

MASTER THESIS

“I keep saying, I’m staying!”

A closer look into the residential mobility patterns of
elderly individuals in Veenendaal

by

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28-06-2024



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Preface

Before you lies the the thesis *“I keep saying, I’m staying!” A closer look into the residential mobility patterns of elderly individuals in Veenendaal* written for the fulfillment of the Master’s program in Urban and Economic Geography at Utrecht University. In addition to writing this thesis, I completed an internship at the Municipality of Veenendaal. Both the writing of the thesis and the internship have brought me a lot of new insight and allowed me to experience working at a municipality.

I would like to start by thanking my supervisor, Dr. K. Visser, for her guidance, support, and constructive feedback during the entire process. Next, I would like to thank Scott de Boer, my internship supervisor at the municipality of Veenendaal, who was always ready to help out and had tons of inspiring ideas for my research. I would also like to thank my fellow internship colleague Louise, who has been there with me through it all and always knew the right things to say when I was lost in the process of writing the thesis. I would also like to thank my partner, Dathimo, for his endless trust in my abilities. Additionally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank all the respondents of this research who were so kind as to invite me into their homes and provide me with the valuable insights and necessary data needed to conduct this research.

I hope this thesis contributes to a better understanding of the residential mobility of elderly individuals in Veenendaal and how this residential mobility can be promoted.

Sincerely,

Dae Barentz

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Elderly people would like to move, but where to?” (Van Der Bol, 2023) and “The housing shortage is getting no help from aging baby boomers” (De Mott, 2024). These newspaper articles are just a few of the many out there, highlighting the effects of aging populations worldwide. Besides people getting older, the share of older individuals in societies grows as well. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO) (2022), it is expected that by 2050 the number of people aged 60 years or older will be doubled in comparison to 2020, consisting of 2.1 billion people in total. This number translates to 1 in 6 people being 60 years of age or older. The Netherlands is no exception to this, as data from the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (n.d.) (CBS) shows that on January 1, 2024, about 20,5% of the population was 65 years of age or older. This is a sharp increase compared to the share of elderly individuals being 12,8% in 1990. Aside from the aging population, the Netherlands struggles with a housing shortage (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023), and when looking at housing suitable for senior citizens specifically, De Jong et al. (2018) show that there is a shortage of at least 373.000 houses for this age group in the Netherlands.

As the share of elderly individuals in society increases, understanding their specific housing needs and preferences becomes more important. This is because the physical and social environments of individuals have a strong effect on the way they age (World Health Organization: WHO, 2022). Living in homes that do not suit the needs of elderly individuals can lead to problems such as reduced mobility, falls, or illness. On the other hand, living in more suitable housing can contribute to a better quality of life and successful aging (Mulliner et al., 2020), and could lead to an overall increase in wellbeing (Hansen & Gottschalk, 2006). In contrast to the above, literature about the residential mobility patterns of elderly individuals shows that with an increase in age, there is generally a decrease in residential mobility (Angelini & Laferrère, 2011; De Jong, 2020; De Groot et al., 2013; Stovel & Bolan, 2004). This leads to seniors living in homes that are bigger than what they would need to live comfortably in (Clark & Deurloo, 2006), or, as described above, could lead to potential problems (Mulliner et al., 2020). Besides this, elderly people are not keen on giving up their dwellings and often only move when they are forced to do so for, for example, health reasons. However, research shows that moving to a care home

The study of residential mobility among elderly individuals is important for several reasons. As Clark (2017) stresses, residential mobility is not only relevant on the individual level, when, for example, looking for better suitable housing, but can affect society as a whole. Individuals who are able to relocate can improve their housing situation, resulting in more suitable living situations. However, in order for this relocation to happen, there should be suitable homes available for those wanting to relocate, which raises questions about the possible restrictions experienced by elderly individuals. Making sure elderly individuals live in suitable housing increases their wellbeing, as living in unsuitable housing can lead to problems (Mulliner et al., 2020). Housing for elderly individuals should be accessible, safe, adaptable, and comfortable (Kazak et al., 2017). Currently, elderly individuals often opt to stay in the home they've lived in for many years. Even when this home does not fit their preferences and needs anymore (Hansen & Gottschalk, 2006). By exploring what keeps elderly individuals from moving, more effective policies can be formulated to promote residential relocation.

The main goal of this study is to find out why elderly people would rather stay in a home that does not suit their changing needs, and, following this objective, how residential relocation can be promoted among elderly people. In the existing literature, an emphasis is put on the residential immobility of elderly individuals due to financial considerations, a lack of suitable housing (Coulter et al., 2015; Han & Kim, 2016; Hansen & Gottschalk, 2006), and housing market conditions (Sánchez & Andrews, 2011). On the other hand, reasons that could lead to relocation among elderly individuals often entail an empty nest, a decline in health, or the death of a partner (Bloem et al., 2008; De Jong et al., 2012). Another element that is important in light of residential relocation is the housing preferences of elderly individuals. This topic is already broadly researched, with some of the preferences being same-level housing, adaptability of the home, and thermal comfort. Proximity to daily amenities and health facilities is also valued (Mulliner et al., 2020). Even though a lot is already known about the residential relocation behavior of elderly individuals, there is still a lack of knowledge about how relocation behavior can be promoted among this group.

Looking at the construction of senior housing in the Netherlands, Smets (2011) shows that there are mainly luxury apartments for elderly individuals built within inner cities. However, this thesis research takes place in Veenendaal, which is a mid-sized city in the Netherlands, currently planning on starting a big redevelopment project within its borders. Within this

project, called Het Ambacht, Veenendaal aims to create space for homes specifically developed for their elderly population. The housing that will be developed will mainly entail apartments in high-rise buildings, still holding on to a city-like feeling. This could deter people, as not everyone likes the idea of living in such an environment. It is therefore important to know what drives or restricts elderly individuals when considering residential relocation, as well as what their preferences and aversions to housing are. Besides this, the redevelopment project makes Veenendaal an interesting place for studying relocation behavior, as this project can still take the wants and needs of elderly individuals into account.

The central research question for this study is: *How can residential mobility among elderly individuals in Veenendaal be triggered, taking into account restrictions and preferences regarding housing and moving homes, and what strategies can be implemented to facilitate successful relocation?*

To address this question, the following subquestions have been drawn up:

1. What preferences do elderly individuals in Veenendaal have concerning housing and the housing environment?
2. What restrictions do elderly individuals in Veenendaal face when considering residential mobility?
3. What strategies can be implemented to address the preferences and overcome the restrictions of elderly individuals, thereby encouraging their willingness to relocate within the housing market in Veenendaal?

Chapter 2: Summary

This study looks into the relocation behavior of elderly individuals in Veenendaal. By using the theoretical model of Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999) which incorporates life course trajectories, resources and restrictions, triggers and preferences, and the macro context in relation to residential mobility, an answer was formulated to the following research question: *How can residential mobility among elderly individuals in Veenendaal be triggered, taking into account restrictions and preferences regarding housing and moving homes, and what strategies can be implemented to facilitate successful relocation?*

The study is a qualitative study. With the help of semi-interviews, data on the opinions of elderly individuals in Veenendaal was gathered. Interviews covered the following topics: preferences regarding the physical characteristics of the home and its environment, living arrangements, residential mobility, and 'Het Ambacht', a residential redevelopment project of the municipality of Veenendaal.

Respondents expressed a strong preference for one-level housing. The home had to be accessible and future-proof. There was a variation in the number of rooms desired, with some respondents wanting three rooms and others having a preference for four. This difference was primarily due to the respondent's level of vitality. Other housing preferences included natural light entering the home and a place to sit outside, such as a balcony. Proximity to daily amenities and medical services was valued. Lastly, a flexible space for social activities and other services was deemed important.

Triggers that made respondents consider relocation often had to do with a sudden change in their lives. For example, the loss of a spouse, a decline in health, or a loss of mobility. These changes had an influence on the preferences and needs of respondent as a home became too big and stairs too hard to climb, resulting in the need for relocation.

Restrictions respondents experienced concerning relocation entailed financial considerations, the loss of social connections, and finding a home that fit their preferences and needs. Cognitive restrictions faced by respondents included struggles in finding the right information online and their perceptions of self. In addition, a shortage of suitable housing was experienced as a big obstacle in the process of relocation. Respondents who had to rely

on social housing experienced long waiting lists and felt discouraged from pursuing relocation because of this.

In conclusion, in order to trigger residential relocation among elderly individuals in Veenendaal, a variety of changes need to be adopted by the municipality of Veenendaal. There is a need for housing that takes the preferences and needs of elderly individuals into account. Housing must also consider the different types of elderly individuals there are, as level of vitality plays a role in the housing preferences of elderly individuals. Besides this, more active spreading of awareness about aging and information about the importance of fitting housing are encouraged. Lastly, relocation assistance should be made available to those who need it. This assistance could be financial or physical during the relocation process.

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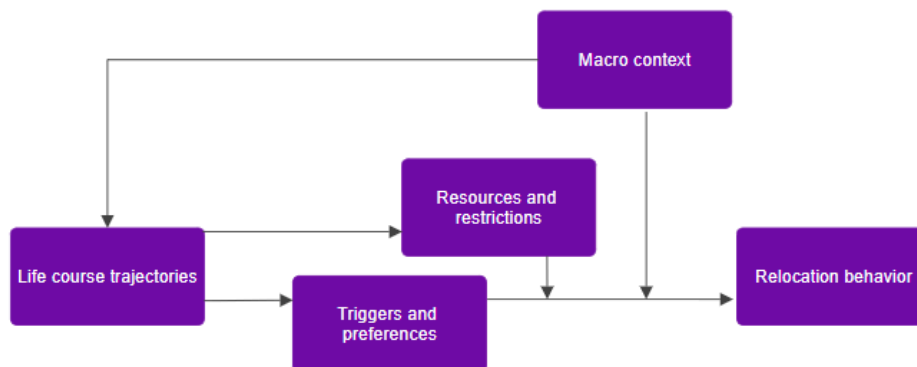
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Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

3.1 The theoretical model of Mulder and Hooimeijer

The main theoretical model used for this research is the theoretical model about relocation behavior as developed by Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999). The model incorporates a life-course perspective together with macro-context, resources and restrictions, and triggers and preferences (see figure 1). The life course perspective, as defined by Hutchison (2010), tries to understand both the consistencies and (unexpected) changes in the lives of individuals. Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999) add to this the importance of looking at the interdependency of various life careers and pathways that run parallel to each other.

Figure 1: The theoretical framework of Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999).



The macro context goes beyond the individual, into the domain where the individual is unable to make changes, whereas the micro context can be changed by the individual (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999). Resources and restrictions can be found in the micro context and entail everything that is both needed by an individual to be able to move and everything that restricts an individual from being able to move. Triggers arise because of a mismatch between life domains in the parallel life course trajectories and depict the actual versus the preferred housing location and/or situation. Triggers are linked to preferences about preferred housing location and/or situation (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999).

However, Coulter et al. (2015) argue that Mulder and Hooimeijer's (1999) model does not fully capture all aspects in which life course links and connections are related to residential mobility. Therefore they elaborated on the model of Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999) by distinguishing two levels: the micro-level which consists of 'linked lives' and the meso/macro level which consists of 'structural connections' (Coulter et al., 2015).

Generally, at the micro level, either the individual or the household is seen as the primary decision-making actor, thereby disregarding the influence of others in the decision-making process (Steele et al., 2013). The linked lives perspective does take this broader perspective into account, claiming that other relationships and social geographies can play a role (Coulter et al., 2015). Structural connections can be described as broader societal forces and influences that shape residential mobility. This is similar to the macro context as described by Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999). However, Coulter et al. (2015) add depth to this notion by showing that the moving decisions of individuals are not only influenced by broad societal factors but also by personal relationships and the ability of individuals to make choices. The interactions between these elements create a more complex understanding of residential mobility.

