
| Childcare | - | - | - |
| Housing | Residents are central, every neighbourhood has to have an active neighbourhood committee | Prevent segregation by allocating dwellings in rich neighbourhoods to low incomes | Change housing allocation policy, more targeted allocation |
| | More affordable housing | | More affordable housing |
| | Prevent segregation by changing housing allocation | | Encourage self-responsibility of residents for their neighbourhood |

2. SECTORIAL VALUES

2.1. Unemployment

During the last decade, the reintegration of unemployed residents into the labour market has been a recurrent topic in council meetings in Nijmegen, especially since the national government announced that it would discontinue subsidised labour policy by 2004. This decision put pressure on the municipality of Nijmegen to reconsider local policy, since subsidised labour had been an instrument in which they had greatly invested over the past decades. The fact that the number of people receiving benefits in Nijmegen was higher than average made this challenge all the more difficult (see City Report Nijmegen). Equality was a very important aspect of the discussion. In 2003, the PvdA made it clear that they did not want to exclude anyone when it came to providing people with the opportunity to work: “We sometimes get the impression, when this College talks about not reintegrating 4.000 people, that it is because they are very hard to reemploy. We absolutely refuse to support that [vision]. It can't be, it may not be, to offer people no chances.”

Political parties had different views on what ought to be the new strategy. The SP always maintained that the city could do a lot more to protect those who were employed in subsidised jobs - they actually would have liked to get rid of subsidised jobs by converting these into regular jobs and heightening the income of the workers. In their view, workers were of high value for the social infrastructure of the city (many subsidised jobs are to be found in the fields of childcare, education or health care) and people fulfilling these jobs should be rewarded for doing so. The PvdA agreed with this position, but also stressed the re-employment function of the instrument. By contrast, the VVD thought these two were not interrelated and should thus be treated separately. D66 thought subsidised labour was a good reemployment instrument, but not a goal in itself.

Reemployment of people receiving social assistance benefits became an even higher priority after the introduction of the Act Work and Assistance in 2004, as the municipality now carried the financial responsibility (see the WP2 Report on The Netherlands). Since many parties agreed upon the fact that the current record of beneficiaries was hard to reintegrate into the regular labour market, attention shifted towards preventing inflow and thus towards the situation of youngsters. In July 2004, the Alderman (PvdA) announced how they had agreed that everyone that did not have paid employment and was younger than 23 would get a work-experience job: “nobody will be sitting on the side-lines”. Also, in 2005, the PvdA stated that “we finally should get rid of the taboo on working just on benefits [without a salary]. Work is essential for the development of an individual and for the development and liveability of the city.” The SP was ambivalent: they agreed with this direction and said that “we always maintained that we should focus on people who can and are willing to (...) but also on people of whom we think they should”, yet they also thought that in addition to the obligation to work, there should also be a right to work, and if this right cannot be fulfilled for everybody (e.g. because of care giving, volunteering): “people shouldn’t be frustrated by asking them the impossible”. Nonetheless, in 2007, the SP too stated that “one of our goals is to get at least all youngsters under 27 a job and after that of course the somewhat older youngsters too, and after that all those other people who we would like to get to work too.”

One proposed solution to assure jobs for the (young) unemployed was to increase the role of employers, but this appeared to be a contested issue. Employers were expected to create internships, where students can get work-experience and learn at the same time, but they were also asked to make room for long-term unemployed in the form of unpaid jobs (yet maintaining benefits). The PvdA argued that employers “are very eager to play a role in the reemployment policy. They don’t only do that from the perspective of social entrepreneurship, but also for their own interests. They know there will be shortages on the labour market in the coming years. They really want to participate in offering people chances, work experience.” Yet, not everybody received this idea positively, and newspaper articles more than the council minutes seem to be making it clear that there were opponents to this plan. The liberal party VVD thought that this was turning things upside down - it should be the responsibility of the municipality to get people back to work, not of the private sector. Instead, the SP was negative about the intentions of the employers, as they were concerned that the private sector would use unemployed people as cheap labour forces - even calling such a solution a ‘new slave market’. Hence, the SP drew a clear line between the SP and the PvdA: “the PvdA puts itself clearly [...] as the comrade of the entrepreneurs. [...] We would like to put ourselves [...] as the comrades of the beneficiaries.” Companies, however, said that they would participate in such projects because they have a societal obligation to do so. The PvdA pointed at their belief of ‘the right to work’, which, again, meant that efforts from the educational and private sector were also needed, to create internships and jobs. Other articles however tend to show that work (or study) is also treated as obligation, especially when it comes to dropouts. For example, the Youth Window is there “to help you, even if you don’t want to”.

According to all (political) parties, investing in the education of youngsters is indeed an effective strategy. For youngsters from ethnic minorities in particular, education has been regarded as one of the most important factors to get them into the labour market. This is underlined by articles in the local press, where in 2004 was written on the so-called ‘Nijmeegse’ model of dealing with youth unemployment. This model was presented as a strict approach and it meant that dropouts would be obliged to follow either an educational program and/or a work program. This approach was essentially the same as what then became a national policy under the Act Investment in Youth or WIJ in 2009 (and was abolished in January 2012). The importance of manual, technical labour has always

been acknowledged too. In 2002, GL and SP proposed to financially support a technical centre that tried to make youngsters enthusiastic for technical schooling and mentioned that there should be a better connection between education and employment. When the crisis became evident, the PvdA praised initiatives that connected labour market and education as much as possible, and also in newspaper articles the involvement of educational institutes was deemed to be essential for any policy to be successful. The role of education seems to be rather neutral since no actor expressed opposition to them taking part in combating unemployment.

A more discussed issue was the involvement of private reemployment companies. The implementation of the WWB in 2004 entailed that municipalities had to contract out reemployment services. Nijmegen was doubtful about this strategy: “The council, the politics did not think it was the right way actually, there were a lot of question marks, such as what are those commercial companies going to do, are they not just picking out the best clients, and will it not costs us much more money if we would do it ourselves” (Policy advisor Work & Income)?

The PvdA stressed at that time that the municipality had to be very careful in contracting reemployment companies. The SP was more radical and said: “We have to get rid of the reemployment companies quickly with all those nonsense programs that are rolling there.” Instead, the SP wanted to execute reemployment programs from within the municipality. In fact, after the first year of contracting out, an evaluation showed that these companies were not very successful in getting people back to work, and since the obligation to contract out was abolished, the municipality indeed started to take reemployment services in their own hands again.

Much changed in 2010, when the new College decided to stop 75 percent of subsidised jobs, although they had claimed to support subsidised labour before the elections. Especially the SP proved extremely disappointed. Some years previously, the PvdA had been saying that it would not necessary for the municipality to retrench that much on subsidised labour in order to meet the cutbacks on the reemployment budget. It felt that it would be a waste to stop with subsidised labour now that the municipality had carefully developed it over the years as a successful instrument. A solution the party proposed was to generate income with subsidised work force (the first stage of the development of the work corporations). In June 2010, the Alderman of Work and Income (from the PvdA) stated that, although there will be much less subsidised labour, “participation remains the starting point”. According to him, work corporations and work-study programmes were the best alternatives. Later on, in line with the party programme of 2010, he even “guarantees almost everyone a place to work”. He argued that many organisations that are dependent on subsidised workers should be able to pay those workers normal wages, although many employers seem to disagree. Subsidised workers themselves also doubted the decision of the municipality and several hundreds of them demonstrated against the plans of the municipality.

“It was regarded as betrayal, especially from the corner of the ID’ers [subsidised employees]. [...] That is what happens during negotiations, then comprises have to be made. But exactly that was... was of course a bitter pill yes, it was regarded as betrayal from the left side” (Chief Editor RTV Nijmegen 1). D66 responded by saying that the money that would be saved by cutting subsidised labour could be used to provide more support for those who are indeed able to get back into the regular labour market. Still, the SP was not convinced about the effectiveness of such reemployment strategies. In fact, when it comes to reemployment instruments, the SP presents itself as the most sceptical towards their effectiveness. Already in 2002, they doubted the usefulness of ‘social activation’: “if you say on the one hand that 5.000 people barely have access to the labour market, and then

put them in a Social Activations plan, it occurs to me that we are able to spend lots and lots of money on this.”. This again reflects the resentment of external parties in reemployment services. In that same discussion, GL was in favour of social activation but felt the proposal of the College lacked ambition, as it was only targeting 150 people of a total of 5.000, while GL wanted everybody to get the chance to be activated. In 2011, the SP opines that when the economy recovers, many of the unemployed would easily find a job again, and that therefore it is not necessary to spend a lot of money on reemployment strategies. GL interpreted this viewpoint as abandoning people - GL was and still is a proponent of investing in job seekers, in guidance and education. In other words, while the SP appears to be in favour of reemployment instruments in good economic times, the other parties (PvdA, GL, D66) appear to be in favour of reemployment instruments especially in bad economic times because, according to them, the municipality has to take care of the less well off.

In 2009, in the middle of the economic crisis, the Alderman (PvdA) had said: “you cannot deal with this economic crisis as a municipality alone, you desperately need the help of partners in the city.” In 2011, the PvdA emphasised once again that the municipality should not carry out reemployment services on its own, but cooperate with employers and educational institutes in the city. Following this way of thinking, so-called ‘work corporations’ were introduced. Along with this new policy - an idea of the College of GL, PvdA and D66 - several of the debates mentioned above come together. Work corporations have been presented with great expectations. Commercial or third sector entrepreneurs can initiate such ‘work corporations’, which must be able to make their own profit (in other words, without extra subsidies from the municipality), and people who are eligible for social assistance can work in a work corporation for a maximum of two years, during which they are being educated and/or guided. Nevertheless, the SP is not particularly enthusiastic about them: “[work corporations are] old wine in new bottles. Therefore, the result of the work corporations is already known. In a few years, we have to conclude, unfortunately, that the work corporations are ineffective and inefficient too.” As was mentioned earlier, the SP would rather cut expenses on reemployment instruments and reserve that money for subsidised labour. A council member of the small local party ‘City Party Nijmegen Now!’ was also rather skeptical when he read the plans for the work corporations, and he expressed concerns about unfair competition with freelancers. Yet, the PvdA is fairly ambitious and sees the following scenario for work corporations: “*The situation in three years has to be that somebody who is unemployed goes to the municipality and says: I would like to work, and that the municipality can say: that is possible, you can choose from the following possibilities.*”

Although the municipality started with work corporations in the ‘social’ (third) sector, they now focus on the business sector.

The business sector is very interesting, because there are the jobs, and all employers [which I have visited] indicated, sincerely: ‘we now have a bit of crisis, we are all down, but when the economy gets a bit better, we will have shortage right away. (...) And those employers would like to be more involved in the societal context of the city they work in. And therefore they are prepared to show much more things, that they have eye for the problems of society where they earn their money.’⁷

The idea of work corporations means a responsible role for everyone, according to the Alderman of Work & Income:

⁷ Alderman Work & Income

The innovative part is that you give all stakeholders in the field a role. Not like somebody has an active role and somebody else a passive one. In my eyes everybody has an active role. [...] We kind of break the taboo... everybody can think something of it and say something, but also take his responsibility. But that is how it should go. Otherwise you get a situation where society says: 'jobseekers at social services, that is the responsibility of the municipality'. Jobseekers who say: 'yeah I get a job from you'. (...) Well that is what I try to break through this way of working, and such a work corporation is a means (to do so).⁸

2.2. Childcare

The main finding for the field of childcare is that when going through the council minutes and the local newspaper only few discussions are found. In fact, between 2002 and 2011, childcare is only mentioned seven times as a point of debate. In the party programs of 2010, none of the biggest three parties mentions child care as a field where something has to be done. All in all, there seems to be a general belief that aspects like quality, accessibility and organisation of childcare services are well arranged in the municipality, probably due to the fact that KION has been a partner of the municipality since 1994, and is still the biggest childcare provider in the city. At the same time, this monopolist position of KION in providing toddler playrooms has become debated, raising questions such as whether, or how, competition among providers should/could be improved. Indisputably, national changes in regulations/legislations fuelled this discussion.

In 2002, the SP disagreed with the abolition of maximum rates of childcare services, which was going to take place in order to stimulate competition among providers. The SP argued that instead of price reduction, this would result in an increase in rates, and they thus feared a 'possible dichotomy' in childcare - something that they wanted to prevent 'at any cost'. At the same time, the VVD noticed that, although it had previously been agreed upon in the council that financial resources for toddler play rooms should be provided not only to KION but also to other organisations, the council proposed once again to give new resources to KION. The party argued that it was necessary to divide these resources among different providers, in order to broaden the demand. The Aldermen agreed with the criticism and acknowledged that other parties should be involved in tendering for budgets too.

In 2003 there were reports on the possible closure of some of the toddler playrooms in Nijmegen. It seemed that in times of economic recession, the costs of childcare services are too high for parents. Part of the blame has been put on the employers: until the new Childcare Act was introduced in 2005, employers were not yet obliged to pay a part of the costs (see WP2 report on The Netherlands). While they attracted employees in good financial times by reimbursing childcare costs, they stopped doing so when the supply of employees exceeded the demand.