3.1.1. Life course trajectories

The life course approach tries to understand both the consistencies and (unexpected) changes in the lives of individuals (Hutchison, 2010). The changes in the life of an individual can occur for two reasons: an individual can intentionally make a choice that causes these changes, or something in the context in which an individual lives can cause such changes (Dijkstra & Van Wissen, 1999). Within the life course approach, individuals have housing careers, adapting to the changing needs of the individual (Steele, et al., 2013). These changing needs can occur due to the interdependencies between the various life careers and pathways, as formulated by Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999), when for example, elderly individuals choose to move closer to family, desire a one-story home or want a home that is more adaptable to their needs (Mulliner et al., 2020)

When looking at residential mobility in the life course it becomes evident that moving is something that infrequently happens, but occurs because, as Clark (2017) phrases it: "individuals progress along in the life course" (p. 584). Another reason why residential mobility usually only happens infrequently is because individuals are held in place by a set of ties to places and to others (Clark, 2017). Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999) call these ties 'the

daily activity space'. There are different reasons why people either choose to move or would rather stay put that are connected to their life course. Reasons for elderly individuals to consider relocation are often connected to changes in their context, such as the loss of a partner or a decline in health (Bloem et al., 2008; De Jong et al., 2012). Demographic changes or unanticipated events can also play a big role in relocation behavior (De Groot, Mulder, Das, et al., 2011). However, Mulliner et al. (2020) found that the older individuals get, the stronger the desire for a smaller home gets, which could lead to individuals making the choice for a change themselves.

The amount of investment made in the living environment of a household plays a role in the likelihood of this household moving (Sánchez & Andrews, 2011). This is because of what Clark (2017) calls it the set of ties that hold individuals in place. Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999) add to this, saying that even though there might be changes in the household composition, the daily activity patterns of individuals do not change. Therefore, if people do feel the need to move, these moves often cover short distances in order to not leave the daily activity space (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999).

3.1.2. Resources and restrictions

Resources and restrictions come into play when an individual decides to move to another place. In order to be able to make the move, resources are needed. Restrictions in relation to moving are linked to the different life course domains. Resources and restrictions in, once again, other domains can, however, also exert an influence and can therefore either enable or restrict the actual act of moving (Bloem et al., 2008). An example of a restriction given by Mulder & Hooimeijer (1999) is homeownership, because it is a long-term investment that is not easily undone. People also tend to see owner-occupied housing as long-stay housing (Feijten & Mulder, 2002). On the other hand however, it can be argued that homeownership can act as a resource as the selling of one's home releases capital (Abramsson & Andersson 2012).

Ownership of a home can therefore act as a resource or restriction. The research of Abramsson and Andersson (2012) shows that owning a home lowers the probability of moving in comparison to renting a home. Possible explanations for this behavior are greater place attachment and the additional effort required to sell a home, in contrast to the ease with

which a renter can terminate their tenure. It is also argued that owner-occupied homes are often of higher quality in comparison to rental housing (Helderman et al., 2004). This higher quality concerns not only the physical characteristics of the home itself, but also the characteristics of the neighborhoods in which these homes are located. This difference in quality could be a reason why people are reluctant to move. Homeowners often also have lower housing costs and could experience an increase in housing costs once they move (Abramsson & Andersson, 2012). This is especially the case for elderly individuals, who are often already done paying their mortgage. Research also shows that those with less financial resources often tend to wind up in less preferable housing as they don't have as much of a choice in comparison to those with more financial resources (Visser et al., 2013).

Whether individuals really make the decision to move is dependent on a couple of factors. Physical characteristics and location play a big role (Sánchez & Andrews, 2011). However, it is also important to keep in mind the restrictions elderly people face when looking to relocate. For example, a lack of suitable housing or financial considerations can play a part in the residential immobility of the elderly (Coulter, 2013; Han & Kim, 2016; Hansen & Gottschalk, 2006). This is in line with the research of Burby and Rohe (1990) who state that many elderly people are unable to afford houses at market prices because of a lack of resources.

Aside from material resources and restrictions, cognitive aspects or influences can also serve as a resource or restriction in relation to moving homes. The ability to find and use information about housing market options, as well as the ability to negotiate with landlords, might be affected by the cognitive resources of individuals (Visser et al., 2013). This is in line with the research of De Groot, Mulder, and Manting (2011) who argue that decision-making can be influenced by education level. Education level and income potential can have a positive effect on materializing the intentions individuals might have.

Studies about relocation behavior often assume that choices are made rationally by weighing up factors. However, as Matthews and Stephens (2016) state, emotions play a big role in the decision-making process and can influence rational thinking. The research of Sergeant and Ekerdt (2008) adds to this by taking into account the influence of family members on the relocation choices of the elderly. They explain that, for example, the concerns in the direct social network about the safety and wellbeing of the elderly can have an effect on moving

decisions. Besides this, close social relations can act as a resource by facilitating help in both the decision-making process and the actual move itself.

It can also be argued that perceptions of oneself can act as either a resource or a restriction. Beliefs and attitudes that older adults might have can create pressure towards moving (Sergeant and Ekerdt, 2008). These attitudes and beliefs can be shaped by personal experiences but can also be influenced by family or society's expectations of the elderly. The research of Sergeant and Ekerdt (2008) also shows that friends and acquaintances who had recently moved had a positive impact on the decision-making process of elderly individuals contemplating moving. These social connections partly contributed to the social pressures experienced by the respondents but are also described as 'role models'. Lastly, the desire to stay independent can also serve as a restriction. Matthews and Stephens (2016) show that being independent was seen as a valued characteristic for people of older age. The respondents in their research put great emphasis on the idea of independence, as it allowed them to maintain a sense of personal identity and control by staying self-sufficient.

3.1.3. Triggers and preferences

Individuals have multiple life domains that are interdependent and exist parallel to each other. Therefore, a trigger can arise in one of the life domains of the individual and create a mismatch in the other life domains, which can lead to an individual deciding to move (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999). Triggers can arise from personal circumstances, for example, the loss of a partner or a decline in health, but they can also be external, such as the availability of a desirable home. This can influence people to relocate (Karlen et al., 2021). A preference can act as a trigger to move, for example, due to changing needs or requirements for housing for an individual.

Preferences concerning housing and the home environment, as formulated by the elderly themselves, show that with an increase in age, there is a desire for a smaller home. In addition, when looking at specific housing and housing environment preferences, research shows that elderly individuals attach high value to the location and the environment of their home (Mulliner et al., 2020). The survey results of the research of Mulliner et al. (2020) show that safety of the location, cleanliness and aesthetics, accessibility to health services and local amenities, and public transport within walking distance are of high importance. Accessibility

to greenery such as parks or recreational facilities was also deemed important, whereas indoor leisure opportunities were not so much. De Jong et al. (2012) found that living in close proximity to family or other older adults is valued. Preferences concerning the physical house itself included the condition of the home, its energy efficiency, temperature, thermal comfort, and security.

With a decrease in residential mobility as age increases, houses should accommodate the needs of their aging inhabitants, as research shows that unsuitable housing can lead to problems (Mulliner et al., 2020). Kazak et al. (2017) emphasize the need for housing that is accessible, safe, adaptable, and comfortable. These homes include features such as ramps, wider doorways, handrails, good ventilation, and spaces that can be easily adapted to changing needs (Kazak et al., 2017). However, the current housing being constructed for elderly individuals often does not take into account the specific wishes they might have (De Jong et al., 2018). Van Hoof et al. (2021) therefore stress the importance of incorporating elderly individuals in the development of new housing to ensure that it is actually tailored to their needs.

In order to promote residential mobility among the elderly population, it is necessary to look at the triggers and preferences for moving that occur within this population group. As mentioned before, a mismatch between the current housing situation and the preferred housing situation could lead to potential reasons to move (De Jong et al., 2012). Triggers that may lead to the decision to move to a different home often have to do with an empty nest, a decline in health, or the death of a partner (Bloem et al., 2008; De Jong et al., 2012). Other indicators that contribute to the likelihood of moving are a pleasant living environment and the housing characteristics themselves (De Jong, 2022).

Elderly people prefer staying in the same place, also referred to as aging in place (Wiles et al., 2011). There are several reasons why elderly people choose to age in place. As Stewart et al. (2014) discovered, emotional attachment, maintaining independence and control, privacy and personal space, and social networks were all listed as reasons why the elderly chose to stay in their current dwelling. Butcher and Breheny (2016) add to this by saying that the longer someone stays in the same place, the bigger this attachment grows. By not moving, people are staying in their own communities and within their own social networks, which has a lot of value. Not wanting to move can therefore stem from a fear of change (Rioux, 2005),

but elderly people are also hesitant to move as moving to a nursing home can be perceived as a heavy loss of self-identity and independence (Stones & Gullifer, 2014).

Different changes in elderly people's life course result in different types of residential mobility. However, it is important to keep in mind that there is no specific trajectory (Bloem et al., 2008). As described above, residential mobility between regular homes often happens after retirement, the last kid leaving the house, the death of a partner, or when there is a decline in health (Bloem et al., 2008). When a move is made due to retirement, individuals often opt for a nicer neighborhood to live in. When individuals experience an empty nest, residential mobility mainly happens within the same neighborhood but to a smaller home. Widowhood and a decline in mobility make people move to a home that better fits their needs (Bloem et al., 2008). However, a decline in health also showed people moving into residential care facilities, just like an empty nest at a higher age. The move to adapted housing often occurred after losing a partner (Bloem et al., 2008).

3.1.4. Macro context

As mentioned before, the macro context can be defined as the social context in which the individual is unable to make changes (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999). This entails, for example, available housing opportunities or the lack thereof, as it is only possible for an individual to move to another place if there are other places to live available (Mulder and Hooimeijer, 1999). These opportunities are created when new housing is built or because of the departure from previous inhabitants, and they are part of the macro context because they are created outside of the individual (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999). Constraints in the macro context are 'any pressures or obstacles producing "attitude-discrepant" (or counter-attitudinal) actions' (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999, p. 168). When looking at the macro context and the choices that people make, it is important to realize that there is a difference between housing preference and housing choice (Jansen et al., 2011). The concept of choice takes, as Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999) call it, opportunities and constraints into account. Because the macro context influences the decisions people are able to make, their preferences are not always reflected in their choices.

The ability of individuals to relocate to a different home is shaped by housing market conditions at both the local and national levels. These conditions are shaped by government

policies and have an impact on housing market outcomes. The rental sector brings flexibility to the housing market but also has a lot of rules and regulations that can hamper residential mobility. Where rules and regulations can, on the one hand, provide people with, for example, affordable rents, it can also create situations where individuals become reluctant to move because of this below-market rent (Sánchez & Andrews, 2011).

As mentioned before, opportunities in relocation behavior on the macro level can be created with the construction of new housing; however, when rules and regulations in the housing market tend to be too strict, this can actually discourage new construction (Sánchez & Andrews, 2011) and therefore affect these opportunities. Another important factor that influences residential mobility is the responsiveness of the housing supply to changes in demand (Sánchez & Andrews, 2011). This also becomes evident in the research of Mutchler & Burr (2003), which shows that the availability of housing and housing prices in the local housing market play a role in where people choose to live and are able to live. The research of Gonyea (2021), shows that the rapidly growing share of the elderly population in the United States is resulting in a housing shortage with adequate housing for this elderly population.

After World War 2, elderly people in the Netherlands were encouraged to leave their homes and move into homes for elderly. By doing this, young families were able to move into the houses that became available (Van Egdom, 1997). However, the housing shortage became less urgent, and rising care costs became an issue for the government. Therefore, starting around the 1960s, the policy encouraging elderly people to move into care homes has been reversed and now encourages the elderly to stay at home for as long as possible (Van Egdom, 1997), often referred to as ‘aging in place’.

Even though the government has been encouraging elderly people to stay at home for as long as possible, De Jong et al. (2018) show that the housing market currently has a shortage of 373.000 homes that are suitable for the elderly population. These homes have features such as good isolation and no stairs and are adaptable in design to accommodate changes in mobility and health (Mulliner et al., 2020). Many of these homes are luxury apartments created within cities; however, the biggest part of the aging population in the Netherlands lives outside of these places (Smets, 2011). This is mainly because of the government’s clustering policy, which limits the amount of land for housing development in rural areas but favors housing

development in urban areas (Smets, 2011). De Jong et al. (2018) also note that the current housing being constructed for these elderly individuals does not take into account the specific wishes they might have. This is in line with the research of Van Hoof et al. (2021), as they emphasize the need to incorporate older people in the development of new housing that is actually tailored to their needs. Besides this, the housing that is being constructed is expensive due to the lack of available land (Smets, 2011). Another challenge the older population in the Netherlands could be facing is the lack of living communities, such as residential care homes. This creates a gap in suitable housing for those who don't need full care but also cannot live independently completely (Van Hoof et al., 2021).