The implementation of the Childcare Act in 2005, which opened the market for private providers of day care, was received quite well by childcare organisations in Nijmegen. The fact that parents are now responsible for paying for childcare, and no longer the provider, was seen as a positive development - "*parents should be put central*", said the director of KION. In terms of costs, childcare organisations in Nijmegen thought that they were distributed fairly equally: high incomes paid more, but access of low income households to

⁸ Alderman Work & Income

childcare services was still ensured because they paid even less than before the Childcare Act. The Childcare Act, which tried to assure the quality of childcare services, triggered more news items regarding the quality of childcare in Nijmegen. Although one childcare facility was shut down because it did not respect the standards, this did not lead to discussions about the quality of childcare services in Nijmegen in general.

In 2005, the Alderman responsible for child care stated that he had a fair amount of trust in market competition: "If you are just a bit of an entrepreneur, you go to the Waalsprong [a site with many new constructed houses] as a childcare provider." Also for parents, the new market structure did not lead to controversy:

For us as parents actually only one theme was important: quality and the well-being of our children. Our children had to there with pleasure. That had to be all safe, that had to be reliable. That was actually the common thread in all our advises and where we looked back at every time." ... "The more offer, the more choice, everybody is ok." ... "No actually there has never been a discussion and back then we all had something like, oh nice, we will see what happens, what parties will do."⁹

With the implementation of the Child Care Act, the position of toddler play rooms was put on the agenda. Two topics came across. Firstly, it was argued that it was illogical to have 'two different systems' for toddler play rooms and day care - especially when this involved the risk of segregation:

The day care, the providers had to fulfill all kinds of legal requirements. The toddler play rooms were not part of that, because they had to fulfil municipal requirements and they were mainly meant for children with a language or development problem. Those two subjects existed next to each other, without the presence of ideas like, hey, could we combine those two or is cooperation possible or something like that. They were really two separated worlds. Content-wise separated worlds, financially separated worlds, but also concerning goals. At a certain moment there was also... I don't know what started earlier, the national development of that harmonization, or also here the awareness of hey, actually it is very weird that make demands of day care at the one hand and for toddler play rooms you have a municipal regulation but it is less heavy. On top of that you get a division between on the one hand children of which the parents do work and earn a bit more, another social economic class, and on the other hand toddler play rooms, where there are often children with language problems or children of parents who do not work. At a certain moment the awareness rises like hey, that is a bit odd, shouldn't we take that closer to each other?¹⁰

A dichotomy of different motivations of parents within the use of toddler play rooms is also recognized by the former president of the parent representative council of KION:

Yes, there were clearly two types of toddler play rooms. You had toddler play rooms where parents were obliged to put their child

⁹ Former president Umbrella Parent Council of KION

¹⁰ Policy advisor child care

on. Because the child had an indication, because it had a language disadvantage. So they actually were sent there. The parents had often especially in the beginning something like does it really have to, eventually getting very enthusiastic and that it was really needed for the children. [...] And there were the 'regular' toddler play rooms where just a pedagogical program was available. And there were a lot more parents who or worked alone and thought it would be good for their kid..." ... "We investigated whether there were people making use of both forms, well those could really be counted on two hands. Those who used day care as well as toddler play room. There were really just a few. And those parents we also questioned and they did that, they brought their kid indeed to the day care because of the care. And yes they let the child during that care day go to the toddler play room, to get more self-actualization for the child."¹¹

The second topic was about the call for more market competition within the field of toddler play rooms, with the liberal party VVD as biggest proponent. For the municipality however, it was difficult to suddenly stop the long-lasting relationship with KION. In 2007, without public tendering, an agreement between the municipality and KION for providing toddler play rooms was made. The VVD argued, along with the PvdA, that, in the eight years that the market for day care services has been opened, some high-quality alternatives have been opened, and they should have been asked for tendering for the agreement. The Alderman defended this choice by pointing at the years of expertise within KION's organisation and its valuable position within the network of childcare for toddlers, e.g. in the provision of language programs. The SP worried about jeopardising an excellent situation that had been developed in collaboration with KION. They feared cheap childcare at the expense of quality on the one hand, and a loss of control on the other hand. The Alderman summarised the discussion as follows:

"I too think that [the expertise developed by KION] should be protected, because we want quality. On the other side, a balance should be found because there are new parties on the market who also deliver a qualitatively good supply and who should get the chance to, if schools would like to, play a role, in childcare but also in broad schools, if it is up to me."

In 2010, the municipality decided to harmonize toddler play rooms with day care (, but all existing toddler play rooms would still be carried out by KION, at least for the first year(s), in order to get used to the new position of toddler play rooms. However, this decision led to heavy reactions on the part of the VVD, who had close bonds with private providers who wanted to compete with KION. They (and in less degree GL too) argued that KION would get a huge advantage on the market, since 34 toddler play rooms would be converted to day care arrangements. In order to prevent a political crisis, the Alderman had to comply with the complaints and the policy had to be completely redeveloped. This time, the municipality involved not only KION, but also other providers, and parents in the formulation of the new policy.

Still, for now, KION remains the biggest organisation providing toddler arrangements. The former president of the parent council of KION noticed that might hold back innovation:

¹¹ Former president Umbrella Parent Council of KION

[...] the disadvantage is that KION has got it [the exploitation of toddler play rooms] for the biggest part, that they then just maintain the two systems next to each other. Because that is easy for the use of it. And that does not do good for innovation, because that is not really there actually. [...] That [assuring quality of child care] is difficult to gain and set up when you are completely new. Then you will have to experiment a lot and that KION did not need anymore.¹²

Rather independently from the discussion about toddler play rooms and marketisation, the development of so-called ‘broad schools’ or ‘integral child centers’ has had implications for the role of child care within the system of education. Albeit a national trend, Nijmegen was relatively early in providing child care close to, or preferably within, primary schools - and wants to continue being a ‘frontrunner’ in this area. This clearly shows how the municipality thinks of the role of child care. Child care is perceived as a means for child development and to prepare children for primary school. The fact that the Alderman responsible for child care carries also the responsibility for education reflects the perspective on child care.

From of the viewpoint of the development of children. And less from the labour market principle. [...] I look at it from the viewpoint of education, regarding the development of integral child centers, where you have daily arrangements which serve parents for the care of their children from, say, 7 in the morning until 7 in the evening. And they have - that would be ideal - just one central contact, whether it is about day care, toddler arrangements or out-of-school care, between-school care, or just primary school, that should not matter. You will just have one contact.¹³

This also includes giving extra help to children with disadvantages at an early stage through the use of ‘early educational programs’ (*voor- en vroegschoolse educatie*, or VVE, see country report The Netherlands) - aimed at mainly but not exclusively children with an ethnic background. The underlying idea is that no children have any disadvantages when they enter primary school. If it would be up to the Alderman, the integral child centers would over time end up into a basic provision for all children, so that there would be a very low threshold for parents to make use of child care facilities. This will remain something of the future, although Nijmegen is involved in a lobby with other municipalities to convince national government of the need for such a change.

2.3. Housing and urban planning

The main debate in the field of housing is about social housing allocation policy and its relation with the segregation of minorities and/or low-income households.

In 2002, D66 complained that the emphasis in the municipal programme was too much on affordable housing - something that they thought heightened the risk that Nijmegen would lose high-income households to other municipalities. A few years later, D66 again criticised the choice of the College to focus on low incomes, as middle-income households struggled in finding housing too. Nevertheless, the Alderman of housing (PvdA) stated in a council meeting that this choice was the right one because

¹² Former president Umbrella Parent Council of KION

¹³ Alderman of Education

if the current rental policy and the policy of some housing corporations continues, it only gets harder for those groups to get a decent roof over their heads in Nijmegen, in all places in Nijmegen, in all neighbourhoods in Nijmegen. Otherwise, there are just a few neighbourhoods accessible for people with low incomes. That is not the policy we are in favour of as the municipal executive board.

The SP - which has always been the party to advocate most for affordable social housing in the city - reacted to this statement from the Alderman, and asked if the Alderman was willing to change the housing allocation system in order to stimulate mixed neighbourhoods. Since 2002, only an applicant's place on the waiting list (derived from the moment of registration as a starter, or duration of rent as a tenant) was used to allocate social housing. In 2004, the Socialist party (SP) argued that income had to be a part of the allocation policy (as it had been before). The Alderman (PvdA) was not sure that a change in the housing policy would lead to less segregation. For him, freedom of choice was always a leading principle in this discussion. Yet, he admitted that to reach the goal of the College - i.e. more variety in neighbourhoods - perhaps this principle should be set aside. As he explained, "too much changes in the world, too much changes in Nijmegen to hold on to old dogma's". The SP thought that housing corporations in Nijmegen did too little to prevent segregation, but that the municipality needed to do more as well. GL agreed something had to change and wanted to discuss with the housing corporations how to realise this. Actually, only the VVD opposed using income as a selection criterion for housing allocation, because it would have been in opposition to their liberal principle. In the course of 2005, the allocation policy was effectively changed: housing corporations were allowed to use income as a selection criterion.

Sometimes, politicians appeared to be uncertain whether they should be talking about segregation in terms of "income, poverty, health, and education, regardless of colour", or whether they should be talking about segregation of ethnic minorities. This was partly due to signals that were given by citizens themselves, who said that they liked to live together. As an inhabitant of Nijmegen put it, "it has nothing to do with black or white. It's all about money. If you are black or white and you have little to spend, than you're restricted to particular neighbourhoods with cheap rentals." The Alderman (GL) stated: "Those Antilleans said to me: let Meijhorst [a neighbourhood] be Meijhorst. The fact that we live together has positive sides too. Particularly when it comes to care giving. There are also social connections within those groups who need each other nearness."

For the SP however, it is about ethnicity too:

[...] we live in a society and within that society we don't live apart, but together, mixed. I do understand if someone lives close to his or her mother and needs good care at home, it is very good if children live near their parents and can provide good care, we should do that, but it doesn't mean immediately that all Antilleans, Turks or Moroccans should live in the same neighbourhoods. I would like to see them all over the city. Not forced, but give them the possibility to live everywhere in the city. By the way, those people would like to live apart. They would like to live in mixed neighbourhoods.

Moreover, the Alderman defended her position by noting that "concentrations of migrants could also have a positive side, because instruments for integration could be employed

more targeted”. For a short period, the College considered appointing houses on the basis of ethnicity. The City Party ‘Nijmegen Nu!’ opposed this plan:

It is a question of income and work. Moreover, if that [income and work] is properly arranged, then you will get integration, then people will go mixing, and if that is properly arranged and people would like to live together, I don't care if 1.000 Moroccans live together or not. If they choose to do so, then they choose for that, I don't have anything to say about that.

In recent years, the SP has been particularly negative about the role of housing corporations (and real estate developers) and has expressed concerns about the fact that, because of all the changes in the sector (see Country Report Netherlands), housing corporations have too much power, as shown by the following quote: “[...] 120 dwellings for people with low incomes in favourable neighbourhoods of the 500 that are built, then I think, yeah, I'm completely stunned and I think, who has the say here in the city, the housing corporations or do we have it?”. Generally, the SP underlined that housing corporations have been more concerned with their financial budgets than with their social goals: “With some corporations you can make agreements, but it won't be easy since they often look at their own wallet”. The SP even stated in 2008 that if housing corporations did not want to cooperate, the municipality should take over the implementation of housing allocation. GL also agreed that housing corporations appeared to be unwilling to actively combat segregation, and they were disappointed that housing corporations did not take responsibility. The PvdA noticed the rigid attitude of housing corporations too: in a public meeting, they had heard a director of a housing corporation say that “the corporations know what good is for the city”, neglecting the role of the municipality.

Indeed, housing corporations expressed heavy doubts about interfering with the allocation system. One corporation argued that the “active segregation policy is worse as means than the problem. [...] A government that opposes her will to her citizens is in our view wrong. We acknowledge there are problems, but our starting point is equity and freedom of choice. Whether people are white or black, everyone should be able to decide to live where he or she wants to.”

Housing corporations claimed that the municipality has other means to realise a more even distribution of low-income households in the city. Three directors of important housing corporations in Nijmegen argued in a letter in 2005 that a diverse housing stock is the best strategy. Housing corporation *Standvast Vrouwen* maintained in 2008 that “offering chances to people such as a job or a good education is the most successful solution”. There was thus a clear disagreement about whether housing corporations are responsible for (combating) segregation or whether the municipality should use housing allocation policy as an instrument to prevent segregation.

Nevertheless, housing corporations appeared to be willing to experiment with new forms of housing allocation, though experiments described in the local press seem to deal more with freedom of choice and personalisation of housing than with tackling segregation. Housing corporations also introduced ideas that would make buying houses more attractive. The PvdA has been in favour of incentives for homeownership - for instance, a PvdA council member argued for collective commissioning by groups of tenants to improve the freedom of choice, participation, and connectedness with the neighbourhood. The VVD too is generally positive about projects that make it easier for lower incomes to buy a house.