3.2 Context

This research will take place within Veenendaal; therefore, it is important to take local and national policies into consideration. Since 2015 the Netherlands has implemented 'Wmo 2015' or 'Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning 2015' (freely translated: Social support act 2015) which aims at helping people stay at home and be independent for as long as possible (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, 2023). The Dutch government does, however, also realize that there needs to be more adequate housing for their aging population. In their program for living and care for the elderly (Programma Wonen en Zorg voor Ouderen) they state there is a need for sufficient homes in the right environment. This is to ensure that elderly individuals can live independently for as long as possible. They add to this that there also needs to be improvements made in both health care and support systems. By realizing adequate housing, they aim to motivate mobility patterns and overall circulation in the housing market (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2022).

Veenendaal itself is a municipality with currently around 68.000 inhabitants. The municipality expects this to increase to 80.000 inhabitants in the next 20 years. Because of the growing share of elderly individuals in our society, the municipality of Veenendaal expects a growing need for future-proof housing that fits the needs of elderly individuals. However, Veenendaal has already reached its' borders and therefore needs to be creative in providing new housing (Gemeente Veenendaal, 2022).

In order to provide new housing to accommodate their growing population, the municipality of Veenendaal will start redeveloping 'Het Ambacht'. This is currently an industrial area in

Veenendaal, which will disappear to make room for the new neighborhood. Starting in 2025 the municipality will start developing this area, aiming to create a neighborhood with a city-like character. This entails high-rise buildings and a high population density in the area. The area will be low-traffic, with parking facilities at the edges of the neighborhood and amenities and facilities nearby. Throughout the neighborhood, there will be a large park to accommodate greenery for everyone. The neighborhood will become a lively place with a mix of different inhabitants, from starters to seniors. To accommodate this, housing types will be mixed as well, differing from social housing to owner-occupied housing (Gemeente Veenendaal, 2024).

Chapter 4: Methodology

The following chapter will outline the research methods used in this research in order to answer the research questions as defined in the introduction. The specific research methods used to gather and analyze the data will be discussed.

This study uses qualitative data collection and analysis to answer the research questions. According to Bryman (2012), qualitative research tries to understand the social world through the eyes of its participants. This research design was chosen to create a better understanding of the experiences, opinions, and beliefs of the respondents. The current study can be described as a ‘typical or exemplifying’ case study, which Bryman (2012) describes as a case study that is not extreme or unusual but will provide a suitable context for some research questions to be answered (p. 70). Besides this, this study takes an interpretivist stance, putting emphasis on understanding the subjective meanings attributed to the actions, interactions, and social contexts of the respondents.

The current research has tried to answer the research questions by using semi-structured interviews based on a topic list. By doing semi-structured interviews, there was still a guide for the researcher to cover all necessary topics, but also the possibility to touch upon topics that were brought up by the respondents during the interview. The topic list for these interviews was developed based on a literature review that was conducted beforehand. The topic list can be found in Appendix 1. Before starting with the interviews, the topic list was discussed with the thesis supervisor and stakeholders of the municipality of Veenendaal. After the first interview with the respondents, the topic list was reviewed once more. The topic list is structured into different sections, covering the physical characteristics of the dwelling and its surroundings, living arrangements, residential mobility, and ‘Het Ambacht’. Since the questions about living arrangements are not relevant for the current study, they will not be elaborated on.

Questions about the physical characteristics of the dwelling and its surroundings focused on the home itself, what respondents believed to be necessary in a home built for elderly individuals, and what their preferences towards housing were. It also covered the home's environment, asking about necessary neighborhood facilities and subjects such as greenery and street furniture. Questions about residential mobility covered the subject of moving

homes, restrictions faced by respondents while considering relocation, and general questions about the promotion of residential mobility among elderly individuals. Lastly, questions were asked about 'Het Ambacht'. A mood board (see appendix 2) provided by the municipality was shown to respondents. By showing this picture, respondents could form a better image of what 'Het Ambacht' will look like in the future. A short explanation was given about the redevelopment plans of the municipality. After this, respondents were able to give their opinion about the redevelopment plans, giving both positive and negative feedback.

Respondents were able to choose whether they wanted to be interviewed at their current residence or at the town hall. Most respondents chose to be interviewed at home. The respondents that chose to be interviewed at City Hall were interviewed in private rooms that were reserved by the researcher beforehand. The interviews were conducted in weeks 15, 16 and 17 of 2024. Before the start of the interviews, consent was asked to record the interview. It was also emphasized that there were no wrong answers and that the researcher's main interest had to do with the respondent's opinion. Interviews generally took around 45 minutes to an hour. Recordings were made on the researcher's phone and deleted after transcription. All interviews are anonymous, only asking respondents about their age.

The sampling method employed to recruit respondents can be described as purposive sampling (Bryman, 2012). Purposive sampling seeks out respondents in a strategic way; this is done to ensure that the respondents are relevant to the formulated research questions. Respondents for this research were recruited with the following criteria in mind: they had to be 65 years of age or older, a variety in socio-economic background, and a variety in living situations. Respondents were recruited with the help of the municipality of Veenendaal. By seeking contact with different senior citizen organizations, it was possible to recruit respondents that fit the above-described criteria. The organizations that eventually provided the respondents were 'Wijs met je Wijk', an organization for more affluent senior citizens, and 'VeensWelzijn', which is the welfare organization in Veenendaal, which provided respondents in the social housing sector. Besides this, the relocation coach at Veenendaal provided respondents who were willing to relocate but were often still living in owner-occupied housing.

Respondents were reached through personal information provided by the above-mentioned organizations and relocation coach. Respondents were called or received an email asking if

they were interested in participating in the research. During this call or in the email, more information was provided about the purpose of the research. After making an appointment, respondents received an additional email with the time and date of the appointment and a letter containing a short explanation of the research.

The eventual sample size of the research was $N = 35$, consisting of 29 interviews. This group consisted of 7 couples, of which 6 were married and one couple consisted of two neighbors, as well as 21 respondents who were interviewed alone. The choice to conduct 29 interviews was made due to the saturation of the data. Saturation in qualitative research means that no new findings are being made from the collected data. In this case, the researcher sees the same patterns repeatedly. Based on this, the researcher may choose not to collect any more data (Saunders et al., 2017). Because the research was conducted with a fellow student, only half of the respondents were interviewed by the researcher of this research. However, the data of all 35 respondents was analyzed and used for this research. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the respondents. Respondents grouped together were interviewed together.

4.1 Analysis

The interview recordings were transcribed. After transcription, the interviews were coded with Nvivo 14 to ensure structural coding. First, the data was reviewed using open coding. Open coding generates concepts, which are later turned into categories after being grouped (Bryman, 2012). These concepts were connected to the different topics on the topic list to be able to connect them to the literature review that was conducted at the beginning of the research. The code list can be found in Appendix 3.

4.2 Validity and reliability

To be able to assess the quality of the research, it is important to look at its validity and reliability (Bryman, 2012). To do so, it is important to keep internal and external validity in mind, together with internal and external reliability. The internal validity ensures a good match between the observations made and the theories developed. The current research tried to do this by connecting the categories that emerged from open coding to the topic list based on a literature review. Besides this, the research makes use of data triangulation (Noble & Smith, 2015), by making use of different data sources, such as the collected interview data and studies from other researchers. The study also used topic lists during the interview to

collect structural data, ensuring that all interviews had the same structure. The external validity looks at the degree of generalization of the study. Since the current study can be described as a case study, it is hard to generalize these findings. However, the questions in the topic list touch upon general themes, considering housing preferences and residential mobility, making it possible to have some form of generalizability.

Internal reliability has to do with agreement between researchers when there is more than one participating in the research. Because half of the interviews in this research were conducted by a fellow student, internal reliability was ensured by doing an interview together. This way, there was a mutual understanding of how the question should be asked and how certain topics were to be explained. The analysis of the data and the formulation of theories for this research are done separately and therefore do not affect the internal reliability. Lastly, external reliability has to do with the degree to which a study can be replicated. As with the external validity, the fact that the current study is a case study makes it difficult to replicate the study. This also has to do with the way respondents were recruited, with the inside help of the municipality. However, to mitigate this, this chapter tries to outline the steps taken in this research as transparently as possible, allowing for better replication of the study.

Table 1: Respondent characteristics.

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Current living situation</i>	<i>Current house</i>	<i>Willing to move</i>
1	66	Alone	Senior housing	No
2	65	Alone	Senior housing	No
3	70	Together	Semi-detached housing	Yes
4	74	Alone	Semi-detached housing	Yes
5	75	Alone	Senior housing	No
6	74	Together	Semi-detached housing	No
7	70	Alone	Semi-detached housing	No
8	-	Together	Single-family townhouse	No
9	62	Together	Semi-detached housing	No
	77			
10	70	Alone	Corner house	Yes
11	86	Together	Semi-detached housing	Yes
	85			
12	85	Together	Senior housing	No
	82			
13	75	Alone	Detached house	Yes
14	79	Alone	Apartment	No
15	66	Together	Townhouse	No
2.1	81	Alone	Senior housing	No
2.2	86	Alone	Senior housing	No
2.3	80	Alone	Detached house	Yes
2.4	73	Alone	Semi-detached housing	Yes
2.5	82	Together	One-level apartment	Yes
	84			
2.6	78	Alone	Senior housing	No
2.7	73	Together	Senior housing	No
2.8	83	Together	Single-family corner house	Yes
	82			
2.9	76	Alone	Bungalow	No
2.10	80	Alone	Detached house	Yes
2.11	77	Alone	Senior housing	No
2.12	86	Alone	Senior housing	No
2.13	66	Together	Semi-detached housing	No
	69			
2.14	80	Alone	Senior housing	No

Chapter 5: Results

The following section will discuss the main findings from the interview analysis. The section is divided into four parts, each focusing on a different part of the theoretical framework of Mulder and Hooimeijer. The first section will look into the life course and changes that lead to relocation. After this, triggers that invoke these changes will be discussed. This will be followed by what preferences individuals have concerning housing. After this, experiences about resources and restrictions will be discussed. The last section will have a wider scope, focusing on the macro context and relocation behavior.

5.1 Life course trajectories and changes in the life course

This section will discuss life course trajectories and the changes that occur within the life course due to triggers

Changes in the life course occur because an individual either decides to make a change or because something in the context of the individual changes. In light of relocation, for some respondents, this meant actively making the choice to relocate to another home because their needs were not met by their house anymore. As Mr. and Mrs. Jansen, respectively 83 and 82 years old, explained about wanting to relocate:

“We want to move to have everything on one level, so that you no longer have to climb stairs, which also makes it much easier to maintain the house, especially for my wife” (Mr. Jansen, 83 years old, living together in a corner house)

As this quote shows, these respondents wanted to move because their current housing did not fit their needs anymore. They wanted to relocate because, even though the stairs did not pose a problem yet, they realized that their housing needs could change in the future. Another couple, called Mr. and Mrs. Beek, also realized that changes in their life course could lead to possible problems in the future. Even though these respondents were quite vital considering their age, they felt the need to move:

“Well, because we, let's say, have a need for it in due time, because as we are now, it's not necessary yet. But we are looking ahead, because things won't stay as they are. And we don't know when that might happen. At the age of 84, you live day to day. Yes, anything can happen suddenly. And then my wife would be left alone if something happens to me. That

would cause a lot of problems. So, in that respect, we want to plan ahead so that there are options for my wife to immediately make contact with people regarding the house.” (Mr. and Mrs. Beek, 84 and 82 years old, living together in a large one level apartment)

In these cases, the change was made before the context of the respondents would change, leading to the need to move. However, another respondent, Mrs. Bakker, explained that due to a change in her context, she felt the need to move. Since her partner had to move to a care home, she felt that the home was too big to maintain on her own, making it hard for her to do daily tasks:

“Yes, because my husband has moved to a care home and I've noticed that I have physical problems keeping this house clean. [...] Because if it hadn't been for that, I would still be sitting here. But it's simply because, once I've vacuumed here in the morning, I sit down first. And then I have to think, I have to go to my husband, so I can't do this or that now. So I have to plan everything. It's too tiring for me.” (73 years old, living alone in semi-detached housing)

Besides this, Mr. and Mrs. Beek found it difficult to move away from the place they had lived for so many years, giving up the social connections they built during that time. They felt like they were being held in place by these social ties:

“That's why we actually don't want to move away from Veenendaal. We would also lose those contacts with friends and such. Then everything would have to come a long way to come to you.” (84 and 82 years old, living together in a large one-level apartment)

However, other respondents mentioned not having trouble at all when talking about moving. They felt like their current housing situation wasn't suitable for them anymore, making them motivated to move to a new place to live. As one respondent mentioned about the upkeep of her current home:

“Yes, I don't feel like it anymore either. I always enjoyed it [upkeep in and around the house] and did it with pleasure, but now I'm just like, I can't find the motivation to do it again.” (75 years old, living alone in a large detached house)

One lady who already lived in housing suitable for senior citizens explained how she did not have any trouble with moving. In the past couple of years, she moved a couple of times due

to her changing housing needs. Her first move was after the passing of her husband. She explained that after he passed away and her children moved out, the house became too big for her, making her opt for a smaller apartment. At that time, she already had a preference for senior housing, but since this was unavailable, she ended up in a home with two floors. However, after a couple of years, she became unable to walk down the stairs and fell down a couple of times. Because of this, she moved to her current apartment and explained that she was extremely happy with her choice to do so:

“I used to live on the other side of [street name]. And there were two staircases there. And that's why I moved away. I had fallen down the stairs several times. And I had to move to a one-story apartment. Well, then I ended up here. And here. I say, this is my spot, I'm staying here, and I hope to live to be 100 here.” (86 years old, living alone in a senior apartment)

At the time of moving to her senior housing, this respondent was around 70 years old. However, due to a change in her vitality, she made the decision to move to a senior apartment, as her previous home did not meet her needs anymore. Another respondent, who also lived in a senior apartment, mentioned that she hoped to stay in her current place for as long as possible. However, she also added to this that if her circumstances were not allowing her to live independently anymore, she would have no trouble moving to a care home:

“Yes well, what else can I do? I mean, I am very happy with all my stuff and my plants you know, it's not that I don't like it here. But yes, once the time comes,. Yes well you know.” (77 years old, living alone in a senior apartment)

Her attitude was in contrast to that of one of the other respondents, who absolutely did not want to move. This lady also already lived in senior housing. When she was asked about the future and her wellbeing, she stated that she would never be moving again. She explained that she was very satisfied with her current home because she saw it as the perfect place to live, but she was losing her eyesight and would eventually become completely blind. This would make it very hard for her to live independently. However, the unfamiliarity of a new home that would be more suitable for her circumstances was outweighed by the comfort of her current home:

“So then I would just get help, you know. And if, for example, I can't spread bread at lunchtime anymore or make meals, then there are delivery organizations that can do such

things for you. So I keep saying, 'I'm staying!'" (81 years old, living alone in a senior apartment)

Changes in the life course

There were different changes in the context of individuals that made them want to relocate. These changes can be described as triggers. Most often, respondents mentioned a decline in health as a reason to consider relocation and eventually relocate. Multiple respondents described the turning point for moving a decline in health that would make it impossible to stay in their current place of residence independently, becoming a burden for themselves, their family members, and also for those who had to provide care for them at home:

"If I can no longer walk. You see, if I really need 24-hour assistance, at least, or if I can no longer walk around the house,. Then it just becomes dangerous to live alone." (81 years old, living alone in senior housing)

Other respondents mentioned the loss of a partner as a reason. For some respondents, this meant staying behind in a home that was too big for their liking, whereas others indicated being unable to keep up with all the maintenance of the home on their own. Mrs. Bakker, for example, discovered that after her husband had to move to a care home, it became too much for her to take care of the house by herself.

There were also respondents who had already moved to more suitable housing, mostly for one of the above-mentioned reasons. These respondents expressed their happiness with their choice and often mentioned that moving itself actually wasn't that big of a hassle because of the help they were able to get:

"Well, it was like this, we got this house. And then my son said, if you pack up your house... Because yes, a lot had to go, of course. Then we will sponsor your house, so his girlfriend and him. And they did that. He took a few weeks off and did the wallpapering. Well, you name it, whatever needed to be done. And three weeks later, I was here. So that's actually really nice." (77 years old, living alone in senior housing)

On the other hand there were also respondents who were convinced that moving wasn't necessary as they could just adjust their home to keep living comfortably.

Some respondents did not want to bother their kids, as they expressed their children having busy lives of their own. They'd rather employ the help from their social network such as friends or neighbors. If this wasn't possible respondents mentioned hiring a professional service to help facilitate their relocation. Respondents did, however, mention that the municipality had to create some kind of assistance for those who did not have the financial means and/or social network to fall back on when relocating.

In summary, when looking at life course trajectories, it becomes clear that respondents relocate either because of a choice made by themselves or because of changes in their context leading to that choice. Some respondents mentioned thinking about the future and the changes that could occur as they got older. This often led them to consider relocation, as their current home did not feel suitable enough for those changes to occur. However, there were also respondents who experienced a change in context, such as suddenly living alone, and because of that change, felt the urge to move to another place. These changes can be described as triggers. The loss of a partner or a decline in health could result in the relocation to more suitable housing. Another reason for wanting to move was not being able to keep up with the maintenance of the home. Some respondents experienced being held in place by the social ties they'd built up over the years. This made them reluctant to move. In contrast, there were also respondents who had no problem moving. For example, one of the respondents who already lived in social housing explained not being troubled by the idea of having to move to a new place if necessary because of changes in her context.

The life course approach tries to understand consistencies and (unexpected) changes in the lives of individuals (Hutchison, 2010). Besides this, Steele et al. (2013) describe how housing adapts to the changing needs of an individual during the life course. When talking to respondents about these changes in their life course, it became evident that the level of vitality of the respondent played a big role in the changes that respondents made in regards to their housing. What was noteworthy is that the level of vitality didn't always correlate to the age of the respondent. When, for example, comparing the answers of Mrs. Bakker and Mr. and Mrs. Beek, it shows how Mrs. Bakker feels less vital than Mr. and Mrs. Beek, even though she is 11 years younger. She indicated often feeling tired and having to really schedule the number of things she did in a day. This also influences her housing preferences.

Besides this, the moving out of her husband changed her need for space and her daily activity space, as she wanted to visit him every day.

Because an individual has different life domains, a trigger in one domain can lead to a mismatch in other domains (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999). Respondents indicated that a loss of mobility or the passing of one's partner were triggers to relocate to a different home. This is in line with the findings of Karlen et al. (2020). Respondents described wanting a home that better fit their needs, as having stairs did not go together with a loss in mobility, and homes became too big to live in alone.

5.2 Preferences

The following section will discuss the preferences respondents have in relation to housing and their home environment. These preferences often stem from the triggers discussed above. However a preference itself can also act as a trigger to move.

Preferences concerning physical characteristics of the home

When asked about their preferences regarding the physical characteristics of a home, almost all respondents indicated wanting a home that was on one level. However, there were also a lot of differences between the answers of the respondents. Some respondents already lived in senior apartments, whereas others still lived in a large detached home with a garden. Still, there are some elements most respondents deemed important to have in a home. Most respondents thought about their living preferences with regard to the future. This entailed, for example, the possibility of a loss of mobility while wanting to maintain as much independence as possible. Things that were received as possible obstructions in the future were doorsteps, small door frames, and small rooms. As one respondent already living in a senior apartment mentioned:

“The doors are very wide. I always take my walker to the bedroom. Because my eyesight is limited, I don't have... You easily lose your balance. But I can do everything, the doors are wide and I just have the space to park my walker, which I always do.” (86 years old, living alone in senior housing)

This shows that even though the eyes of the abovementioned respondent are bad, she was able to live independently and get around the house with ease because of the wide doors.

Besides this, she also has enough space to actually park her walker in all her rooms because the home is spacious enough to provide for this. Mrs. Bakker added to this by stating:

“Same-level and space, and I really mean starting from 70 square meters and not going back to 50 like they are doing now, because then you can't move. [...] If you need care, which nowadays is often provided at home, it needs to be spacious; otherwise, they can't help you, and that's where it falls short.” (73 years old, living alone in semi-detached housing)

Having enough space in the home was something that was mentioned more often during the interviews. However the amount of space that was seen as 'enough' varied between the interviewees. Some respondents were satisfied with the idea of having a three-room apartment consisting of a spacious living room, a bedroom, and one extra room with around 70 m² of living space. Others were more keen on having a(n) (more luxurious) apartment with four rooms and at least 100 m² of living space. This entailed a large living room, two bedrooms, and an extra room that could serve as a study or hobby room. A thing most respondents had in common, however, was the need for a spacious bathroom. This relates back to the possibility of getting around the house with a walker and the possible need for care in the future. Having enough space also applied to the hallways and elevators outside of the direct home. Another element that was mentioned multiple times was the need for good isolation in order to keep the home warm enough during the winter but also have the possibility of cooling down the home during the summer and having enough natural light entering the home:

“Light is very important in a home because seniors spend a lot of time at home, so natural light is essential.” (80 years old, living alone in large detached housing)

Some strong dislikes mentioned by respondents mainly had to do with the size of apartments. Most respondents mentioned disliking apartments that were smaller than 60 m² and small balconies, as this would lead to a cramped feeling. Respondents were also not keen on high-rise buildings and having little space in between buildings:

“You could be on the 13th floor with a balcony of just 2 square meters, and it's really warm or simply nice weather. Then you also want to go outside, you don't want to feel cramped tightly between buildings. I think that's also very important, to have some living space outside your home.” (62 and 77 years old, living together in semi-detached housing)

Interviewees valued having some sort of outdoor space. Respondents generally did not mind the idea of living in an apartment, but they did stress that the outdoor space attached to the house had to be spacious. A balcony had to be able to accommodate seating for at least four people and would still have to have enough space to easily walk around the seating. Besides that, having enough space for some plants was also important. There were also some respondents who preferred a home on the ground level with a garden instead of an apartment with a balcony:

“Comfort to me also means that it is ground-level. That I can go into the garden, the greenery. I'm not a fan of balconies and that sort of thing. I grew up in the city until I was 14 and have seen enough balconies. So greenery is important to me in a certain way.” (74 years old, living with a partner in semi-detached housing)

Besides this, the idea of having a common room or some sort of place nearby where activities could be hosted was very appealing to respondents. The idea of being able to have a place they could always go to if they would like to do something was mentioned often. For some, this could be just drinking some coffee or maybe watching TV with others, whereas others specifically mentioned the possibility of doing activities. Having a common room was seen as a way to keep up with social connections and to get out of the house. The common room, however, had to be completely separated from the place of residence itself, as privacy was deemed very important by all respondents. Some respondents who already lived in a senior apartment with a common room mentioned how satisfied they were with the activities hosted there:

“What I have now at the moment is this: you're not obligated to do anything, but it's offered to you. So, it's up to you whether you make use of it or not, yes or no. And that's how I am with it as well. I try so much. I hardly ever skip the gym, you know. But I've been going there for about ten years now. They become your friends, you know. It's so nice. [...] And then we have coffee for about fifteen minutes. Sometimes there's a cookie, sometimes nothing. But you can have your chat. Because you all know each other so well, and that's why I hardly ever skip it.” (77 years old, living alone in senior housing)

Lastly, when looking at the physical properties of a home itself, respondents mentioned the need for an extra storage room outside of their home. This could be used for storing extra stuff or for example, a scooter or bike. Because respondents would like to store their scooter

or bike in a separate space, they stressed the importance of being able to actually charge those items in that space.

Preferences and vitality

During the interviews, it became clear that the level of vitality of the respondents played a role in their housing preferences. The respondents already living in senior housing indicated not being willing to move someplace else as their current home already suited their preferences and needs. Some respondents already living in senior housing did mention realizing that, at some point, they might have to move to a care facility. However, this was something that would only happen once living alone became impossible to do.