In 2007, the Alderman (GL) pointed out that, particularly in the neighbourhoods where the concentration of migrants is the highest, the most interesting and promising bottom-up initiatives that contribute to integration and social cohesion have been developed. According to the Alderman, it is the task of the municipality to embrace and support these initiatives. This brings up another discussion that can be found in the council minutes, albeit somewhat more on the background, which is about the participation of residents in the neighbourhood. The PvdA, GL and also CDA would like to see “more involvement of residents in the neighbourhood to make people participate more in what happens in a neighbourhood to be together responsible for those things that happen.” In 2006, the PvdA discussed ‘neighbourhood experiments’, of which they said two things are particularly important, namely “that residents need to determine what happens in the neighbourhood and that it is extremely difficult for residents to get something done in this city”. The chief editor of RTV Nijmegen notices:

You see that there is a trend that continues that even a municipality is looking at more locally. Not centrally, like we solve it in town hall, but going to the neighbourhood. [...] But also appealing to the citizen in that neighbourhood. Like how can you do something with this [problem]. And then the steering is from the municipality, from town hall, but they do look out to citizens in the neighbourhood, ‘it is your neighbourhood, how can you do this’.¹⁴

CONCLUSION

As in other Dutch municipalities, local policies are strongly influenced by national policies and trends. An analysis of the local policy orientation must therefore be necessarily ambivalent. The empirical material (the analyses of council minutes and newspaper articles, as well as the interviews) suggest that the sectorial references and values in the different local policy fields are on the whole consistent with the general values and discourse of the local welfare system. Specifically, the ideas of an ‘undivided city’ and of providing equal opportunities for everybody remain central in the traditionally left-leaning city: regardless of people’s background or socio-economic status, all residents should have the chance to enjoy a fulfilling job, a decent housing situation, and sufficient access to childcare services. It has led to a prominent role for social policy in local politics. At the same time, the more specific developments within policy fields are to a large extent driven by broader trends in markets and national policies. Such trends have been incorporated into the local discourse, adding a local flavour while staying within the mainstream.

An example is that the municipality aims to provide residents with equal opportunities in all three of the policy fields, while simultaneously encouraging higher levels of participation. Therefore a common trend in ‘innovative’ solutions is a progressive shift from more ‘paternalistic’ to more ‘empowering’ forms of welfare provision -hardly specific to Nijmegen, but encapsulated within the dominant discourse of equality and solidarity. Several of the interviewees made statements similar to the following: “By caring a lot for society, by taking care of a lot of things, we took away the initiative and the strength of residents to solve issues amongst each other. Now we are striving to get people who have more capacities to help those who have less.”¹⁵

¹⁴

¹⁵ District manager

This comes back in all the fields. When it comes to employment, for instance, the Alderman for Work & Income stated that:

To the unemployed job-seeker we say: ‘we want to invest in your talents. But you also have to show that you are motivated to get a job again. We are not going to tell you to go there and there, so to speak, for working experience. We create a lot of possibilities, and these will be offered to you, and you can go and have a talk, and you can do your own research, but we do expect you to make that step at some point. We do not accept that you stay on the side-line the whole time.’¹⁶

Overall, it appears that the ‘pampering’ attitude of civil servants and social workers typical of much of the welfare provisions during the last couple of decades now tends to give way to openness to self-determination - welfare services are still offered to those who need them, but users of these services should be more in control of the situation. Instead of relying on civil servants and social workers to take care of everything, residents are supposed to take matters more in their own hands again:

Not so long ago we were looking at what we could do for a client, and we would literally take them by the hand, help them fill in the forms, go with them to the UWV, prepare them for examinations, go with them to hearings, etc. Now we are focusing on self-determination (‘zelfregie’). That’s a very nice word, much like empowerment. From our own experience we realised that, even though you may be hindered and something may have happened to you that you didn’t want to happen, you tend to forget that you still possess certain qualities. [...] Well, we focus on that, empowerment and self-determination. [...] Looking at what people can do, and making use of that, that is our starting point. Not because we are listening to the government, but because we ourselves think that is important.’¹⁷

Still, despite the insistence that the trend towards participation is locally driven, and this does indeed appear to be partly the case, it is also in line with developments in other cities. This again shows the intricate intermeshing of organisational, local and national influences. Innovations effectively originate at all these levels.

Another common trend observed in the three policy fields was that different actors are increasingly collaborating with each other in the attempt to bring many separate policies together into a single, more coherent framework. For instance, in the reintegration of the unemployed into the labour market, the municipality is increasingly collaborating with educational facilities and other third sector organisations, but also with private organisations. Again, here one can observe national drivers of the trends. Closer cooperation between different actors engaged in the provision of welfare services has been encouraged by cutbacks and the need to pool resources. Also, during the last couple of decades, so many organisations had been set up that there was a lot of overlap between the services provided by all of these different actors, and thus also a large measure of inefficiency.

¹⁶ Alderman Work & Income

¹⁷ Director of the Association for Social Security

A third trend is for welfare arrangements to specifically focus at the neighbourhood level and for civil servants and social workers to be operating closer to the street level. The trend towards neighbourhood-level interventions has likewise been fashionable in public policy, while at the same time reflecting local concerns.

The effects of these innovations has been to ambivalent, leading both to moderate resistance and gradual change. In a municipality where the prevailing discourse favours 'taking care of the weak', and where powerful welfare organisations concerned with such a mission are deeply rooted within the city, it takes time before current modes of operating can fundamentally change. This could be visibly observed, for instance, in the field of child care, where the major role of KION could be an obstacle for innovative solutions. As a municipal researcher put it:

I think it might take a bit more energy in Nijmegen, because Nijmegen has a lot of policies and organisations. That is not meant negatively, but that it always has been taken care of you. Maybe it is because of that that the amount of organisations and regulations is a bit too much, maybe became a bit too big, or at least a bit cluttered, with the risk that it is not effective and I have the idea it isn't at various points. Yet it is of great value that as a city you try to protect the weaker ones. Another element is that you have to take care that you do not go pampering or that people start taking advantage of you, those are all things that can happen.¹⁸

Simultaneously, innovations are gradually affecting the discourse of an 'undivided city' in which the values of equality, solidarity and responsibility are upheld. While at the core this conviction remains firms, its expressions change, in part because of external influences, in part because of the experience that funding all sorts of welfare programs and organisations may not be enough. In spite of the prominence of social policy, it remains in many respects a divided city. The editor of the regional newspaper 'de Gelderlander' wraps it up nicely by saying that: "Maybe those who talk about an 'undivided city' are more Catholic than they think, because it's the idea that 'I am doing something good'. And there is nothing wrong with that, that you think that, because maybe you are. But the point is to sometimes think critically about yourself and ask yourself whether this is indeed the right way to go."

¹⁸ Researcher Municipality of Nijmegen

3. APPENDIX

4. SUMMARIES OF PARTY PROGRAMMES (2002, 2006, 2010)

GroenLinks (GL)

2002-2006

In 2002, GL feels the municipality has have the option to influence housing corporations to build enough cheap rentals, because the amount of people in Nijmegen that is in need of affordable housing stays relatively high. Liveability in neighbourhoods is also an important aspect. This means that “people take others into account and that is why it is so important people know each other”. Therefore, GL wants to stimulate contacts between people and provide the necessary facilities in all neighbourhoods, such as neighbourhood festivals and sport events. Residents organisations should expect much cooperation from the municipality when they contribute to improve the neighbourhood. GL also would like to give more say to residents about the use of financial means, and residents’ initiatives should be granted as much as possible. The programme also promotes the positive function of neighbourhood centres and would like to expand these centres, reversing current cutbacks. Finally, a diverse population in neighbourhoods should be achieved by building various types of dwellings.

GL would like to continue supporting low income households and jobless inhabitants, “because in a united Nijmegen, nobody sits on the side-lines”. Therefore, the municipality has to do more to create jobs for disadvantaged groups. GL also would like to stop the trend of more flexible and temporary contracts, although it is not very clear how they want to achieve this. Jobseekers should be given more responsibility by giving them a ‘personal budget’, in order to leave the choice for an educational programme to the jobseeker. Furthermore, the position of people who are working with a subsidised salary have to be improved, by increasing their income and giving more options for education. “In the social employment sector people are working increasingly under pressure of the labour market. Moreover, the sector has to produce more of its income itself. Economic performance appears to supersede the social goals. GreenLeft wants to hold on to that special provision of protected labour for people who have no real access to the labour market. And that goal may cost something!” People who do societal relevant work, such as volunteering or taking care for children or elderly should be exempted from the obligation to apply on vacancies.

Childcare is regarded as an important precondition for women and men to be able to work, study or participate to other activities. That is why GL wants to provide more places in childcare for groups with disadvantages, particularly for single parents and migrants¹⁹. Childcare should be available from 8 am until 8 pm. The municipality should inform migrants about childcare possibilities, and she also has to contribute to a better spreading of childcare provision among neighbourhoods. Suggestions include increasing the amount of subsidised jobs in childcare and actively educating migrants who want to work in childcare. There should be more attention to quality too, which means more inspections by the municipal health care service.

¹⁹ Persons of which at least one of the parents is born abroad.

More in general, GL would like to see that the municipality really listens to citizens and organisations, and that the ideas and desires actually form the basis for decision making. The party wants deliberation much earlier in the process, when politics have not talked about directions yet. Involvement of citizens can be increased by giving organisations more decentralised responsibility, for example by giving budgets directly to citizens.

Lastly, GL is sceptical about privatising and agencification, because the experience with external providers is not always positive. Therefore, GL would like the municipality to be less dependent on and more powerful towards these parties.

2006-2010

In the introduction of the party programme in 2006, named *United city in a green environment*, the most important goal of the party is mentioned: to reduce the societal dichotomy and give support to disadvantaged people. The main solutions that are proposed in the introduction are: more affordable housing, prevention of black or white neighbourhoods and schools, and more involvement of residents with their neighbourhood. Surprisingly, the latter standpoint is not reflected in any practical suggestions in the programme. In general, the field of housing plays a smaller role than in the previous programme. GL is against forced spreading of people over schools or neighbourhoods, but would like to prevent 'ghetto's' through diversification of the housing stock. Only in neighbourhoods where because of the current housing allocation system the liveability becomes under pressure, the municipality can use different rules temporarily. When neighbourhoods are being restructured, the amount of social housing should be at least as high as the original quantity. This follows the idea that "varied housing improves the variety of residents in the neighbourhood". With the current housing allocation system, they mean the system introduced in 2002, when only a house seekers' place on the waiting list (derived from the moment of registration as a starter, or duration of rent as a tenant) became the criterion to give out social housing.

On the field of unemployment, the programme says jobseekers with high chances on work deserve intense guidance. Also, GL thinks unpaid work is essential for a social city based on solidarity. The party wants to keep subsidised labour regardless of cutbacks from national government. The municipality has to create so-called 'participation jobs' for people who have no realistic opportunities to get back to the regular labour market. These are real jobs with a salary and pension rights. Reemployment services should only be used when effective. GL doubts if the private sector should continue to play a role here. The private sector can help though, by realising - in collaboration with schools - enough learning programmes for school leavers and drop outs.

2010-2014

Green works in Nijmegen is the title of the party programme in 2010. The programme describes a vision of the future of the city in 2018. GL would like to see that people who are unable to take part in the regular labour market, have a subsidised job or contribute one way or another to the society, for example by volunteering. Youngsters under 30 should be offered an educational programme or work. The municipality creates programmes for youngsters, but companies are stimulated to offer programmes as well. Their stance on subsidised labour has not changed: keep those jobs for people who are distant from the labour market, and provide education and guidance if outflow to regular jobs is possible. "Greenleft emphasises the possibilities of individuals. Everybody should be able to develop themselves optimally. Therefore, 'personalised education' is introduced. In the coming period, social assistance beneficiaries have the right on an education which leads them directly to a job." Companies who carry out work for the municipality or

organisations who receive high amounts of subsidy, are asked to make a ‘social return’ possible, in the form of jobs for jobseekers or educational programmes.

Again, GL’s ambition is that “real black or white neighbourhoods do not exist anymore in the city.” Therefore, they propose to allocate houses in rich neighbourhoods to low income households, and to build affordable houses in high income areas and vice versa. 40 percent of all to be build houses should be social housing.

Labour Party (PvdA)

2002-2006

The party programme of the PvdA in 2002 is called *A future for everybody*. In the introduction, they say:

“We would like a city where we can build together the future of the city of Nijmegen. A future where, if it is up to us, everybody is of value and nobody is excluded. [...] Citizens must be more involved with their own surroundings, their neighbourhood, school, care. [...] The PvdA would like a social, strong, tolerant and creative city where everybody gets optimal chances to develop his or her talents, where nobody is left behind, where for everybody is room and where can be lived and enjoyed to the fullest.” It is clear the party feels inclusion of every individual in society is an important value.