As mentioned before, the answers of respondents about the size of the home varied, with some respondents indicating a preference for a home with three rooms and others having a preference for a home with four rooms. When analyzing the data, it became evident that the level of vitality of the respondents played a role in these preferences. More vital respondents often had a more active lifestyle with social activities and hobbies. These respondents still regularly hosted people in their homes. Because of this, they often had a preference for a home with four rooms. As Mr. and Mrs. Jansen stated:

“A comfortable home for us is also, because we have quite a few social contacts, that we would like to have more rooms. This way, we can also accommodate guests who can stay here. And we also have children and grandchildren, and it would be nice if we could just give them a place as well.” (82 and 83 years old, living in a corner house)

Respondents who were less vital preferred a smaller home with fewer rooms. They were not vital enough anymore to, for example, host people in their home and therefore needed less space. Another reason for the preference for fewer rooms was the maintenance of the home becoming too much for them:

“And furthermore, the size is big enough for me. I also have it [the second bedroom] as an additional room, but that’s more like my junk room, really. I always had my hobbies and things, though a bit less now than when I first came here. But now it’s all still there and a bedroom. So, I actually never have guests or anything like that.” (86 years old, living alone in senior housing)

Preferences concerning the living environment around the home

When looking at the living environment around the home, a lot of respondents mentioned the importance of having facilities nearby. This includes, for example, having a supermarket, bakery, butcher, and pharmacy within ten minutes walking distance. One respondent also mentioned the importance of flexible spaces in the neighborhood that could be used for social activities but could also host certain medical procedures, such as taking blood samples. The common room at her current place of residence could be described as such a flexible space as it hosted a variety of activities and services. One of those services that made use of this common room was a thrombosis service:

“You used to have the thrombosis service downstairs in the common room, as well as a pedicure, and more things like that. And it's all been taken away. They have moved it to that doctor's office, what's it called, but that's way too far away for me. And that's what I find problematic about this neighborhood, that all of this has been removed from this area.” (86 years old, living alone in senior housing)

Besides this, some respondents expressed that they would like to have some sort of coffee place within the neighborhood where they could go and have a drink with friends or family:

“Also there, at that shopping center in the South, you have something like a pizzeria, but there are all those guys with black hair and beards sitting there. Yeah, as an old lady, I don't feel like going there for a cup of coffee; it's not inviting at all. But it would be a nice addition if something like that was there. Yeah, because when you meet someone, you end up standing on the street talking until the other person says, ‘Hey, I can't stand for so long’.” (80 years old, living alone in a large detached house)

Respondents also mentioned the need for green surroundings. This included having trees and bushes in the neighborhood but could also be a park where you could take a walk. Benches were mentioned as important because they allowed respondents to take a rest during a walk or just sit outside when the weather was nice. However, in order to go outside and take a walk, some respondents mentioned that the condition of the sidewalks was important. The need for level sidewalks that were broad enough was stressed by multiple respondents who felt like their current neighborhood could not provide this. As a result, respondents could not go outside easily:

“And what I have a lot of trouble with, the sidewalks and bike paths, there are so many bumps in them. And I can't stand it. And when I go around them with my mobility scooter, I get really nauseous.” (66 years old, living alone in senior housing)

Or even hurt themselves whilst walking outside:

“Well, that happens sometimes because my brother and sister-in-law always go for walks on Saturdays. And two months ago, they were walking behind the [location name]. Then there was a loose tile, you see, and they fell. And then my sister-in-law, her elbow was fractured. Well, she's been in rehabilitation for six weeks now. ” (86 years old, living alone in senior housing)

When asked about the level of activity and the level of social mix in the neighborhood the opinions of the interviewees were divided. Some interviewees were keen on the idea of having a mixed neighborhood with people of different kinds of ages, backgrounds, and socio-economic status. These respondents also liked some more hustle and bustle on the streets, as it provided entertainment when looking out the window:

“Yes, a bit of bustle. Yeah, as you get older, if you don't make sure you keep the bustle going, you're reducing the stimuli, and then you're slowly shrinking in your mind. So, it's precisely those environmental dynamics and tolerance that come with it that I find important.” (74 years old, living with a partner in semi-detached housing)

There were also respondents who were more keen on the idea of having a neighborhood with some more elderly people and less hustle and bustle on the streets. Other respondents also disliked the idea of a mixed neighborhood in relation to their background and/or socio-economic background. They were mostly worried that not everyone would have respect for the elderly:

“I think it's important that the population groups involved have respect for the elderly. Now, I'm going to tread on very thin ice here. You see, there are population groups that often reside in social housing. They have less respect for the elderly, leading to antisocial conditions. Just like certain neighborhoods here in Veenendaal,. So, you see what kind of antisocial neighborhoods they've become. I dread the thought of ending up in a residential area where such people also live.” (69 years old, living with a partner in semi-detached housing)

In short, there is a preference for one-level living. Homes should be spacious and accessible. Even though the preferences vary, respondents indicated the need for natural lighting, good isolation, and outdoor space. Besides this, there should be flexible spaces that can be used for different activities and services. Proximity to daily amenities and medical facilities is valued. The level of vitality of elderly individuals plays a role in their housing preferences, with the more vital seniors preferring a house with more rooms.

5.3 Resources and Restrictions

In this part, restrictions on finding the right housing are discussed. Whether the preferences discussed above can be realized is dependent on resources and restrictions.

Obstacles in finding the right home

More than half of the respondents who did not live in senior housing indicated being willing to move out of their current home. However, while actively looking or just being open to the idea of moving, almost all respondents experienced difficulty finding a home that fit their preferences and needs. The available housing was either not the right size, too expensive, or, as some respondents indicated, just not worth it in comparison to their current home. Mr. and Mrs. Jansen explained their troubles. While looking for a new place, they found that many senior houses were very small:

“R1: And what we would really like is an extra room for a guest. It doesn't have to be big, but just for a guest. Because you often see a living room, a bedroom, and what else is there? And we would really like that. And then still a very small amount of space, because many senior homes are indeed very small.

R2: And then, of course, you really end up losing out a lot.” (Mr. en Mrs. Jansen, 83 and 82 years old, living together in a corner house)

Mr. and Mrs. Jansen also explained the lack of cooperation and flexibility from housing corporations. When discussing the financial aspects of finding new housing, they explained that, on paper, they could only afford social housing. In reality, however, they had more to spend and could actually rent housing outside of the social sector. They expressed being unable to find a house that suited their preferences and were therefore considering not even moving at all anymore but rather adjusting their home in order to be able to live comfortably.

Because their current home was a rental and taking their age into account, they felt like they had reached a point where they had to make a decision:

“Yes, and we're actually putting it [investing in the current home] off a bit. Because we're on the fence, do we keep living here, or if we could get something else after all.” (Mr. and Mrs. Jansen, 83 and 82 years old, living together in a corner house)

Respondents who were eligible for social housing also experienced restrictions when looking for housing. The long waiting lists for houses in the social rental sector provided great difficulty in their relocation processes. As they could not look for housing outside of the social sector, their options were limited. Respondents felt discouraged to keep looking for another home, as Mrs. Bakker explained:

“So, I thought about it in the autumn, I would like to leave here, but I didn't realize how difficult it is because I'm registered with Huiswaarts. Well, then you're one of the 5-600 who wants a house. (73 years old, living alone in semi-detached housing)

This waiting time and discouragement actually led respondents to consider staying in their current home and making adjustments in order to live comfortably and meet their needs. A lot of respondents mentioned the implementation of a stairlift and help around the house if they weren't able to do certain things themselves anymore.

Another respondent added to this, saying that in her neighborhood she knew more seniors who would not mind the idea of moving to a smaller home but that the current housing stock did not provide for their preferences. She realized that she had to give up quite a lot when moving from her current home and she expressed being willing to do so, but she was not willing to give up everything:

“We want something built for the more luxurious sector. People who live quite nicely. I hear from everyone who lives in this neighborhood. Most houses are, of course, a bit smaller than this one. [...] I want to move, but I can't find anything nice. We all feel the same way, really. And we all have rooms sitting empty. But yeah, there needs to be a better idea.” (80 years old, living alone in a large detached house)

She also added to this that even though she could sell her current house and buy a new apartment, the housing prices for new apartments were outrageous.

Some respondents indicated having housing preferences for housing that was scarce in the current housing market, which posed a restriction. Respondents often realized their preferences could not be met. However, they did not alter their preferences to something more realistic and would rather stay at home instead of moving. As one respondent explained:

“I am not going to live in a small apartment. Unless there is a very large balcony, a penthouse, or something with a beautiful view over the forests, then it might be different. But even then, I would have to think about it very carefully.” (69 years old, living with a partner in a semi-detached house)

In the literature, it also becomes evident that there is a lack of suitable housing for the elderly population (Coulter et al., 2015; Han & Kim, 2016; Hansen & Gottschalk, 2006). This also becomes evident in the result described above, where financial aspects play a big role in the possibility of finding new housing. As Abramsson and Andersson (2012) show in their research, homeowners often experience low housing costs. Some respondents confirmed this finding and explained that because of this, they did not consider it worth the effort to move to another home as this would lead to an increase in their fixed expenses. However, the high housing prices were also a restriction for some respondents, as they could not afford homes at market prices. This is in line with the research of Burby and Rohe (1990), who explain that many elderly people are unable to afford houses at market prices because of a lack of resources. Some respondents added to this, saying that because of their age, they were not entitled to a mortgage anymore. Respondents who had to rely on socially rented housing indicated not being able to find a home that suited their preferences and needs in this sector. Visser et al. (2013) show similar findings, as those with fewer financial resources often wind up in less preferable housing. Besides this, housing in the rented sector is often of lower quality, possibly having a negative effect on moving behavior (Helderman et al., 2004).

Emotional, cognitive and social restrictions

In addition to experiencing practical limitations, respondents also experienced cognitive restrictions in relation to moving. One of the respondents explained not being keen on the idea of moving because of his emotional attachment to his house and neighborhood. His age also played a role in his hesitancy towards moving:

“I am giving up a lot by leaving here. And I have a large social network here because I am the founder and chairman of [organization for seniors]. I know a lot of people here. And, I am very capable of building a new network again, but as you get older, that does become a bit more difficult to do” (70 years old, living alone in semi-detached housing)

Mrs. Bakker added to this by stating:

“I can go to Ede, or to Scherpenzeel, or Wageningen [to find a house]. But I'm at an age where I can't move around among people so easily anymore to gain new knowledge, which I have acquired here over the years. So, it's not easy to go to another place. You don't do that. That's very simple. So, you're stuck.” (73 years old, living alone in semi-detached housing)

Restrictions in relation to age played a role for more respondents. Mr. and Mrs. Jansen explained experiencing age discrimination when applying for housing in shared living communities, and they were not the only ones who mentioned this problem. As they explained:

“No, we haven't even met them. It's purely over the phone, 'How old are you?' And then I already heard, and then they called two weeks later saying, 'Well, we've discussed it in the committee and you're too old, so we're not recommending you.’” (83 and 82 years old, living in a corner house)

On the other hand, one of the respondents was a member of the board in a similar shared living community and explained that people were more often declined on the basis of age. This was due to the expected vitality of people of a certain age and their ability to contribute to the community. However, the age of Mr. and Mrs. Jansen was in contrast with their expected vitality, as they explained that they were still volunteering and taking part in all kinds of activities. That age was not a good predictor of vitality was the case for more respondents, as Mrs. Bakker, for example, was 73 years old but described having trouble with the upkeep of her house and often feeling too tired to participate in activities.

Another respondent explained that she really enjoyed living in her current house and neighborhood. Even though she explained during the interview that there were quite a few obstacles to living in her current house, she did not see any reason to move to housing that would be more suitable for her. She still perceived herself as vital and capable enough to stay where she was. However, she mentioned getting help in her garden every few weeks, so the

things she was unable to keep up with were still done. Besides this, she recently installed new lighting with movement sensors around her home in order to feel more safe at night. She also stated that she would rather adapt her house to her needs and get home care before moving.

Besides the above-mentioned, Mrs. Bakker mentioned having trouble finding the right information online. She explained that even though she used to work with a computer for her job and took several courses on how to do things on a computer, it posed difficulty for her in finding a home online. Another respondent added to this by explaining that they experienced difficulty finding information online about upcoming housing construction with housing suitable for seniors.