As a solution for dealing with unemployment, the PvdA would like to see a better connection between the private sector, education, social partners and the municipality in the form of Dutch corporatism (see Country Report Netherlands) to increase the success of reemployment for job-seekers. Yet, for the PvdA, stimulating benefit receivers does not necessarily have to lead to regular employment. “It’s about searching, strengthening and using talents”, they argue. The party would like to improve the situation of people in social assistance who have no realistic chance on the labour market.

According to the PvdA, the provision of childcare, day care as well as toddler play rooms, should be increased, again pointing at the idea that everybody should be given chances to participate in society: “For everyone who needs childcare, childcare should be available within three months. Expansion of childcare facilities is also needed to make it possible for parents and care-givers to combine work and care, but especially to increase the personal development of the child. For all children, to give everybody the chance to discover and develop his talents. Parents are allowed by the PvdA to get more involved with the programmes of the toddler play rooms and with the (pedagogical) policy of the childcare provider.”

Furthermore, the PvdA thinks it is important for the city to have enough affordable housing. They would like special attention for middle-incomes, a ‘forgotten’ group. Involvement of residents is essential for PvdA, too: “We can only achieve success if residents cooperate. That is why PvdA thinks it is so important that residents who do extra efforts get support from the municipality. Participation has to pay off. The municipality has to make plans together with the housing corporations and residents.”

2006-2010

In 2006, the party programme announces *Chances for everybody*, even more explicating their fundamental principle than the previous programme. They explain the title as follows: “We would like a city where everybody has the chance to make something of his live. A city where youngsters and elderly can find a proper home. Where people who do

not have a job get supported actively with finding a proper job. A city where residents are being addressed to make something of their live.”

The PvdA would like to see that everybody has a job and an income: “For the PvdA, the standpoint is that every inhabitant of Nijmegen has the right to work. We do not accept that people who can work sit at home. If there are not enough regular jobs available, it is the task of the municipality to create work. There is enough work to do in the municipality: think of work in neighbourhoods, playgrounds, schools and health care. The basis is that everybody gets offered a (subsidised) job or the chance to do an educational programme.” Here, it is believed that the cooperation from the private sector is necessary.

Segregation is mentioned as a big problem. The PvdA feels that “the municipality has to take, together with housing corporations, schools and sport organisations, concrete measures to stop segregation. [...] A joint approach is necessary to keep Nijmegen an undivided city.” The housing allocation system has to be adapted for several neighbourhoods. Also, possibilities for participation of migrants have to be made easier. Related to this is the need for more affordable housing. The PvdA pleads it should be assured that neighbourhoods are diverse. Thus, cheap houses should be spread over the city. In order to prevent the development of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the party also desires the active participation of residents. They propose the development of ‘meeting areas’ in every neighbourhood.

2010-2014

Nijmegen works says the title of the programme in 2010. The general tendency does not change in comparison to the last two programmes: “Because of our ambition to give every inhabitant of Nijmegen equal chances, we consciously do not make a distinction between autochthones and migrants. Not because we do not see the disadvantages that many new Nijmegenaren [inhabitants of Nijmegen] have. But because we feel that to combat these disadvantages the distinction between native residents and migrants is not relevant. For all Nijmegenaren the same rules apply and especially for all Nijmegenaren with less chances there must be support available.” Yet, in this programme the responsibility of citizens is also emphasised: “A decent society arises when freedom, solidarity and responsibility come together.” These three words should provide a framework for the choices of the PvdA for the coming years.

This time, it is even more clear that for the PvdA, “participating in society starts with work”. They see work as the most important factor for social contacts, the realisation of ideas, chances for emancipation, and integration of ‘new Nijmegenaren’. To prevent increases in unemployment, they argue that the good cooperation between government, education and the private sector, which has led to a decrease in beneficiaries of social assistance, should be continued. Also, the municipality has to keep investing in subsidised labour, “for example through the development of work corporations: organisations who set goals to create extra work, after the example of Foundation Dagloon”.

When it comes to housing, the PvdA says the housing market is under pressure which means that there should be enough high quality and affordable houses. Again, spreading of different types of housing is proposed too, which has been reached by making performance agreements with housing corporation recently - “crucial for our ideal of diverse neighbourhoods”. The system of housing allocation is “no longer maintainable”, it is argued. Therefore, housing should be allocated to special target groups. The party is also in favour of using unconventional measures herself, to keep up the production of new houses, such as loans for starters, and more room for collectively commissioned housing.

The PvdA would like to support residents to build “closer, social tissue in the neighbourhood. Doing things together, facilities, more say for residents and more attention for the liveability of neighbourhoods.” Therefore, they appeal for structural support of tenants organisations.

Socialist Party (SP)

2002-2006

In 2002, the party programme of SP is called *Give Nijmegen back to the people*, which indicates a concern that there are too many things in the municipality where citizens do not have control over anymore. SP notices the municipality does try to listen to citizens, but too often nothing is done with this information. Therefore, the party pleads for more voice and control for citizens, especially on the neighbourhood level. As solutions house-to-house surveys and conversations in the neighbourhoods are proposed, to identify the most important needs of citizens, in order to meet these needs as good as possible. The programme also would like to see the introduction of an Alderman of neighbourhood issues. Furthermore, referenda should be taken more serious and there should be more possibilities for citizens to start a referendum.

The SP argues that local employment policies are per definition largely ineffective, because the amount of jobs available is largely dependent on the economic development in the Netherlands, and, moreover, the labour market is characterised rather as regionally than as locally. They would like to make it more attractive for the private sector to settle in Nijmegen, but oppose ‘subsidising’ - as they call an agreement between Philips and the municipality to maintain infrastructure in exchange for expansion of the company - companies to grow in Nijmegen. The party also would like to invest in ‘neighbourhood economy’ - support entrepreneurs and markets in the neighbourhood.

The SP feels that “subsidised labour deserves better”. As a survey among subsidised workers shows, people consider the financial compensation they get too low. The investment in education and guidance is also too less. Thus, the SP concludes “ID’ers [subsidised employees] are working, but not out of poverty. Rather, it is subsidised exploitation”. Therefore, they propose to give current subsidised employees a regular contract with regular conditions and expand the possibilities for education and guidance.

When it comes to housing, the SP criticises the fact that the social housing sector is a free market since several years, saying that it lead to an increase in rental prices and less availability for affordable housing. Thus, the SP is in favour of increasing the stock of affordable housing. They do not trust the housing corporations to cooperate in this goal voluntarily, so the municipality has to make ‘stricter’ deals with them. Furthermore, the free allocation of housing is according to the SP disastrous for low incomes. They want income to become yet again a criterion in the housing allocation system, as it used to be. This will also be an effective instrument in preventing segregation, the party thinks.

2006-2010

The title of the SP party programme in 2006 is *Neighbourhoods central, social city*. Two main concerns are made explicit: the shortage of housing for starters and low income households, and the increasing youth unemployment. For the former problem, again the party suggest to build more affordable housing. Still it is thought that housing corporations do not comply with their social goals. Therefore, SP would like to make “strict performance agreements with housing corporations about the expected rental policy.

Social rental policies will be rewarded by involving a housing corporation in new construction projects. Is the rental policy antisocial, this housing corporation will not be able to do business in Nijmegen.”

For the latter problem, a better relation between education and the labour market is seen as a necessary improvement. The private sector is asked to provide enough work-learn programmes for students and drop-outs. The SP would like to provide work for everybody, “to start with for all youngsters”. Private reemployment companies are not the solution. Therefore there is, according to the SP, “all reasons to take the reemployment instruments in our own hands again”. For all youngsters until 27 years of age a job or an educational programme must be guaranteed, which also implies a ‘duty to work’ for the ones who are able to work. “Together with the private sector and educational institutes agreements are made to make this guarantee indeed possible. The million Euros wasting private reemployment companies will be set aside. [...] Beneficiaries can take upon their own reintegration programmes. Indeed, if people are more motivated to work, the chance on success is higher.” The programme also proposes if the municipality contracts out work, the municipality can make demands for the external party to provide work for job-seekers.

Again, the SP would like to see the retrenchments on subsidised labour to stop, and would like to increase the wages of people in the current schemes. Also, changing the housing allocation policy by including income as a criterion is a recurrent theme. The prevention of segregation is very important for the SP: “Nijmegen is under the threat to become divided in neighbourhoods where it goes well and neighbourhoods which turn into disadvantaged places. In the latter areas a high concentration of problems exists, such as a lowly educated population with low incomes, a high unemployment rate and little chances on the labour market. The liveability in those neighbourhoods is under heavy pressure so that everybody who is somewhat better off leaves as soon as possible. Besides, in the same neighbourhoods often live underprivileged migrants who also have a language and integration problem. A big majority of the population agrees with the wish for an undivided city. That also applies for Turks and Moroccans. They too would like to live in a mixed neighbourhood and would like their children to go to a mixed school. The only problem is that disadvantaged citizens do not get the chance on the housing market to get into wanted ‘white’ neighbourhoods.”

The SP thinks the involvement of citizens in their own neighbourhood can still be better. They propose the following measures: “The municipality has to everything to assure in every neighbourhood a residential platform or active neighbourhood committee is present. Youngsters and migrants are too often not involved in things that concern the neighbourhood. The municipality is going to reach these groups actively to make sure they contribute positively to a liveable and social neighbourhood. Residents will be involved earlier, more and better in plans in their neighbourhood. Before official deliberation procedures start, residents have to be able to say something about big interventions in their neighbourhood. Big decisions have to be taken together with residents, if needed through a neighbourhood referendum. The municipality has to ask residents about their opinion on important decisions more often. On the basis of reactions decisions will be adapted if needed.”

2010-2014

Build further our social city is the SP programme called in 2010. They feel they have accomplished a lot of their goals in the past eight years. Still, the SP wants to increase the stock of affordable housing once more. They also would like the allocation of housing to be more personalised, e.g. considering the size of household in relation to the amount of bedrooms. SP writes that in the past years, agreements with housing corporations have

been made to prevent segregation and they would like to continue this policy. When it comes to work, once again SP expresses the desire to protect people in subsidised labour by making their jobs regular. The aspiration “work for everybody, to start with for youngsters” has not been changed. The involvement of the private sector and educational institutions is emphasised equally. Furthermore, it is believed that the resident can still be put more central. This means that residents have to be informed at all times what happens with their input and the wish for an active neighbourhood committee in every neighbourhood is repeated. The wish for more house-to-house surveys is again desired.

5. SUMMARIES OF COUNCIL MINUTES, 2002-2011

Table 3 - Summaries of council minute discussions on unemployment

| # | Date | Summary |
|----|-----------|--|
| 1 | 30/1/2002 | D66, together with GL and SP, argues if Nijmegen loses particular industrial areas, the municipality has to arrange job possibilities for lowly educated elsewhere. |
| 2 | 13/3/2002 | The PvdA thinks the municipality has to pay extra attention to people in weak positions, especially those who are in subsidised jobs. The SP feels the city could do a lot more to protect the group of subsidised workers. In accordance with the party programme, they actually would like to get rid of subsidised jobs by converting subsidised jobs into regular jobs and heighten the income of the workers. Furthermore, they doubt the effectiveness of 'social activation': "if you say on the one hand that 5.000 people barely have access to the labour market, and then put them in a Social Activations plan, it occurs to me that we are able to spend lots and lots of money on this." GL thinks the ambitions of the social activation plans are too low. |
| 3 | 3/7/2002 | The liberal parties D66 and VVD would like to see that the city does more effort to attract large companies with unskilled, manual labour in order to provide work for current subsidised workers, but they do not get support from other parties. |
| 4 | 25/9/2002 | A proposal to make a statement in local media to show the commitment to subsidised labour in the city, and thus protesting against plans of national government, is accepted by PvdA, GL, D66 and a small local party and passes the council. |
| 5 | 16/4/2003 | The PvdA makes it clear that they do not wish to exclude anyone when it comes to providing people a chance to work. "We sometimes get the impression, if this College talks about not reintegrating 4.000 people, because they are very hard to reemploy. We absolutely refuse to support that [vision]. It can't be, it may not be, to offer people no chances." |
| 6 | 14/5/2003 | The SP feels that subsidised workers are of high value for the social infrastructure of the city - many people in the scheme work in childcare, education or health care - and should be rewarded for this. The PvdA agrees with this position, but also points at the reemployment function of the instrument, while the VVD thinks these two are not interrelated and should be treated separately. |
| 7 | 17/4/2004 | The SP is satisfied that the choice has been made to focus reemployment on people with higher chances on regular jobs. In this respect, they would like to emphasise the situation of youngsters. They say that "we always maintained that we should focus on people who can and are willing to (...) but also on people of whom we think they should." On the other side, they think that next to a obligation to work, there should be a right to work too, and if not for everybody this right can be fulfilled (e.g. because of care giving, volunteering) "people shouldn't be frustrated by asking them the impossible". |
| 8 | 14/7/2004 | The Alderman (PvdA) announces they have agreed that everyone without a job under 23 year gets a work-experience job, stating that "nobody will be sitting on the sidelines". |
| 9 | 16/3/2005 | It is clear that private reemployment companies are not able to realise the degree of outflow the municipality was hoping for. The PvdA therefore says that the municipality has to be very careful in contracting reemployment companies, but does not oppose the very fact of contracting private companies. |
| 10 | 11/5/2005 | The PvdA states that "we finally should get rid of the taboo on working just on benefits [without a salary]. Work is essential for the development of an individual and for the development and livability of the city." |
| 11 | 8/6/2005 | In general, the SP is glad that entrepreneurs would like to join efforts for reemployment, but they stumble on the fact that nobody speaks of obligations on the part of the employers: "it looks like a new slave market will be opened, like here you have some people, just take them". The SP draws a clear line between the SP and the PvdA: "the PvdA puts itself clearly [...] as the comrade of the entrepreneurs. [...] We would like to put ourselves [...] as the comrades of the beneficiaries." |