There were also respondents who mentioned not being able to relocate earlier because their partner did not want to move. After the passing of their partner, however, relocating became an option again:

“Yes, my husband had passed away in the other house because he always said he would stay there. I always said I hope I won't be alone, but I won't stay living here. He passed away within three years, and then I moved here.” (80 years old, living alone in senior housing)

Besides facing more material restrictions, respondents also faced restrictions on a more cognitive level. As the research of Visser et al. (2013) shows, the ability to find and use information online might be affected by cognitive resources. As Mrs. Bakker mentioned, she had trouble finding the right information online. She experienced this as a big obstruction to finding housing. Another cognitive aspect that plays a role in relocation behavior is emotional attachment (Matthews and Stephens, 2016) and perceptions of self (Sergeant and Ekerdt, 2008). As another respondent described, he had a large social network and was still capable of making new connections; however, his age troubled him, and he was worried that he would be less able to make new connections due to his age. Mr. and Mrs. Jansen, on the other hand, experienced restrictions due to other people's expectations of their age and vitality. As Sergeant and Ekerdt (2008) state, these expectations are not only shaped by friends and family but also by society.

Ideas about moving or staying put can also be shaped by the social connections of the individual. Attitudes and beliefs about moving are shaped by social pressures and personal experiences but can also be influenced by family and friends (Sergeant & Ekerdt, 2008). This

is in line with the moving process of one of the respondents. She described not wanting to move but realizing it was necessary to do so because of a conversation she had with her son:

“Well, yeah, he gave me advice. I lived in [neighborhood] for 32 years, and, I mean, I had incredibly sweet neighbors. You knew exactly where to go if you needed something or even if you didn't. You knew each other inside out, and yeah, then something happens, and yeah, the world changes a bit. And he figured it out sooner than I did. [...] Yeah, and then you start thinking, because initially I did say no. I know everyone here, so no. And then you lie awake at night and you think, well, he does have a point.” (77 years old, living alone in senior housing)

Another respondent described the opposite scenario: she had a friend living in a large home who did not want to move because her kids wanted her to stay put. Looking at the influence of friends, some respondents mentioned having friends move to another home. After seeing how happy their friends were in their new place, respondents got thinking about moving themselves more seriously. Some respondents described having friends that, after seeing the senior suitable housing of the respondent, did not want to move at all, creating an adverse effect.

When talking about moving, a lot of the respondents described it as something that 'had' to happen at some point. Relocation was being viewed as something that was only going to happen once it became a must because living alone or without help was not doable anymore. This way of viewing relocation can be connected to the research of Sergeant and Ekerdt (2008) who state that perceptions of self can also influence relocation behavior. Beliefs and attitudes about oneself can make an individual want to move, or rather, stay put. Taken together with the fact that elderly individuals find it important to stay independent for as long as possible (Matthews and Stephens, 2016) and the policy of aging in place, this could result in elderly people seeing relocation as something that has to happen at some point instead of an opportunity for more suitable housing.

In summary, there are different restrictions experienced by elderly individuals looking for housing. First of all, there are financial restrictions faced by the respondents in this study. Some of them are limited in their housing choices due to the amount of resources they have available, whereas others who do have the resources are not keen on the idea of spending a

lot of money on a new apartment that is significantly smaller in comparison to their current home. Individuals who are dependent on housing in the social rented sector face the restriction of long waiting lists, which they describe as discouraging. Instead of moving, these respondents consider making changes to their home to better fit their preferences and needs. On a more cognitive level, the results described above show that self-perception and expectations of others can also pose a restriction in relocation.

5.4 Macro Context

During the interviews, it became evident that almost all respondents, who did not live in senior housing already, were willing to relocate. However, a lot of the respondents experienced difficulty finding something that met their preferences and was within their price range. Respondents felt there was a shortage of suitable housing that also considered their housing wants and needs. When asked about residential relocation and relocation possibilities, one respondent explained that due to a shortage in buildable land and the current housing costs, it was unrealistic for him to get the kind of home he would like to see. Another respondent, who was chairman of an association for the elderly, also described this problem, explaining how hard it is for people to move from home to a small apartment with only three rooms. Another respondent added to this by mentioning that if there were enough suitable houses, she would already have moved to a new home, stating:

“That [the shortage of housing] is the biggest problem, otherwise I would have been long gone already.” (80 years old, living alone in large detached housing)

Besides this, when talking about moving, one of the respondents mentioned that moving to another place was not something you could plan in advance because of how quickly houses were rented out after becoming vacant:

“The disadvantage of wanting an apartment in this neighborhood is the shortage of them. So you have to act quickly. Otherwise it's gone already. You can't just be like, I would like to move to an apartment in about three months or so” (70 years old, living in semi-detached housing)

Besides experiencing difficulty finding a home due to this shortage of apartments, this respondent also mentioned the need for a change in current policies concerning housing and relocation in the Netherlands:

“I actually live in a home that is way too big, but yeah if there is no policy. You see, I myself can go and move to another place but that doesn't solve anything in this country. [...] We have of course not enough homes, but we also have too many people living with too few people in a home.” (70 years old, living alone in semi-detached housing)

Another respondent also recognized this problem, saying that the national government should take more action in creating attractive living spaces for senior citizens:

“I think that where there has been a failure is in building sufficiently attractive senior housing. In apartment form, or whatever form, that is still affordable. I think there would be many more seniors willing to move, because they have their own house, they would sell it, and they would say, ‘I'm going to live there, I'm going to enjoy my retirement here, do fun things.’ But it's not available. So you don't get any flow. [...] I think you should mainly ask the government that question: how can we promote the flow of housing?” (62 and 77 years old, living together in semi-detached housing)

The case of Veenendaal

When zooming in on Veenendaal specifically, respondents mentioned that there was also a shortage of housing. As Mrs. Bakker explained:

“And yes, then you want to move on, you want to downsize. Well, that's not possible in this municipality. It really isn't.” (73 years old, living alone in semi-detached housing)

Besides this, respondents were unsatisfied with the housing being constructed. Many respondents mentioned feeling as if the new housing being constructed for senior citizens did not pay any attention to their wants and needs. As one of the respondents mentioned:

“My conclusion is that the wishes of seniors are actually not sufficiently taken into account, even in Veenendaal. This has been the case for a very long time.” (70 years old, living in semi-detached housing with a partner)

According to the respondents, the housing being constructed in Veenendaal mainly entailed apartments with small balconies. Almost all respondents described new construction on the Brouwersgracht as something they strongly disliked. This had to do with, for example, the buildings being too close to one another. Another problem recognized by respondents in relation to Veenendaal was the shortage of buildable land, resulting in the municipality only

constructing high-rise buildings. Even though a lot of the respondents were opposed to the high-rise buildings on the Brouwersgracht, they weren't necessarily opposed to high-rise buildings in general. Mrs. Bakker, who did strongly dislike high-rise buildings, explained her frustration with the new construction in Veenendaal:

“But they [the municipality] want everything to go up in height. Preferably ten or fourteen stories high. And then a tiny balcony, which makes me think, I'm not a chicken, you know, that really annoys me.” (73 years old, living alone in semi-detached housing)

When asked about the new construction plans of the municipality in 'Het Ambacht' not everyone was positive. The idea of high-rise buildings standing closely together was the exact opposite of why one of the respondents originally moved to Veenendaal in the first place. As he explained:

“And now you see a lot of high-rise buildings, under the assumption that many retirees wanted that. There are certainly those who want it, but a lot of them, considering the growth of Veenendaal, come from the surrounding areas. But we specifically came to live here for the greenery and the ability to be outside, and for ground-level houses.” (74 years old, living with a partner in semi-detached housing)

Besides this, he did not agree with the way of thinking and policymaking of the municipality of Veenendaal:

“Then they say that people choose to live there, but that's obviously nonsense. If there's a huge housing shortage, people are just happy to have a house. They'll take anything they can get. But only once they start living there and face issues do the complaints begin. So, I think for policymakers, it's something to consider: you can claim to create circumstances that people would accept. And they initially say yes. But once they actually live there, the problem becomes bigger.” (74 years old, living with a partner in semi-detached housing)

However, a lot of respondents reacted positively when the new construction plans from 'Het Ambacht' were shared with them. They did not see a problem with the new buildings being multiple stories tall and actually thought of it as a place where they could see themselves living. Respondents were positive about the municipality taking greenery into account and creating spaces that would be shared with different kinds of people. As one of the respondents explained:

“Yes, I can certainly see myself living there. It's very nice. As you said, shops nearby, low traffic. The height, I don't need that much. I would prefer something lower. But there's a little café, which I really like. You don't have to leave the area to enjoy yourself, so to speak.” (76 years old, living alone in a two-story bungalow)

Another respondent also added to this by saying that the plans for the park in the middle of the neighborhood were really attractive to her:

“Yes, but I think that, especially if there's a park in the middle, space for greenery, climate, and tranquility. That really appeals to me.” (65 years old, living alone in senior housing)

Addressing triggers to promote relocation behavior

Looking at the implementation of strategies to encourage relocation behavior in elderly individuals, some respondents mentioned that in order to do so, changes in the macro context were necessary. One respondent mentioned the influence of policymaking on a national level. Another respondent added to this by mentioning a television advertisement she had seen, promoting the installation of a stair lift in one's home in case of a loss of mobility. She believed that these types of advertisements had the wrong effect on people in regard to encouraging relocation behavior:

“Well, coincidentally, I was watching TV the other day and saw a commercial. And then, I think, I believe they should actually ban that. They already ban smoking advertisements. But this one was for a stairlift. Two people saying, well, actually, we can manage everything ourselves. We can easily stay living here. And if you take that stairlift, you have... I think you can't force people out of their homes where they like to live. But then I think, those kinds of commercials...” (78 years old, living alone in senior housing)

Others indicated the need to make people more aware of getting older and the restrictions that come with it. Respondents mentioned the need to motivate people more to move to housing that would be suitable in the long run, as it prevented people from being forced to relocate. Multiple respondents stressed the importance of being able to make the choice to relocate yourself. Therefore, they also deemed it important that there was sufficient information and encouragement from others to consider moving. One respondent explained that her son talked to her about moving to another place as he noticed that her previous living situation was not suitable for her needs:

“Well, he gave me the advice. I had lived in [building] for 32 years, and, yes, I mean, I had incredibly lovely neighbors. You knew exactly where to go if you needed something or even if you didn't. You knew each other inside and out, and yes, then something happens to you and, yes, the world changes a bit. And he realized it sooner than I did. So there was no force or anything like that.” (77 years old, living alone in senior housing)

At first, she was not happy with his advice, but after a while, she started to realize that maybe he did have a point:

“Because at first I did say no. I know everyone here, so no. And then you lie awake at night and think, yes, but he is right. Yes, he does have a point.” (77 years old, living alone in senior housing)

Right now the municipality of Veenendaal has a 'relocation coach' (verhuis coach) who visits people at home to discuss possible options in housing and helps people navigate possibilities considering relocation. The relocation coach only visits people if they indicate wanting advice. Respondents were positive about the relocation coach because this person was seen as someone who spreads awareness and could also take people by the hand and guide them:

“They [some people] have less overview, so someone who just takes you by the hand is actually good. [H]aving a housing coach who can just point things out to people. But also, just having a conversation with people about what is really important to you. That's actually what it's about, what really matters to you. If a housing coach can help you with that, or someone else, that's of course fine.” (70 years old, living alone in semi-detached housing)

However, Mrs. Bakker stated that the relocation coach was not able to offer the help she felt like she needed when discussing what had to be done in order to be able to move to another home. She felt like she needed more practical help concerning moving itself:

“I thought that the relocation coach could handle that, but they only give advice on how you should do it. Yeah, that's not very helpful.” (73 years old, living alone in semi-detached housing)

Because the macro-context can influence individuals' relocation behavior, policy can be used to create triggers for elderly individuals to move. As Sánchez & Andrews (2011) state, rules and regulations on, for example, housing prices can create opportunities for individuals that make them want to move. Some respondents mentioned the housing prices being too high, making relocation either financially unviable or just not worth it in comparison to their current home and costs. Another factor that could act as a trigger in the macro context could be the construction of more suitable housing for the elderly. Policy has an effect on the housing market and housing market outcomes (Sánchez & Andrews, 2011). Right now, policies in the Netherlands, such as the WMO, encourage (elderly) individuals to stay home for as long as possible. The Dutch government does, however, realize the need to construct more suitable housing for elderly individuals.

Housing policies, together with rules and regulations, can affect housing market opportunities for individuals (Sánchez and Andrews, 2011). Added to this is the responsiveness of the housing supply to changes in demand, as currently there is a housing shortage of 373.000 houses that are suitable for the elderly population. Gonyea (2021) also notes that the share of elderly individuals is growing rapidly. Taken together, this results in a shortage of suitable housing, as experienced by the respondents in this study. Besides this, the literature also shows that the current housing that is being constructed doesn't take the preferences and needs of elderly individuals into account (Hoof et al., 2021). This was also reported by one of the respondents, who stated that the new housing that was being constructed still did not match up with what elderly individuals wanted.

Looking at Veenendaal specifically, the municipality tries to respond to the change in demand for housing for elderly individuals. By doing this, they are actively trying to influence residential mobility, as described by Sánchez and Andrews (2011). In the development of Het Ambacht, there will be housing built specifically for elderly individuals, creating opportunities for those who'd like to move but also would like to stay within the municipality. However, not all respondents were keen on the idea of living in a high-rise building, as one of the respondents moved to Veenendaal for a ground-level home and the nature of the municipality. On the other hand, after hearing the plans for Het Ambacht, almost all respondents reacted positively to the plans, and more than half of the respondents could see themselves living there.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The aim of this study was to create a better understanding of the relocation behavior of elderly individuals in Veenendaal. This was done by conducting qualitative research, trying to answer the following research question: *How can residential mobility among elderly individuals in Veenendaal be triggered, taking into account restrictions and preferences regarding housing and moving homes, and what strategies can be implemented to facilitate successful relocation?*

To be able to answer this question, three subquestions have been drawn up:

1. What preferences do elderly individuals in Veenendaal have concerning housing and housing environment?
2. What restrictions do elderly individuals in Veenendaal face when considering residential mobility?
3. What strategies can be implemented to address the preferences and overcome the restrictions of elderly individuals, thereby encouraging their willingness to relocate within the housing market in Veenendaal?

In order to formulate an answer to the main research question, respondents were asked about their preferences concerning housing and the housing environment. Respondents expressed a strong preference for one-level housing. The home had to be accessible and future-proof, meaning no doorsteps, wide door frames, and spacious rooms. There was a variation in the number of rooms people desired, with most respondents indicating they would like to have either three or four rooms. This variation was dependent on the vitality of the respondents, with less vital respondents preferring fewer rooms and more vital respondents having a stronger preference for more rooms. Respondents also mentioned the importance of having enough natural light enter the home, as elderly individuals tend to spend a lot of time at home. Outdoor space attached to the home, such as a balcony, was also highly valued by respondents. Lastly, the importance of good isolation is stressed, meaning the house would be warm enough during the winter but could also be kept cool during the summer. A common room within the building, separate from the respondents' homes, was preferred. This could enable respondents to organize, take part in activities, and stay socially active.

Preferences regarding the environment of the home entailed having facilities such as a place to do daily groceries and health services nearby. Having flexible spaces in the neighborhood that could host a variety of social activities and medical services was also deemed important, as it would enable elderly individuals to easily get their blood sample taken, for example. Greenery in the living environment was also valued. Besides this, respondents mentioned the importance of level pedestrian paths in minimizing the risk of injuries. Having benches in the neighborhood was also deemed important, as it created the opportunity for respondents to take a rest during a stroll or to simply sit outside when the weather was nice. The opinions of respondents about the level of hustle and bustle in the neighborhood were divided, with some respondents indicating a preference for a lively neighborhood, whereas others preferred more calm surroundings.

Relocation often occurred after a sudden trigger, which changed the context of the individual. After the passing of a partner, a loss of mobility or a decline in health often leads respondents to reevaluate their current living situation in light of their changing preferences and needs. However, some respondents expressed considering residential relocation as a preventative measure instead of waiting for a trigger to happen, keeping their age and future changes in mind.

Restrictions considering residential mobility can be divided into different domains. Respondents experienced restrictions on a micro- and macro-level. Starting at the micro-level, financial considerations and social networks pose a restriction for those looking to relocate. Respondents struggled to find a home that was within their price range but still met their preferences and needs. Many homes were considered too small, often not having enough rooms to cater to the often active lifestyles of the respondents. Aside from this, respondents who lived in the same house for a long period of time mentioned the importance of social ties they had built up over the years. This loss of social ties came with a fear of not being able to make new social connections as easily due to age. For example, respondents mentioned experiencing more difficulty gathering information and making new social connections. When looking at the macro-level restrictions faced by respondents, a shortage of suitable housing that met their wants and needs was frequently mentioned. The new housing being constructed also did not take into account these preferences and needs of elderly individuals. Respondents experienced difficulty finding a home because of this. Respondents who had to rely on social housing described being on long waiting lists. This caused some

respondents to consider staying at their current home instead of moving. Besides this, some respondents questioned the policy-making of the Dutch government in regard to residential mobility, stating that the lack of policy focus on suitable housing and relocation behavior of elderly individuals made moving to another home unrewarding.

In order to try and overcome some of the restrictions faced by elderly individuals, the municipality of Veenendaal is redeveloping an industrial area into a neighborhood called Het Ambacht. Within these redevelopment plans, the municipality of Veenendaal specifically wants to focus on creating housing opportunities for elderly individuals that meet their preferences and needs. This entails housing that is on one level, can accommodate a loss in mobility and/or a decline in health, and has a large bathroom. Other strategies that the municipality of Veenendaal can implement to promote relocation behavior among elderly individuals include not only the construction of more housing but also the spreading of awareness and information about getting older and the available housing options. To some extent, the municipality already tries to do this through the use of a relocation coach that visits people and helps them with their questions regarding relocation options. However, as one of the respondents noted, the relocation coach only provides information about relocation and does not actually help with the process of finding a home and relocating itself. Because of this, respondents mentioned the need for some kind of assistance provided by the municipality in order to make residential relocation also possible for those who do not have the financial means or social network to relocate.

The study has used the theoretical framework of Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999), which examines relocation behavior through life course trajectories, resources and restrictions, triggers and preferences, and the influence of the macro-context. In the model used by Mulder and Hooijmeier (1999) there is no clear hierarchy in the importance of these influences on relocation behavior. However, when talking about residential relocation, the respondents who were willing to relocate all indicated a shortage of suitable housing posing as one of their main restrictions. This highlights, on the one hand, the importance of the influence of the macro-context in the search for housing. On the other hand, it highlights the influence of preferences that respondents have concerning housing that are not being met in the current housing market. Triggers were a big determinant in whether a respondent had the ambition to relocate or not. This was mainly the case when big changes occurred in the life of an individual due to, for example, the passing of a spouse.

In conclusion, in order to trigger residential relocation among elderly individuals in Veenendaal, the municipality needs to adopt a variety of changes. The redevelopment and construction of new housing in Het Ambacht is a great step in the right direction; however, it is important to make sure that the new housing being constructed reflects the different kinds of elderly individuals, with their differing preferences and needs. To address these differences properly, new senior housing being constructed should vary in size and number of rooms. The environment of these homes should include facilities and services that are easily accessible for elderly individuals. Additionally, the municipality could benefit from investing in relocation assistance for elderly individuals and the spreading of information and awareness about getting older. Currently, the relocation coach in Veenendaal visits people who want more information about moving and housing options. However, this visit only happens upon request. The more active spreading of information could get more people to consider residential relocation. When enacting the policy of aging in place, it is important to make people aware of the restrictions and possible problems of aging in place in a home that is not suitable. Therefore, moving to a more suitable home should be promoted for successful aging in place.

Other types of relocation assistance that could be employed are financial assistance for those who don't have the means available to relocate, the provision of help in sorting through stuff, and the moving itself. This could entail subsidies for moving costs or facilitating moving services. Those services could help with sorting through stuff, packing stuff, and setting up the new home. Besides this, there should be services available that enable elderly individuals to easily donate their stuff to other places instead of having to throw a lot of it away.

Chapter 7: Discussion

The preferences of elderly individuals in Veenendaal for one-level, accessible, and future-proof housing are in line with the role of life course trajectories as described by Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999). They show the need for adaptable housing that fits the changing needs of elderly individuals over time. The respondents indicated a preference for homes with wide door frames, spacious rooms, and enough natural light. These findings are consistent with the literature, which highlights the importance of suitable houses for aging populations (Hutchison, 2010; Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999).

The study also identified restrictions faced by elderly individuals in Veenendaal, including financial constraints, loss of social networks, and a shortage of suitable housing. Financial constraints and the lack of affordable housing options were mentioned the most when talking about restrictions, which also come forward as restrictions experienced by elderly individuals in the research of De Jong et al. (2012) and Han and Kim (2016).

Looking at macro-level restrictions, long waiting lists for social housing turned out to further restrict the relocation process of individuals in the social housing sector. This is in line with the addition to the framework of Mulder and Hooimeijer by Coulter et al. (2015), who emphasize the influence of structural connections and broader societal influences on residential mobility.

In terms of triggers for relocation, significant life changes, such as the loss of a spouse or a decline in health, were the most prominent factors that influenced the decision to move. These findings support the theory of Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999), who state that certain triggers or life events and changes in life course trajectories act as a reason for relocation (Bloem et al., 2008).

The redevelopment of the Het Ambacht area by the municipality of Veenendaal is a step in the right direction, trying to overcome restrictions faced by individuals through the creation of housing that meets the preferences and needs of elderly individuals. However, there is a need for the more active spreading of information about relocation options and a need for relocation assistance. This aligns with the study of Gonyea (2021) who shows the importance of support systems in making successful relocation happen.

One of the findings that stands in contrast to the used literature is the willingness of respondents to relocate to better-suited housing. However, respondents explained experiencing restrictions on both the micro- and macro-level, which made it hard to actually relocate to a different home. The literature does state that macro-contextual influences can play a constricting role in the relocation processes of elderly individuals due to, for example, a shortage of housing (De Jong et al., 2018), however, the emphasis on this possibility is rather small. In this study, respondents mentioned that a lack of suitable housing was one of the main restrictions, which even made them reconsider their relocation ambitions. This is a practical restriction faced by respondents, whereas the findings in the literature put more of an emphasis on the immobility of elderly individuals due to emotional attachment and social networks (Stewart et al., 2014). Besides this, the literature shows that there is an increasing preference for smaller housing the older someone gets (Mulliner et al., 2020). However, the current research found that, instead of age, the level of vitality played a role in housing size preference.

New findings adding to the already existing literature are the variations in housing size on the basis of the vitality of the respondents and age discrimination in shared living communities specifically aimed at individuals 55 years of age or older. As became clear in the conclusion, the level of vitality of the respondents often correlated with a certain preference for the number of rooms they wanted. Respondents who were more vital preferred homes with four rooms, whereas respondents who were less vital often preferred homes with three rooms. Another finding that did not come forward in the already existing literature used in this study is the age discrimination experienced by some of the respondents when applying for housing in shared living communities aimed at seniors. These shared living communities are available for people over the age of 55; however, as became evident in the results, respondents with a higher age were declined because they were 'too old'. Their level of vitality was not taken into consideration.

Based on the new findings of this study, the following recommendations for future research can be made: First, future studies could benefit from more longitudinal data collection to see whether claims made by individuals about relocation behavior are actually true. In the current research, a shortage of housing poses problems for respondents willing to relocate. After the construction of more suitable housing within Het Ambacht, there should be more housing availability for elderly individuals. A study with a more longitudinal nature could examine

whether more suitable housing options actually make elderly individuals relocate or whether there are still other factors at play. Additionally, future studies could focus on the correlation between the level of vitality and housing preferences of elderly individuals. If there truly is a correlation between the two, policy on the construction of senior housing could greatly benefit by taking into account the different types of homes necessary to accommodate as many different elderly individuals as possible. By further investigating these recommendations, a better understanding of relocation behavior among elderly individuals can be formed.