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| 12 | 9/11/2005 | The SP objects contracting private reemployment companies. "We have to get rid of the reemployment companies quickly with all those nonsense programmes that are rolling there." They opt for executing reemployment programmes from within the municipality. Also when the municipality announces participation jobs as a replacement of the traditional subsidised jobs, the SP opposes an open bidding process - they would like a local, well-known organisation to carry out the programme - which in fact gets the support of the most parties in the council. |
| 13 | 21/12/2005 | D66 thinks subsidised labour is a good reemployment instrument, but no goal on its own. |
| 14 | 11/10/2006 | GL would like to see that small organisations in Nijmegen who are reliant on subsidised workers should be supported when these jobs come to an end, and they should be able to get people from a new developed alternative for subsidised labour. The VVD thinks that this particular new instrument, called 'participation jobs', is just a waste of money. The municipality spends too much money on 'keeping people in poverty', and too less on people who have a good chance to get back on the labour market. The PvdA opposes this view: "What would you like to do with these people? Do you want to say, just stay in the benefit scheme, you never have to do anything again, you'll receive a benefit every month and goodbye." The VVD responds, "For some people this will be the case, because you know just as well as I that some people will never participate on the labour market." PvdA: "We don't accept that, we would like to give those people a chance to participate as well." The Alderman (PvdA) argues that the instrument is for people with more distance to the labour market, and benefits participation as well as the social infrastructure of the city. |
| 15 | 28/2/2007 | Also for youngsters from ethnic minorities, education is regarded as one of the most important factors for getting them into the labour market ?? |
| 16 | 12/9/2007 | The SP states that "one of our goals is to get at least all youngsters under 27 a job and after that of course the somewhat older youngsters too, and after that all those other people who we would like to get to work too." |
| 17 | 18/3/2009 | The PvdA praises initiatives during the crisis to connect labour market and education as good as possible. They also call for much attention for youngsters (under 27) and would like to see that every youngster either works or is in education, what is underlined by the Alderman (also from PvdA). |
| 18 | 15/7/2009 | The Alderman (PvdA) says "you cannot deal with this economic crisis as a municipality alone, you desperately need the help of partners in the city". |
| 19 | 28/4/2010 | A council member of the small local party City Party Nijmegen Now! worries about unfair competition with freelancers. |
| 20 | 14/7/2010 | The PvdA thinks of the following scenario concerning work corporations: "The situation in three years has to be that somebody who is unemployed goes to the municipality and says: I would like to work, and that the municipality can say: that is possible, you can choose from the following possibilities." |
| 21 | 10/11/2010 | The SP is extremely disappointed in the new College, which agreed on to stop 75 percent of subsidised jobs, while they were in favour of subsidised jobs preceding the elections. D66 responds and says the money that will be saved through this measure much more people who are able to get back on the labour market can be supported. The SP is unconvinced about the effectiveness of reemployment strategy. |
| 22 | 29/6/2011 | The PvdA states that the municipality should not carry out reemployment services themselves, but cooperate with employers and educational institutes in the city. The SP is not convinced about the work corporations: "[work corporations are] old wine in new bottles. Therefore, the result of the work corporations is already known. In a few years, we have to conclude, unfortunately, that the work corporations are ineffective and inefficient too." They rather cut expenses on reemployment instruments and reserve money for subsidised labour. |

Table 4 - Summaries of council minute discussions on childcare

| # | Date | Summary |
|---|------------|--|
| 1 | 30/1/2002 | The SP challenges the idea that competition among childcare providers will lead to cost reduction. The SP argues that instead of price reduction, an increase in rates will be the consequence, and they fear a 'possible dichotomy' in childcare which they would like to prevent 'at any cost'. |
| 2 | 30/10/2002 | The VVD recalls the decision from the municipality to, in accordance with national policy to create a market structure and more competition, divide resources among more partners than KION alone. They oppose a tender where only KION is considered as possible party. The Alderman responsible for childcare admits more parties should have been included in the bidding. |
| 3 | 12/3/2003 | The VVD wonders if it is true that private childcare providers are told the municipality only does deals with KION. They plea for public tendering for several projects. |
| 4 | 11/6/2003 | Again, the VVD does not understand that only KION is considered in a contract with the municipality, and thinks other private childcare providers should have given the chance to compete in the bid. |
| 5 | 11/5/2005 | The Alderman (PvdA) explains that using competition among toddler play rooms is also connected to national developments on the day care sector - "one should not get two different systems". He states that he has a fairly amount of trust in market competition: "If you are just a bit of an entrepreneur, you go to the Waalsprong [a site with many new constructed houses] as a childcare provider." |
| 6 | 13/6/2007 | The VVD points out there are several new, private childcare providers in the city which perform very well. They wonder why the municipality does not consider these companies in a contract for toddler play rooms. The Alderman (GL) defends this choice pointing at the years of expertise within KION's organisation and its valuable position within the network of childcare for toddlers, e.g. in the provision of language programmes. |
| 7 | 30/6/2010 | It appears the municipality continues the cooperation with KION, again excluding other childcare organizations. Once more the VVD is the main opponent. But also parties on the left side of the political spectrum, the PvdA en GL, agree that "the monopoly position of KION has to come to an end". Increasing choice for parents, improving the quality of childcare and stimulating innovation are given as reasons for including other providers. Yet, the SP worries about throwing away an excellent situation that has been developed in collaboration with KION. They fear cheap childcare at the expense of quality at the one hand, and a loss of control at the other hand. Still, KION as an organisation is not regarded as offering bad quality. The development of so-called 'broad schools', in collaboration with KION, Tandem (a welfare organisation) and primary schools receives much praise. The Alderman summarises the discussion as follows: "I too think that [the expertise developed by KION] should be protected, because we want quality. On the other side, a balance should be found because there are new parties on the market who also deliver a qualitatively good supply and who should get the chance to, if schools would like to, play a role, in childcare but also in broad schools, if it is up to me." |

Table 5 - Summaries of council minute discussions on housing

| # | Date | Summary |
|---|------------|--|
| 1 | 24/4/2002 | D66 thinks there is too much emphasis on affordable housing. A good mix of expensive and cheap is essential, they say. They fear that high incomes will leave Nijmegen. |
| 2 | 13/11/2002 | SP argues that migrants do not want to live together and understand that living in concentrated neighbourhoods means disadvantages. SP challenges the freedom of residing where you want. |
| 3 | 14/7/2004 | The City Party Nijmegen Nu! opposes the plan of appointing houses on the basis of ethnicity: "It is a question of income and work. Moreover, if that [income and work] is properly arranged, then you will get integration, then people will go mixing, and if that is properly arranged and people would like to live together, I don't care if 1.000 Moroccans live together or not. If they choose to do so, then they choose for that, I don't have anything to say about that." |
| 4 | 20/10/2004 | PvdA is in favour of "more involvement of residents in the neighbourhood to make people participate more in what happens in a neighbourhood to be together responsible for those thing that happen" |
| 5 | 10/11/2004 | The Alderman of housing (PvdA) would like to give more attention to people with low incomes. "If the current rental policy and the policy of some housing corporations continues, it only gets harder for those groups to get a decent roof over their heads in Nijmegen in all places in Nijmegen, in all neighbourhoods in Nijmegen. Otherwise, there are just a few neighbourhoods accessible for people with low incomes. That is not the policy we are in favour of as the municipal executive board." The SP would like to hear from the Alderman that a housing allocation policy on the basis of income could prevent 'black' neighbourhoods. The Alderman is not so sure about that. Nevertheless, he is willing to set aside his principle freedom of choice, because as he says "too much changes in the world, too much changes in Nijmegen to hold on to old dogma's". The SP thinks the solution for preventing segregation is primarily in the hands of the housing corporations. As a government body, the SP feels that Nijmegen has the task to intervene in the current housing allocation policy, to be able to steer somewhat in the problem of a lack of affordable housing in certain areas. The PvdA supports this vision, only the VVD opposes intervening in the freedom of choice of residents. |
| 6 | 28/6/2006 | The PvdA discusses 'neighbourhoods experiments', of which they say two things are important, namely "that residents need to determine what happens in the neighbourhood and that it is extremely difficult for residents to get something done in this city" |
| 7 | 20/9/2006 | GL worries about the position of low incomes on the housing market. While now 20 percent of the housing stock can be allocated to certain target groups, they feel that it should be 30 percent. D66 and SP support this idea. D66 even says it would like to see that 100% of the housing stock gets personalised. |
| 8 | 8/11/2006 | SP thinks that increasing the amount of affordable housing will be a difficult task, because they need cooperation from housing corporations and real estate developers, and although there are still some housing corporations where deals can be made with, especially with the latter group it will be hard. They feel tougher agreements have to be made with developers, to assure they will build affordable housing. The Alderman of housing (GL) struggles with talking about spreading on the basis of income or ethnicity. She says: "Those Antilleans said to me: leave Meijhorst [a neighbourhood] Meijhorst. The fact that we live together has positive sides too. Particularly on the aspect of care giving. There are also social connections within those groups who need each other nearness." According to the PvdA it is about ethnicity too and it should be made explicit. |

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| 9 | 25/9/2007 | Although the concentration of immigrants seems to be rising, the Alderman of housing (GL) wants to emphasise some positive developments. She points out that, particularly in the neighbourhoods where the concentration of migrants is the highest, the most interesting and promising bottom-up initiatives which contribute to integration and social cohesion have been developed. It is the task of the municipality to embrace and support these initiatives, she maintains. SP is disappointed in what has been reached in two years time of a changed housing allocation policy. The party points the finger at the housing corporations in particular: “[...] 120 dwellings for people with low incomes in favourable neighbourhoods of the 500 that are built, then I think, yeah, I’m completely stunned and I think, who has the say here in the city, the housing corporations or do we have it?”. |
| 10 | 12/3/2008 | There is consternation about the housing corporations and their apparent unwillingness to cooperate with the municipality to combat segregation. GL, SP and D66 ask the Alderman clarity about the position of the housing corporation. The Alderman acknowledges that housing corporations do not share the same ambitions as the College. He also says there are little instruments available to do something about the segregation. |
| 11 | 13/5/2009 | The PvdA complains that in developing a report on the future of housing in Nijmegen, the inhabitants of Nijmegen are hardly involved. They have been informed, but they didn’t have anything to say about the report. In order to get mixed neighbourhoods, the party also suggests to look more at the neighbourhood level, because you need residents to achieve this goal. Furthermore, the PvdA is fairly negative about the housing corporations, who appear to have said “the corporations know what good is for the city”, neglecting the role of the municipality. The SP thinks residents cannot be easily involved in these kind of reports, because it is too general. Inhabitants are much more easier involved in local issues. The PvdA thinks that the SP underestimates residents, and thinks that the municipality should be more pro-active. |
| 12 | 18/11/2009 | D66 discusses the investment policies of housing corporations. The party argues that the municipality should set boundaries in which kind of projects corporations may invest or not. Furthermore, they propose a renting system, where the rental price of social housing increase or decreases according to changes in household income. |
| 13 | 14/11/2011 | Housing corporations have announced an increase in rental prices. D66 argues that housing corporations in Nijmegen should retrench on management in order to save money for social housing. Housing corporations should work more in collaboration. The PvdA notices that housing corporations have to deal with big cutbacks from national government and thinks it is unfortunately necessary for the corporations to increase rental prices. |

6. SUMMARIES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

(De Gelderlander, 01/06/2003 - 31/3/2012)