This master's thesis has several limitations. The first point of attention is the representativeness of the sample. During the recruitment of the respondents, there was some attention paid to the socio-economic background of the respondents by reaching out to different kinds of organizations that were connected to elderly individuals with those different backgrounds. However, the current study did not take cultural or migration backgrounds into account. This has led to a sampling bias because the recruitment of respondents was done through convenience sampling. Because the study's respondents were mainly Dutch, it is impossible to make statements about housing preferences and attitudes towards residential relocation based on culture or migration background. However, this could possibly have an effect on preferences concerning housing, the restrictions faced, and attitudes towards residential relocation.

A second point of attention is the lack of attention to socio-economic background. Even though the recruiting of respondents was done in a way to get a varied sample in terms of socio-economic background during the interviews themselves, respondents were not specifically asked about their socio-economic background. However, just like cultural and migration backgrounds, the socio-economic status of respondents could have an effect on their attitudes concerning housing, preferences, restrictions, and residential relocation. In hindsight, there has also been a lack of attention towards the opinions of respondents regarding renting or owning a home. When constructing new housing and formulating policies aimed at the development of new housing, knowing the preferences of elderly individuals concerning this topic is necessary, as these factors can play a role in whether or not someone chooses to relocate. Besides this, the current research pays little attention to the influences of individuals within the social network of the respondents. However, the literature shows that the attitudes and beliefs of others can play a role in relocation behavior.

The qualitative nature of the thesis, combined with the limited representativeness of the sample, gives the study a low generalizability. However, this was mitigated by the data saturation in the study, which makes it possible to still draw generalizable conclusions based on the collected data for individuals similar to the sample group. Besides this, the data collection was done by two people, creating the possibility for a bias in the data due to the nature of how the questions were asked to the respondents. There could also be bias in the responses given by the respondents to what they ought to be desirable answers. However, in order to mitigate this kind of bias, respondents had the possibility of being interviewed in the familiar surroundings of their home. At the beginning of the interview, respondents were also informed that there were no wrong answers to the interviews and that their opinions were the subject of interest.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Topic list interviews

Onderwerp	Sub-onderwerp	Vraag
<i>Algemene vragen</i>		Wat is uw leeftijd?
		Wat is uw huidige woonsituatie? (soort woning/ woonvorm)
		Woont u alleen/ met een partner/ met kinderen?
		Hoelang woont u hier al?

<i>Fysieke kenmerken woning</i>	Behoeften	<p>Hoe ziet een comfortabele woning er voor u uit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voldoet uw huidige woning hieraan? - Wat zijn eventuele aanpassingen in huis die het wonen comfortabeler en toegankelijker kunnen maken? - Wat is er voor u onmisbaar in huis? - Zijn er aspecten in uw woning waardoor u zich belemmert voelt?
		<p>Hoe toekomstbestendig is uw woning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Denk hierbij aan verlies van mobiliteit, gezondheid, gezinssamenstelling, - Bijv. Drempels, meerdere verdiepingen, tuin

<i>Leefomgeving</i>	Omschrijving buurt	Hoe ziet uw ideale buurt eruit? OF Wat heeft u nodig in de buurt?
		Hoe ziet uw huidige buurt eruit? - Wat vindt u fijn aan uw huidige buurt/ wat minder fijn? - Als nog niet uit antwoord gebleken is doorvragen naar diensten en voorzieningen (zie hieronder)
	Bereikbaarheid	Zijn de diensten die u nodig heeft goed bereikbaar? - Toelichting diensten: zorg, winkels, bank, horeca, buurthuis, clubjes etc.
		Wat voor voorzieningen vindt u belangrijk om in de buurt te hebben? - E.g. parken, bankjes, ander groen zoals bomen of planten in de straat ofzo
		Hoe kan de inrichting van een buurt rekening houden met senioren?

<i>Mobiliteit</i>		Maakt u gebruik van het openbaar vervoer? - Nee: waarom niet? wat gebruikt u wel? - Ja:
		Hoe kan de toegankelijkheid van het openbaar vervoer verbeterd worden voor senioren? - Denk aan afstand tot haltes, bankje bij halte etc. - Voldoende aanwezig?

<i>Sociale contacten</i>	<p>Wat voor sociale contacten heeft u nu in uw huidige buurt?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bent u hier tevreden mee? Waarom wel/niet?
	<p>Als u in een nieuwe woonomgeving zou gaan wonen, wat is dan uw behoefte qua sociaal contact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hoe kan het leggen van contacten bevordert worden? (stimulans welzijnswerkers, activiteiten, ontmoetingsruimten (binnen en buiten))

De respondenten krijgen een spectrum voor zich met verschillende woonvormen, waarbij uitleg wordt gegeven. De respondenten mogen zelf een kruisje zetten op het spectrum, waar zij zichzelf het liefst zien wonen.

Daarna wordt het gesprek aangegaan dmv van vragen, de vragen die hieronder staan genoteerd zijn voorbeeldvragen, is afhankelijk van wat degene aangeeft in het spectrum:

	<p>Zou u gedeelde faciliteiten willen? Denk hierbij aan bijvoorbeeld een gedeelde woonkamer of keuken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waarom wel/ niet? - Met wie wel/ niet?
	<p>Denkt u dat het delen van faciliteiten invloed heeft op uw woongenot?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waarom wel/ niet
	<p>Heeft u ooit nagedacht over het wonen in geclusterde woonvormen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waarom wel/niet? - Als ja: wat voor woonvorm dan?

		Wat zou uw ideale balans zijn tussen meedoen met het gemeenschapsleven en privacy?
<i>Als iemand al in een geclusterde woonvorm woont</i>		Waarom heeft u ervoor gekozen om hier te gaan wonen?

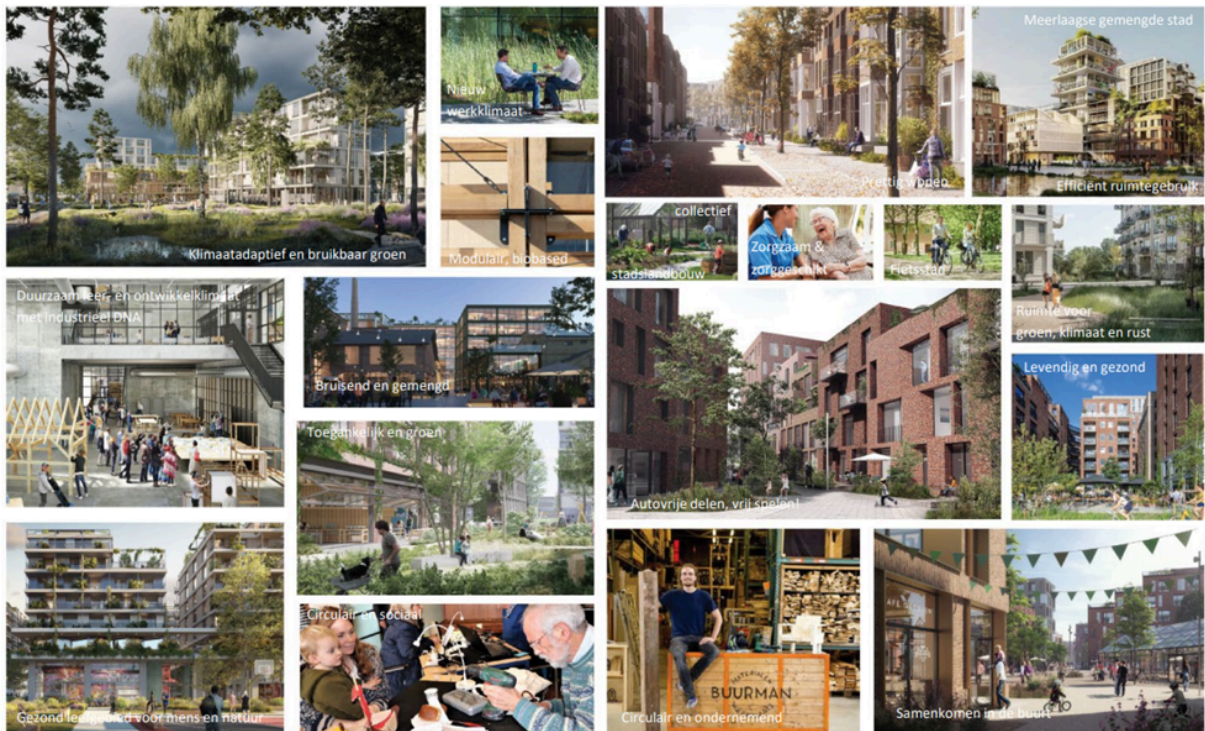
<i>Doorstroming</i>		Waarom zou u juist wel of niet willen verhuizen?
	Constraints	Is uw huidige woning een koop- of huurwoning? - Heeft dit invloed op of u zou willen verhuizen of niet?
		Wat zijn/waren mogelijke belemmeringen omtrent verhuizen? (kan te maken hebben met geld, gebrek aan informatie, gebrek aan geschikte woningen etc)
	Triggers	Zijn er bepaalde veranderingen in uw leven waardoor u zich juist wel of niet geneigd zou voelen om te verhuizen?
		Hoe zou u gemotiveerd/ gestimuleerd kunnen worden om te verhuizen?
	Zorgen	Heeft u zorgen omtrent verhuizen? - Weggaan uit buurt, gevoel van veiligheid, contacten
Hoe zou u geholpen kunnen worden om de stap van overwegen te verhuizen naar daadwerkelijk verhuizen te zetten? - Wie zou u kunnen helpen (persoonlijke contacten/ organisaties/ instanties)		

[Er zal eerst een beeld geschetst worden van hoe de spoorzone eruit komt te zien. Dit wordt gedaan door middel van afbeeldingen en een omschrijving van de plannen die er nu voor het gebied liggen.]

Het Ambacht zal een plek worden met een stads karakter voor diverse bewoners van jong en oud. Dit houdt in dat het gebied dicht bebouwd zal worden met hoge gebouwen. Er zullen grondgebonden woningen zijn (woningen die direct toegankelijk zijn vanaf de straat) van 3 tot 4 woonlagen. Er zullen appartementen komen van ongeveer 5 woonlagen hoog en er zal hoogbouw gerealiseerd worden van 8 tot 12 woonlagen. Dus: Relatief veel hoogbouw en weinig grondgebonden. Woningen zullen zorggeschikt zijn. Er zal gezorgd worden voor voorzieningen in de buurt, denk hierbij aan een buurtsuper maar ook gezondheidszorg. Het gebied zal autoluw zijn en door het midden van het gebied zal groen aanwezig zijn.

<i>Spoorzone (Het Ambacht)</i>		Wat vindt u van deze plannen?
		Ziet u uzelf hier wonen? Waarom wel/niet?
		<p>Terugkoppeling naar wat naar voren is gekomen uit het interview, respondent zegt A maar dat staat in contrast met visie voor het Ambacht, hoe denkt de respondent hierover? Wat zou moeten er veranderen en waar liggen de kansen?</p> <p>- Liever in gemengd appartementencomplex of eerder met andere senioren?</p>

Appendix 2: Mood board 'Het Ambacht'



Appendix 3: Code list

Name	Files	References
Doorstroming	16	34
belemmering doorstroming	25	92
Belemmering verhuizen	11	18
bewustwording+motiveren	15	23
hulp bij verhuizen	9	10
Waarom niet verhuizen	10	17
Fysieke kenmerken woning	1	1
afkeuren woning	13	36
belemmering	15	33
Huidige woning	28	73
Onmisbaar	17	22
toekomstbestendigheid	16	24
Voorkeuren woning	28	173
Kenmerken omgeving	0	0
afkeur omgeving	17	35
Belemmering omgeving	13	20
Huidige omgeving	15	29
onmisbaar omgeving	11	18
Voorkeuren omgeving	26	124
Leeftijd	0	0
65-75	11	13
75-80	8	8
80+	9	12
Macro context	12	34
Resources	6	6
Restrictions	8	17
sociale contacten	27	98
activiteiten	24	38
Spoorzone	2	3
eisen	8	19
negatief	14	32
Positief	18	45
Trigger	25	63
Vervoer	0	0
Eigen vervoer	14	19
openbaar vervoer	19	41

Woonsituatie	0	0
Alleen	17	18
samen met iemand	12	13
woontijd huidige woning	24	24