Table 6 - Summaries of newspaper articles on unemployment

| # | Date | Word count | Summary |
|---|-----------|------------|---|
| 1 | 3/11/2003 | 341 | Ethnic youngsters trained for bricklayer or carpenter - Six youngsters with different nationalities start with a special pre-education to become a carpenter or bricklayer. It is a project to stimulate hiring migrants in the construction sector. If construction companies employ a certain percentage of ethnic minorities, they will receive a subsidy from national government. The project is eligible for men between 20 and 25 who are unemployed for more than half a year. After the pre-education, they will enter a work-study programme where they will get paid for their work. It is subsidized by the municipality of Nijmegen. |
| 2 | 24/9/2004 | 284 | Youth has to get to work - Municipalities in the region of Nijmegen will deal strictly with youngsters who leave school without a diploma. Youngsters who drop-out will be obliged to do a study and/or work programme. The municipalities in the area will work closely together. |
| 3 | 13/1/2005 | 262 | ROC and private sector would like to realize five hundred learn jobs - The middle-sized and small company association Nijmegen (MKB) and the Regional Educational Centre (ROC) cooperate to create 500 'study-jobs' the coming four years, where youngster can learn and work simultaneously. This cooperation must assure a better connection between education and labour market. |
| 4 | 23/5/2005 | 751 | Discussion: Economic policy of municipality Nijmegen - Nijmegen deserves better - The leader of the local liberal party (VVD) criticizes the leftist municipal coalition on several areas, under which the idea of letting entrepreneurs hiring social assistance receivers. He argues that this is the reversed world - the private sector should not facilitate the responsibility of the municipality to get these people back to work. |
| 5 | 27/5/2005 | 378 | Companies happy with job plan - Companies in Nijmegen will cooperate with a new plan for creating job experience for long term unemployed while receiving social assistance. The idea is that there is an advantage for all three parties concerned: the municipality, the unemployed and the companies. The employers participate because of their societal involvement. |
| 6 | 4/6/2005 | 292 | Deal: 100 jobs for unemployed - Three employers organisations will try to give 100 unemployed people a job in 2006. The municipality funds the project for 900.000 euros. The intention is that a local, well-informed employment agency carries out the project, on request of the employers. |
| 7 | 9/6/2005 | 324 | Job plan stands for 'new slave market' - The local Socialist party (SP) criticizes the plan of creating work-experience jobs in the private sector by calling it a 'new slave market'. They argue that unemployed people will be used as cheap employees. Their main concern is that the companies who will participate in the plan did not arrange any education or guidance on the job. For people who have more distance to the labour market, they think cooperation with non-commercial organisation will be much better. |

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| 8 | 29/10/2005 | 1138 | Young and unemployed - how do you reach them? The regional employment agency and eight municipalities in the region of Nijmegen cooperate in a project which tries to prevent school drop-out and youth unemployment. They try to fill in as much vacancies with jobless youth as possible. One of the problems appears to be reaching this group. When youngster do not receive a benefit, they cannot be forced to do anything. The project consists of a intensive collaboration between the regional employment agency, municipalities, social affairs, education and employees. |
| 9 | 16/11/2005 | 278 | Premium for the one who accepts work - Nijmegen will give people receiving social assistance benefits an extra premium when they find a job. It could stimulate people to accept an offered job. Now many clients of the social service decline, because they are not sure if their monthly financial situation will improve. For youngsters until 23 years old, a more strict approach will be taken. They will be obliged to have education or to do an employment programme. If they decline an offer, their benefit will be stopped. Changes in the employment policy of the municipality are a consequence of new national policy: if, from January 1st 2006, municipalities do not meet with the national average of benefits it will have direct financial consequences. |
| 10 | 3/12/2005 | 735 | Social service - Reemployment unemployed impossible? The Alderman responsible for the reemployment of the unemployed is blamed by other political parties because she is unable to reduce the amount of people receiving social assistance. Only 300 of expected 635 people have been reemployed through municipal efforts. Because of a more stringent youth policy, less benefits have been allocated than would be before. The biggest problem seems to be that the municipality is not able to select the right clients for the available reemployment services. The Alderman is not in favor of the strict approach, known as 'work first'. |
| 11 | 23/3/2006 | 316 | Experiment - Insurance helps to get youth back to work - Employers who are afraid to employ youngsters without a diploma are given the possibility to get an insurance which covers sickness. This is an experiment which will run in three cities, among them Nijmegen. The insurance is meant for youngsters without a so-called 'start qualification' (a minimum level of education) up to the age of 22 and who enter a so-called learn-job. |
| 12 | 29/4/2006 | 361 | Especially for youngsters soon more jobs - The number of jobs has increased the past year. Especially in construction work there are many vacancies. In the technique branch, the demand is high. There are too little people qualified for this sector. Youngsters are increasingly finding jobs but Nijmegen is lacking behind the region. It is said however that the group of unemployed youngsters is still small and the municipality is doing a lot to prevent youth unemployment. |
| 13 | 12/9/2006 | 269 | Drop-outs - Project learn-jobs for young unemployed - A new project should provide a study and a learn-job for at least sixty young jobseekers from Nijmegen and around. The project is a cooperation between the regional employment agency, attendance officers of several municipalities, the regional educational institute, and on behalf of the employers, the national Taskforce Youth Unemployment. It focuses on two groups: youngsters who know what they would like to do, but are at home because they haven't found a learn-job, and the group who is still obliged to go to school but doesn't know exactly what to do. The cooperation between the different parties is the most important aspect of this project. |
| 14 | 20/4/2007 | 379 | 'Actuating youth' In Nijmegen, almost 1100 adolescents leave school without a diploma annually. A 'Youth Window', a cooperation between seven municipalities in the region of Nijmegen, will have to help drop-outs with getting a diploma or a job. The intention is to intensively urge youngsters to do something. However, it is difficult to trace drop-outs. Therefore, the Youth Window has to register drop-outs, so that all organisations involved know where they are, what they do and what the organisation could do for them. The employment agency, the benefit agency, but also employers and the regional educational institute are involved in the Youth Window. According to the Alderman of Economic Affairs, the connection between educational programmes and the private sector should be improved. |

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| 15 | 19/9/2007 | 347 | 'Stimulate contacts between residents' - To improve the deprived neighbourhood Hatert, an action plan came with numerous ideas. One is the development of an action centre 'Hatert to work' in the neighbourhood. Unemployment in the area is high and the goal is to reemploy several hundreds of people through education. |
| 16 | 15/2/2008 | 691 | The youth window helps, even if you don't want to - In the beginning of 2008, the so-called 'Youth Window' started, where unemployed youngster aged 18 to 27 years have to apply. There is a problem group of youngsters which is called the 'invisible group' and consists of approximately 750 adolescents. These are youngsters who have no job, no benefits and are school drop-outs, often making money in the criminal sector. The youth window tries to get to this hard-to-reach group by visiting neighbourhoods and welfare organisations. |
| 17 | 25/3/2009 | 251 | Jobseeker maintains house and neighbourhood - Long term unemployed will help in the maintenance of houses, gardens and parks. This is a project where Talis, a housing corporation, and 2Switch, a recycle and maintenance company, cooperate. Through this project, on the one hand unemployed should get higher chances in getting a job, while on the other hand neighbourhoods should get a better appearance. |
| 18 | 20/6/2009 | 566 | No panic soccer with subsidized labour - A council member and the fraction leader of the local labour party (PvdA) say that the municipal coalition makes the wrong choice in cutting heavily in subsidized labour. They say there is still room in the budget and the city should keep on investing in subsidized labour. They would like to make it possible for jobseekers to do a work-study programme while maintaining their benefit if this increases the chances on a job. They also would like to use the possibility to generate income with subsidized workers. |
| 19 | 9/10/2009 | 351 | party programme - PvdA focuses on work. In the new party programme of the local labour party (PvdA), which is called 'Nijmegen works!', the party states that everyone has 'the right to work'. Jobless people who have no chances on the current labour market should get back to work through subsidized jobs and internships. They argue it can only be achieved with close cooperation with the private sector and educational institutes. |
| 20 | 6/11/2009 | 321 | Youth unemployment - Youth project at Citadel in Lent - Youth can get to work in Lenteveld - To combat the increasing youth unemployment eight parties in Nijmegen start a big employment project where jobless youngster will be given the opportunity to learn and work, to think of new work themselves and to generate income. The focus is on youngsters in construction and technique. The intention is that the project will be set up by youngsters themselves. |
| 21 | 5/1/2010 | 427 | New year speech - Top priority - 'Do not let the youth down' - Mayor Thom de Graaf shows in his new year speech his concerns about the deteriorating position of youngsters in the municipality of Nijmegen. He would like companies to create jobs and internships for the youth, but he also calls for professionals to look beyond their own organisation. |
| 22 | 4/5/2010 | 670 | Gild 'The Craft Square' seeks for self-employed for master-apprentice - A new projects seeks for self-employed craft men to function as masters for students or 'apprentices'. These students are drop-outs, young handicapped or social assistance receivers. They have to be motivated for a strict and serious education in the craftsmanship. |
| 23 | 26/6/2010 | 621 | Subsidized jobs - 'Participating remains the starting point' - Many of the current subsidized jobs in Nijmegen will come to an end. For people who have no chance of coming back to work, the Alderman of Work and Income will guarantee they keep participating. As a replacement the municipality will start 'work corporations' or work-study companies for 'societal relevant tasks', so that social assistance receivers learn how it is to work in practice. |

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| 24 | 21/9/2010 | 373 | Region Gelderland-South is ready for approach to youth employment - The second part of the action plan 'Youth back to work' has been presented. It is part of a national campaign to deal with youth unemployment. The first part has been closed and it is estimated that 350 youngsters got employed through the plan. The second part calls for initiatives from private companies to employ jobless youngster with the help of educational institutes. The region Gelderland-South comprises nine municipalities, under which Nijmegen. |
| 25 | 30/10/2010 | 1106 | Subsidized jobs - Alderman Turgay Tankir: reforms necessary - 'I guarantee almost everyone a place to work' - Alderman Turgay Tankir explains the plans of the municipality to stop with 75 per cent of the current 864 subsidized jobs within two years. Tankir thinks that many of these jobs can be preserved in other forms - for instance, as unpaid job while receiving social assistance. But it also means some organisations will have to close down because they are dependent on subsidized workers. The municipality would like to cut expenses on subsidized jobs because it takes up 70 per cent of the entire budget for reemployment. |
| 26 | 9/12/2010 | 721 | Doom and gloom? No, yet concerns. Contractors in Nijmegen are a little bit disappointed in the efforts of the municipality to help them in the difficult times they are going through. Contractors are now working together to improve the chances they get rewarded with some big projects in the city. They also participate in 'Born', the educational institute for construction workers. Students of this education can get some work experience at the participating companies. The contractors also try to do this for young unemployed construction workers or other unemployed youngsters as a way of fulfilling their societal duty. |
| 27 | 23/5/2011 | 771 | 'Hatert Werkt and look, the bridge gets smaller'. Action centre 'Hatert Werkt', a local employment agency, where several organisations work together, has proven to be fairly successful since its establishment in the neighbourhood Hatert in 2009. The bridge with other neighbourhoods in the city is getting smaller. After the summer, the centre wants to focus more on youth, such as finding internships for students. There is some concern about the future of the project in terms of financing, but the municipality and the housing corporations would like it to continue. |
| 28 | 4/6/2011 | 710 | 'Youth with little work experience have difficulties getting through' - Experience with Five Euros job - A 'Five euros' job gives unemployed youth from the region of Nijmegen the possibility to get work experience. It is a cooperation between (private) employment agencies and the municipality of Nijmegen. Foundation 'Region Work' carries out the project. An employer pays five Euros while a youngster can get familiar with the particular work for six to thirteen weeks. In five months since the start of the project eight youngsters have participated in such a job. |
| 29 | 11/7/2011 | 257 | Youth Unemployment - Cheque at hand - Chances for young unemployed - Jobless youngsters (18-27 years old) will be given the opportunity to hand out a cheque worth 2.500 Euros for an employer who will give him or her a job. The 'chances-cheque' is a follow-up of the youth voucher. The youth voucher was given to employers who were able to employ a jobless youngster. Now, the roles are reversed: the voucher is given to the youngster to increase their chances at employers. |
| 30 | 8/9/2011 | 320 | Carry on with regional approach - Youth Window must improve - The ten municipalities who participate in the regional Youth Window, which aims to combat youth unemployment, are not completely satisfied about the service. They complain that results are not clearly visible, communication with the municipalities is bad, and the cooperation between the municipalities is much too bureaucratic. Nevertheless, they think the problem of youth unemployment is something that has to be solved regionally. |

Table 7 - Summaries of newspaper articles on childcare

| # | Date | Word count | Summary |
|----|-----------|------------|---|
| 1 | 18/6/2003 | 341 | Bus has to attract toddlers for play room - A campaign has been launched to attract parents to use toddler play rooms. The focus is especially on parents with an ethnic background, because their children often have language problems. These children could benefit from toddler play rooms. |
| 2 | 18/6/2003 | 573 | 'Mentality change needed among childcare organisations' - A director of a private childcare organisation Nannies plies for a change in mentality within childcare management. Organisations are too inefficient. Nannies contracts out all of its administrative work. The director of KION does not share this opinion. They are, however, satisfied with the municipality of Nijmegen. "Nijmegen does not give subsidies to the organisations, but gives money to low income households and stimulates the creation of new childcare places". |
| 3 | 21/7/2003 | 408 | Without extra subsidy five toddler play rooms have to close - Without extra subsidy five toddler play rooms will have to close. National government is cutting back on subsidized jobs. KION has seventy employees which are subsidized through national subsidies. They would like to shift some subsidized employees from day care to toddler play rooms, since day care is commercial, contrary to toddler play rooms, who can only exist with subsidies, says the director of KION. |
| 4 | 26/7/2003 | 559 | Waiting lists for childcare in the region are dissolving because of economic recession. The amount of cancellations are increasing so much, that the childcare organisation SKAR is inventorying what the underlying reasons are. They think it is because of a loss of jobs. KION thinks also the increasing competition among providers and the fact that employers do not always compensate for childcare in times of high supply, are part of the cause. |
| 5 | 13/2/2004 | 304 | Jobs under pressure at KION - Jobs of KION employees are under pressure because of a decline in attendance and an increase in competition of other providers. |
| 6 | 20/2/2004 | 364 | Forced downsizing toddler play rooms - Toddler play rooms will run less hours because of lack of money and a decline in attendance. It is yet unclear if national subsidies will be available in 2005 or not. |
| 7 | 4/9/2004 | 290 | KION dealt well with decline in attendants - KION did not have to fire professionals after a steep decline in attendance of day care. |
| 8 | 16/4/2004 | 2195 | Pilot project: all problem toddlers detected early - A pilot project which tries to follow the behaviour and development of children aged 0-4 years to tackle problems in an early stage will start in two neighbourhoods. The project is initiated by professionals, financed by the municipality and is guided by researchers of the Radboud University Nijmegen. |
| 9 | 30/9/2004 | 753 | Parents receive the bill from now on - Because of the new Act on Childcare, parents will have to pay the bill of childcare costs themselves directly. KION is preparing parents for this new structure. The KION director thinks that only a few people will have to pay more for childcare and that the act secures equality. |
| 10 | 21/3/2005 | 599 | Commotion about closure of toddler play room - Parents which use a particular toddler play room object the decision of KION to close the play room in the nearby future. While KION says there the attendance is too low to make it cost-effective, parents are irritated that they have not been involved in the decision-making process. |

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| 11 | 29/3/2005 | 476 | Project for risk toddlers carries on till 2006 - A pilot project which focuses on children aged 0-4 years with behaviour and development problems will carry on in two neighbourhoods. |
| 12 | 4/4/2005 | 583 | Parents wait for months on money childcare - Because of a conflict between KION and the foundation Mens en Werk, dozens of parents did not receive the employer share of childcare costs. The foundation is responsible for the distribution of this share, but also arranges for some parents their payments since the new Act on Childcare. |
| 13 | 23/6/2005 | 729 | 25 years IKK - Luckily not the only one with a head scarf - The International Child Centre Nijmegen (IKN) exists 25 years. Originally it was created as a day care for Turkish children, now it is a multicultural day care and part of KION (the biggest childcare organisation in Nijmegen). |
| 14 | 9/11/2005 | 520 | The egg of Columbus is at the Kopseweg - While there is a call for 'broad schools' nationally, it already happens in Nijmegen. A primary school combines toddler play room, education and after-school childcare. |
| 15 | 27/1/2006 | 374 | Most parents stayed true to KION in 2005 - After the implementation of the new Act on Childcare, KION, the biggest childcare organisation in Nijmegen, lost 3 percent of its clients, while a much higher percentage was expected, because of higher administrative burdens for parents. |
| 16 | 21/11/2006 | 439 | KION - KINDWijzer quality label - KION, the biggest childcare organisation in Nijmegen, is initiator of the new, national 'KINDwijzer', a new quality label for childcare. Eleven regional childcare providers are member of 'KINDwijzer'. |
| 17 | 28/2/2006 | 482 | 'You cannot expect that it is free' - It is discussed if, since the new Act on Childcare, childcare has become too expensive or if costs are more evenly shared among low and high incomes. Childcare organizations do not oppose the new Act in terms of costs for parents. |
| 18 | 13/6/2006 | 369 | Work visit - An idealistic vision on childcare - The state secretary and the minister of Education visited Nijmegen to discuss childcare with parents. The minister says that norms of quality are developing in the field and should not be created by politicians. |
| 19 | 15/7/2006 | 259 | Radboud University - Researchers from Nijmegen plea for more professionals in day care centres - The Radboud University of Nijmegen publishes a research which says that babies and toddlers are better off when professionals have on average three children to look after compared to five. It is not the first time the university is critical on the quality of childcare services. |
| 20 | 16/10/2006 | 346 | Active elderly - 'Babysitting strengthens bond between grandmother and grandchild' - One out of three of the elderly in Nijmegen babysits every week on their grandchildren. Different persons are asked if they think this is good for children or elderly or not. Reactions are mainly positive. |
| 21 | 4/1/2008 | 474 | Grootstal gets exemplary school - In Grootstal, a neighbourhood in Nijmegen, a new primary school is built which is supposed to function as an example for other schools. It will be a school for children aged 0-12 years, integrating childcare in the school. They will be open the whole year through. It is based on the so-called 'integration model' from Sweden. |
| 22 | 11/1/2008 | 426 | Critique on fine for parents who are too late - Childcare organizations in a western province of the Netherlands are fining parents who pick up their children after closing time. Childcare centres in the region of Nijmegen think this is client unfriendly. |

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| 23 | 26/3/2008 | 347 | Quick help to risk children in Nijmegen appears to be a success - The municipal health service (GGD) and Youth Care are successful in spotting behaviour and development problems of children between 0-4 in day care centres and toddler play rooms. In 2007, 404 children were given extra care. Most children with problems live in Dukenburg and Lindenholt, and half of them had an ethnic background. |
| 24 | 21/5/2008 | 294 | Parent-child-centre in Dukenburg brings nationalities together - In Meijhorst, a neighbourhood in Nijmegen, a first parent-child-center (<i>OuderKindCentrum</i> , or OKC) will arise. It will be a service where through all kinds of projects parents get help in parenting. It is thought it will be a perfect spot where parents of different nationalities can come together. Fourteen volunteers will be running the place. |
| 25 | 7/10/2008 | 534 | 'If people expect a child, they would like to have childcare arranged right away' - Ironing and dinner along with child - Childcare organisation Nannies has become fairly big despite great competition from KION. It became so big because, according to the director, they listen to the parents. 'If they [the parents] want flexibility, then you have to offer it. It is possible through good calculation and planning. At one day care, cooperation with a secondary school has given the option for parents to let your laundry ironed or to get a cooked meal, all done by students. |
| 26 | 11/2/2009 | 295 | KION: 'BSO-parent thinks it's fine' - Tandem, a welfare organisation, provides since seven years a so-called 'Child living room' facility, which consists of after-school childcare, toddler play room and a parent-child-center. A client satisfaction research showed that it contributes to the connectedness between school and the neighbourhood. |
| 27 | 14/10/2009 | 537 | Allez kids - New day care centre Willemskwartier A new childcare organisation provides care 24 hours per day. This would be especially helpful for (single) parents with night shifts (such as nurses and doctors). |
| 28 | 5/11/2009 | 293 | Inspection GGD: 'Safety not all right' - Nijmegen closes childcare - For the first time in the region, a childcare organisation in Nijmegen has been shut down by the municipal health service because of heavy violations of safety rules. The day care centre opposes conclusions from the inspection report and says it's not about the care of the children, but only about some mistakes with filling in forms. |
| 29 | 8/6/2010 | 409 | Fear childcare organisations for investors - Childcare organisations in the region of Nijmegen condemn the possible overtake of a big childcare organisation by foreign investors. According to KION, the biggest organisation in Nijmegen, profit maximization does not fit the sector. |
| 30 | 30/6/2010 | 280 | GGD Inspection: fail for one fifth of childcare centres - In 2009, 20 percent of all day care centres and child minders were performing insufficient concerning safety and health. One day care was eventually forced to shut down. According to inspectors, the quality of day care centres has improved, but the quality of child minders stays has not. Yet, this will probably change, because all 185 child minders of KION have been receiving extra training the past months. |
| 31 | 22/7/2010 | 475 | KION - day care place in neighbourhood assured - toddler play rooms in Nijmegen in difficult times - Until 2015, 1 million euros has to be retrenched on toddler play rooms. KION probably has to dismiss several employees and has to shut down a few play rooms, although in vulnerable neighbourhoods, chances are high they can stay. |
| 32 | 2/11/2010 | 706 | In bath, warm dinner and then a big hug - The oldest day care centre of Nijmegen celebrates its 40th anniversary. It was founded for children of single parents and other parents with social problems. In 2001 it became a regular day care, and it is now part of KION. |
| 33 | 6/12/2010 | 404 | Commotion among competitors - fear for monopoly of KION - The municipal board is planning on reforming toddler play rooms (all owned by KION) into regular day care centres. Other providers express their concerns about unequal competition and a monopoly position for KION. The Alderman of Education has been forced by the Council to talk with KION and the other providers to come to a solution. |

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| 34 | 16/5/2011 | 271 | Toddler play room - Flow of money stops - Subsidy KION comes to an end - Toddler play rooms (owned by KION) in Nijmegen are dealing with cutbacks (e.g. suspension of 44 subsidized jobs) and reduced attendance. Toddler play rooms will probably be dissolved into regular day care centres. To assure a free market, the Alderman of Education is looking for ways to arranging a more equal distribution of toddler play rooms among KION and other providers. |
| 35 | 31/11/2011 | 535 | Nijmegen and region - 1.700 jobs gone - In the region of Nijmegen 1.700 jobs in total will be lost. KION (the biggest childcare organisation in Nijmegen) is preparing for reduction in attendance by no longer extending fixed contracts. |
| 36 | 2/2/2012 | 330 | KION - Big change at toddler play rooms in city - Tension at play rooms - Since January 1st 2012, the market of toddler play rooms is now open. KION, which is now acting as a monopolist in this area, has to make some changes the coming months. Probably some toddler play rooms will be merged in order to keep it affordable. |

Table 8 - Summaries of newspaper articles on housing

| # | Date | Word count | Summary |
|---|-----------|------------|---|
| 1 | 19/6/2003 | 328 | Protest action against housing shortage - The youth department of the Socialist party (SP) wants more social housing in Nijmegen. There was a demonstration at the city hall. |
| 2 | 31/7/2003 | 384 | Only one out of five finds bed at crisis shelter - Passade, the crisis shelter of Nijmegen, could offer a place to stay to only 20 percent of the applicants in 2002. That was the highest percentage ever. |
| 3 | 8/11/2003 | 686 | Inter-Lokaal: for all nationalities - Inter-Lokaal, a welfare organisation in Nijmegen founded by students in the 1980s, has become so big that it has to move to another location. Once focusing on Turkish and Moroccan labour migrants, it now helps every migrant living in Nijmegen with questions on family reunification, benefits and housing. The organisation is ran mostly by volunteers. |
| 4 | 1/7/2004 | 364 | 'Deltaplan Integration lacks ambition' - The so-called 'Deltaplan for Integration', a broad proposal from the municipal coalition to deal with multicultural problems, has been received with quit some criticism. Migrant organisation Inter-lokaal thinks the plan is much too bureaucratic and deals too less with the organisations that play a role in the field. The Advisory Commission of Migrants says the plan focuses too much on the employment of immigrants and not on the social-cultural dimension. |
| 5 | 5/7/2004 | 1454 | Plea for extra impulses to multicultural policy Nijmegen - creativity is invisible in Integration plan - The manager of Inter-lokaal, a migrant organisation, has critique on the migrant integration policy of the municipality as written in the so-called 'Deltaplan for Integration'. Among others, he finds it remarkable that the document says nothing about the current housing allocation policy, which stimulates immigrant concentration in neighbourhoods. |
| 6 | 9/11/2004 | 467 | Debate - 'Take initiative yourself for a better neighbourhood' - During an organised discussion, a resident calls for more involvement of residents to improve the liveability of their neighbourhood. A couple of residents of the neighbourhood Neerbosch-Oost argued their neighbourhood was doing better because of the actions of tenants. |
| 7 | 10/2/2005 | 550 | Divided city - Growth because of increase of migrants - To prevent the creation of 'white' and 'black' neighbourhoods in the city, the Alderman of Housing wants to realize cheap social housing in so-called 'renewal' areas, which are now mainly inhabited by 'native' Dutch residents. |
| 8 | 23/2/2005 | 639 | Allocation rental house according to income - Income will become a criterion for allocation of social housing. Freedom of choice, which was a fact from 2002 on, will come to an end. Having income as a criterion will hopefully prevent the existence of income-concentrated neighbourhoods, which was stimulated by the current allocation policy. |
| 9 | 28/2/2005 | 1045 | Preventing segregation by allocating houses on the basis of income nonsense - politics is wrong - Three directors of different housing corporations in Nijmegen think the wish of politics to change the housing allocation system is based on the wrong assumptions. They argue that a few years ago, the system was changed because allocation on the basis of income lead to a concentration of the same height of incomes in the same streets. Now, for the same reason, politics wants to reverse this change. They argue that the segregation should not be exaggerated and the current segregation is not the consequence of the housing allocation policy, but of building without variation after the Second World War. Most importantly, they say that people are not to be steered - their expectation is that when people with high incomes are not able to rent in popular neighbourhoods, they will look out for other municipalities. Furthermore, the directors point at the principle of freedom of choice. It is unacceptable for them to give more restrictions in choice for renters in comparison to buyers. |

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| 10 | 28/2/2005 | 912 | System of housing allocation has to change - dichotomy because of Entree - The social housing allocation policy in Nijmegen has to change. According to the leader of the local Socialist party, this policy has been the reason for the existence of 'white' and 'black' neighbourhoods in the city. |
| 11 | 6/4/2005 | 1270 | 'It's simple: these boys are Dutch' - The city part Dukenburg has a high percentage of migrants, and although the image of Dukenburg is still relatively poor, it appears that many things have changed the past few years in a positive sense. |
| 12 | 8/6/2005 | 395 | Neighbourhood closed for black or white - The municipal coalition considers taking ethnicity as a criterion for the allocation of social housing. It implies a further tightening of the allocation policy as carried out by housing corporation Talis for particular dwellings, where it considers the employment situation of potential renters. Ethnicity could be taken into account for as well 'white' as 'black' neighbourhoods. |
| 13 | 10/6/2005 | 503 | Housing allocation - residents of Nijmegen see particularly problems of spreading - Different residents of Nijmegen are asked what they think of the plans of the municipal coalition to be more restrictive in the allocation of social housing, in order to divide migrants over the city. Some are positive about preventing concentrated neighbourhoods, but there are doubts if this should be done by taking ethnicity into account in allocating houses. |
| 14 | 20/6/2005 | 1127 | White and black neighbourhoods in Nijmegen - Nijmegen: city without dividing lines - Paul Depla, Alderman of Housing, explains the necessity to prevent a dichotomy between 'white' and 'black' in the city by changing the current housing allocation policy. |
| 15 | 20/6/2005 | 522 | White and black neighbourhoods in Nijmegen - Setting boundaries to unwanted behaviour in neighbourhoods - The manager of Portaal, a housing corporation in Nijmegen and Arnhem, thinks the idea of Paul Depla, Alderman of Housing, to incorporate ethnicity as a criterion in the housing allocation policy, is wrong. Instead, behaviour should be leading in allocating houses. |
| 16 | 25/6/2005 | 356 | Infobox: White-Black Neighbourhoods - Plan for spreading not a good idea - Among readers of the newspaper, a vast majority thinks the municipality should not allocate houses on account of ethnicity. |
| 17 | 24/8/2005 | 378 | Finding the causes for avoiding white neighbourhood - The municipal coalition would like to know why migrants oppose to live in 'white' neighbourhoods and why autochthones 'flee' from 'black' neighbourhoods. |
| 18 | 31/10/2005 | 1224 | Discussion: Black and white neighbourhoods - Policy 'Divided City' wrong - A sociologist from Amsterdam comments on the wish for the 'undivided city' as articulated by the current political coalition in Nijmegen. He argues that focusing on equal division is not the right way. |
| 19 | 3/3/2006 | 342 | Political debate: Allocate house on account of colour and especially income - In a political debate for the next municipal elections most parties showed they are in favour of housing allocation on account of income. Allocation on account of ethnicity is for most a bridge too far. |
| 20 | 28/2/2007 | 264 | Four blocks of maisonettes demolished - Four blocks of maisonettes in the neighbourhood Malvert will be demolished. There has been a lot of deliberation with a group of residents on the renewal of the neighbourhood. According to Standvast Wonen, the responsible housing corporation, the neighbourhood's composition is too unilateral which leads increasingly to social problems. |
| 21 | 7/4/2007 | 629 | Portaal wants to actively involve tenants with the liveability in neighbourhoods - Portaal really goes for the neighbourhoods - The regional director of Portaal, a housing corporation in Nijmegen, wants to involve tenants actively in creating well-being of the neighbourhood. Portaal wants to strengthen the trust of tenants in Portaal. Point of focus however stays good and affordable housing and a livable environment. |

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| 22 | 14/4/2007 | 324 | Approach to neighbourhoods - A professor social entrepreneurship of the Radboud University Nijmegen thinks the decision of the national government to appoint a budget for 40 'problem neighbourhoods' is much too centralized. It should be the responsibility of the municipalities to decide in which neighbourhoods should be invested. |
| 23 | 17/11/2007 | 604 | I have never been blamed for too little efforts in the city from StandVast Wonen - Where are the efforts from the municipality? Adri van Grinsven, director of Standvast Wonen, a housing corporation in Nijmegen, argues that the cooperation between the municipality and the housing corporations must improve. The municipality criticizes housing corporations, but it is often unclear which particular organisation they mean. Also, the municipality takes too little responsibility for important issues, so that housing corporations are almost obliged to take the lead. |
| 24 | 1/3/2008 | 466 | Portaal chooses new direction: more listening - Portaal, a housing corporation in Nijmegen, says it's would like to give tenants more options to express their opinion. They also want to become more transparent in their decision making. |
| 25 | 14/3/2008 | 453 | Left: minima to houses in better-off neighbourhoods - Social rentals in better-off neighbourhoods that become vacant should be appointed to low income households. The municipal coalition of three left wing parties demands this from the local housing corporations. The corporations do not comply with this request yet. |
| 26 | 15/4/2008 | 368 | 'Keep renters in East' - The local Labour party (PvdA) is against the sale of rental houses in the well-off city part Nijmegen-East, because the party thinks it does not help to counter segregation of low-incomes in the city. |
| 27 | 10/5/2008 | 728 | We have to deal with making less profit - Dichotomy of the city: reverse the trend - Three politicians from the left wing coalition parties (SP, PvdA and GroenLinks) plea for 'mirror building': building owner-occupied houses in neighbourhoods with many rentals, and building social housing in neighbourhoods with many owner-occupied houses. This way segregation of rich and low-income neighbourhoods can be prevented. |
| 28 | 10/5/2008 | 492 | Prospect for people in Nijmegen-East - The director of Standvast Wonen, a housing corporation in Nijmegen does not understand that council members are resistant to selling social housing in the better-off area Nijmegen-Oost. He thinks there is already a lot social housing in Nijmegen, thinks there should be constructed in other neighbourhoods and thinks segregation can also be prevented by offering people jobs or education. |
| 29 | 31/1/2009 | 760 | Building in times of crisis - let quality be priority - director of Portaal, a big housing corporation in Nijmegen, argues that in time of economic crisis, housing corporations should build less in favour of quality. |
| 31 | 3/2/2009 | 551 | 'Make it possible to buy your own house' - Stijn Verbruggen, council member for the local Labour party (PvdA), argues that the municipality should experiment with collectively commissioning of housing. This would improve freedom of choice; the connection of residents with their neighbourhood increases; it is relative cheap; and it helps creating diverse and integration. |
| 32 | 26/3/2009 | 539 | Helping 'small purse' with buying house - Talis, a housing corporation, experiments with the concept 'Koop Garant', where buyers have to pay only 75 per cent of the real value. If they sell it, you must offer it to the housing corporation, which will buy it for the real value at that time. Loss and profit are then shared equally. |
| 33 | 15/9/2010 | 559 | Chances starters on housing market decreased - The chances for 'starters' to get social housing have decreased again in 2009. The Alderman of Housing thinks building is the right solution. He does not think the housing allocation policy needs to be changed. |

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| 34 | 25/9/2010 | 778 | Improve outflow in rental house - Esther Lamers, manager Standvast Wonen, a housing corporation in Nijmegen, thinks the current housing allocation policy is suitable, because it is self-regulating - high income households do not choose houses with low rental prices and vice versa. She thinks it's more effective when the outflow of tenants is stimulated. |
| 35 | 9/10/2010 | 741 | Improve outflow seriously - Stijn Verbruggen, council member for the local Labour party (PvdA), thinks the emphasis on the outflow of tenants, as promoted by Standvast Wonen, is not good enough. He regrets that the housing corporation is opposed to target group policies, because these are the most effective in preventing segregation in the city. |
| 36 | 27/11/2010 | 301 | Homelessness family with baby finally gets house - A couple of former asylum seekers with a baby of thirteen months was homeless for more than one year. Normally, people with granted asylum accept an offered dwelling, but they declined. For one year, they stayed on several places, the father often slept in his car. An urgency request at the housing allocation organisation was first declined, but a new request was accepted and they got appointed a house. |
| 37 | 23/4/2011 | 703 | Affordable house more often unreachable - The City Region Arnhem Nijmegen and Talis, a housing corporation in Nijmegen, argue that the new European rules on housing allocation (90 per cent of housing stock with rental prices until 652.52 euros must be allocated to incomes lower than 33.614 euros) hits middle-income households. They plea for being creative with this rule. They also think selling social rentals to tenants with discount could be a solution. |
| 38 | 12/7/2011 | 896 | Keep paying attention to affordability of house - A politician from the local green party (GroenLinks) is worried about the consequences of the national housing policy for the housing market of Nijmegen. The rental prices will increase and housing corporations will have less money to invest in social projects and new housing. |
| 39 | 22/10/2011 | 314 | In Nijmegen: every year rent of 400 social rentals to 652 euros - The Alderman of Housing agrees with a raise of the maximum rental price of new social housing from 575 euros per month to 652 euros. According to the housing corporations, this is necessary because their expenses will increase from 2014 on, since they then have to pay a part of the housing benefit. |
| 40 | 26/10/2011 | 700 | Choosing your neighbours by yourself - Standvast Wonen, a housing corporation, experimented with a new form of housing allocation, by letting neighbours choose a new resident from a selection of candidates. |
| 41 | 29/10/2011 | 832 | The municipality has to build houses herself - According to the leader of the local Socialist party (SP), the municipality should invest in cheap rental houses in order to keep young, highly educated people in the city. |
| 42 | 17/11/2011 | 323 | SP-idea 4.000 municipal houses has no chance - Nijmegen: not building yourself - The plan from the local Socialist party to build 4.000 cheap rental houses in the north of Nijmegen by the municipality itself did not pass the council. There are concerns about the financial risks and the enormous increase in rental houses in the particular area. |
| 43 | 19/11/2011 | 866 | Extra rental warranty for new housing - According to the Alderman of Housing, Jan van der Meer (Labour party), the raise of the maximum rental price is necessary to assure that the housing corporations keep building new houses, which is essential because of a shortage in the local housing market. He regrets that this means that the houses with the new maximum rate of 652 euros per month are no longer accessible to households with minimum incomes, but he thinks the alternative - to stop building at all - is worse. |
| 44 | 23/11/2011 | 352 | A unique experiment day with rental houses - Standvast Wonen, a housing corporation, carried out two other experiments to look for new ways of housing allocation. It consisted of casting lots and an auction (by increasing the rental price up to a maximum). |

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| 45 | 24/11/2011 | 262 | Housing allocation system needs to change - 'House miles' give starters more chance - At a seminar where professionals thought about housing allocation policies, an idea has been developed where ranking on a waiting list is no longer the major criterion, but 'house miles', which can be earned by doing voluntary work or being active in your neighbourhood. |
| 46 | 6/1/2012 | 761 | 'System has to be revised' - The system of housing allocation should be revised. Especially for starters and people in urgent need of a house have tremendous difficulties to find a dwelling. Therefore, the City Region Arnhem Nijmegen, which is responsible for the housing allocation system in the region, wants to present a new system in June 2012. |
| 47 | 14/1/2012 | 841 | Housing allocation has to be more fair - Stijn Verbruggen, a Labour party (PvdA) council member, comments on the plans of City Region Arnhem Nijmegen to change the housing allocation policy. He thinks the Region should consider working with target groups, for example to prevent the rental of big family houses by couples. |
| 48 | 2/2/2012 | 306 | PvdA: Remove length of residence at Entree - The Labour party (PvdA) would like the criterion of length of residence to be removed from the housing allocation policy. According to the party, this criterion has lead residents to stay much longer in their current house which hinders the flow of residents. |
| 49 | 3/2/2012 | 660 | Right to buy of social housing offer chances - The 'right to buy', a proposition from the national coalition, which gives renters of social housing the right to buy their house, in order to stimulate house-ownership, is a positive development according to the local liberal party (VVD). House-ownership is liberal, social and works emancipating. It also gives more financial means to housing corporations and it reduces the amount of social housing, which is too high, says the party. |
| 50 | 8/2/2012 | 436 | And now slowly 'ontvogelaren' - The so-called priority neighbourhoods programme, a programme which started in 2007 and focused on the improvement of 40 Dutch 'problem' neighbourhoods, has changed a lot in Hatert, a neighbourhood in Nijmegen. Much has been invested in dealing with youth unemployment, youth nuisance, health care and new buildings. Yet, the image of the neighbourhood can still be improved. |
| 51 | 31/3/2012 | 419 | Key task corporation: renting out of good and affordable houses - Max van den Berg, president of the Tenants Interest Organisation of Portaal Nijmegen (housing corporation), argues that Portaal should be more aware of his main task, the renting out of good and affordable houses, and should not act as a commercial organisation. |