

Erasmus School of
Health Policy
& Management

Age-friendly communities and well-being realization

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Neighbourhood resources



Outdoor space & buildings



Transportation



Communication & information



Housing



Respect & social inclusion



Social participation



Civic participation & employment



Community support & health services

Content

- Background
- Moroccan Older Adults
- Native-Dutch Older Adults

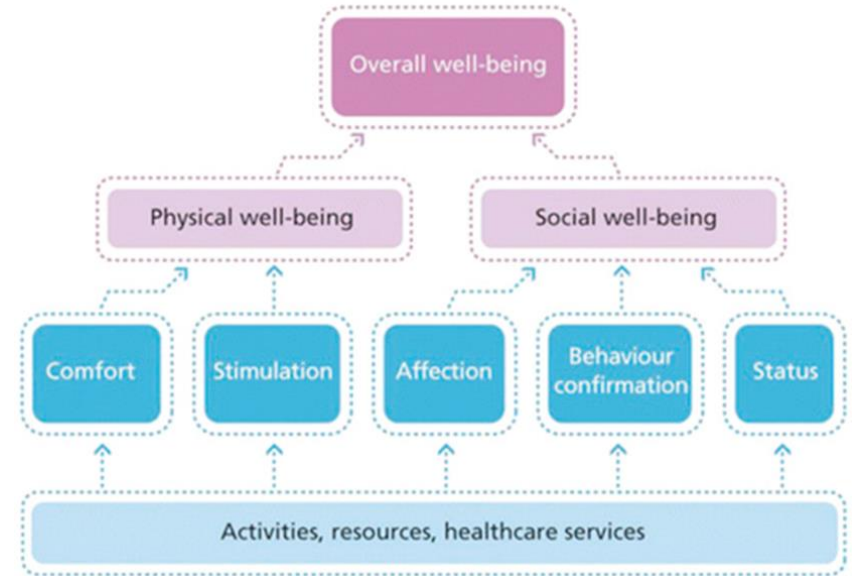
Differences between neighbourhoods

- Vast differences in neighbourhood resources supporting ageing in place (all 8 domains)
- With frailty, older people become more dependent on their neighbourhood (all 8 domains)
- There is a need to invest in neighbourhood resources, especially in neighbourhoods that fall behind
- Differences in neighbourhood resources contribute to differences in well-being realization of older people

Cramm, van Dijk & Nieboer (2016). The creation of age-friendly environments is especially important to frail older people. *Ageing & Society*

Age friendly neighbourhoods and well-being

- We may speak of *community* when community-dwelling older people realize multiple well-being needs together (joint production)
- But what are the well-being needs?
- And what role does solidarity play?



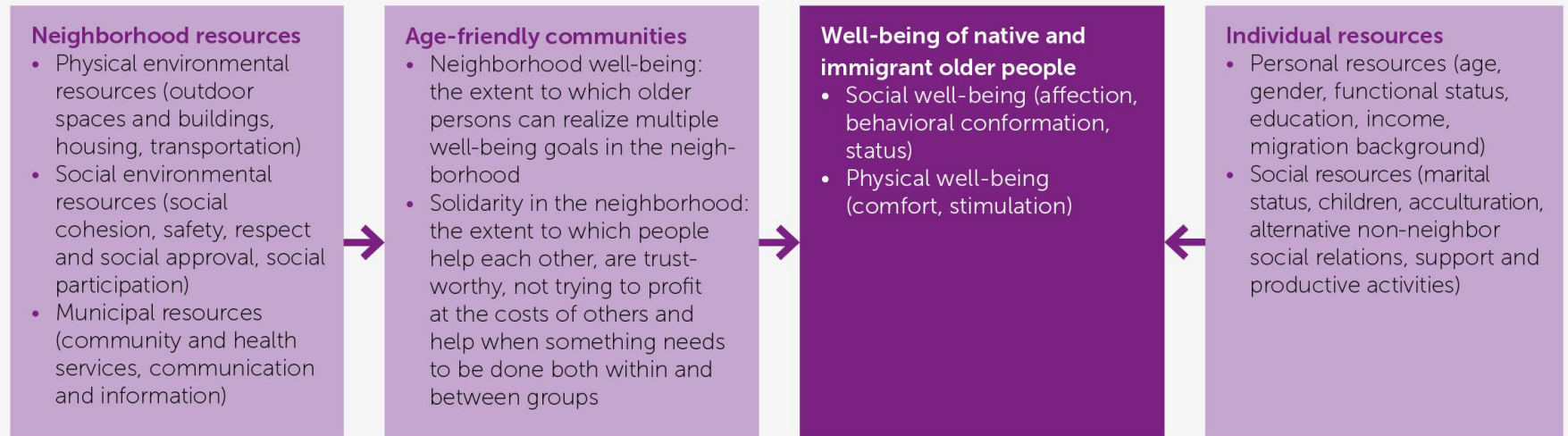
SPF-theory, Lindenberg (1996)

Nieboer, A.P., Cramm, J.M. (2018). Age-Friendly Communities Matter for Older People's Well-Being. *J Happiness Stud* 19, 2405–2420.

To identify how and under what conditions
age-friendly communities help older people
realize well-being

Age-friendly communities

Figure 1. **Theoretical model: Neighborhood and individual resources, age-friendly communities and well-being realization**



Study Protocol

Nieboer and Cramm *BMC Geriatrics* (2022) 22:273
https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-022-02880-4

BMC Geriatrics

STUDY PROTOCOL

Open Access

Age-friendly communities and well-being realization among older native and immigrant populations in the Netherlands: a theory-guided study protocol



Anna P. Nieboer* and Jane M. Cramm

Abstract

Background: With rapid population aging, policy makers and service providers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of building and maintaining age-friendly communities. Clearly, "age-friendly" relates to the impact of context on people's well-being. But how? What is an age-friendly community, and does that differ for native and immigrant older people? Up until now, how native and immigrant older people in the Netherlands perceive community age-friendliness, and whether and how age-friendly communities help them realize well-being, remains unknown which limits opportunities to develop appropriate interventions. This article presents a study protocol to identify, theoretically and empirically, how and under what conditions age-friendly communities help native and immigrant older people in the Netherlands realize well-being.

We present a theory-guided approach to elucidate differences in neighborhood age-friendliness and requirements for age-friendly community development between native Dutch and immigrant older people. Good interventions are built on good theory. The proposed research will add to theory building by systematically examining what older people get from their neighborhoods and the conditions that influence well-being realization, including the role of individual and neighborhood resources. We posit that physical and social well-being realization will be enhanced in age-friendly communities that support realization of multiple well-being needs and development of solidarity within and between groups in the neighborhood via cross-cutting sharing arrangements.

Methods: We present a mixed-methods design among native and immigrant older people (Turkish, Surinamese and Moroccan) consisting of: (i) Q-studies (combining in-depth interview-based and quantitative analyses); (ii) a pilot survey study; (iii) a main survey study in Rotterdam, the Hague, Utrecht, and Amsterdam; and (iv) focus groups.

Discussion: By exploring truly new ground in the field of age-friendly communities, the results of the proposed research will provide new empirical evidence, advance theory, and be helpful for the development of interventions aimed at improving age-friendliness and well-being for native and immigrant older populations, thereby contributing to resolving the societal challenges of caring for and supporting older people in the community.

Keywords: Older people, Immigrant, Theoretical model, Mixed-methods, Age-friendly communities, Well-being, Solidarity, Study protocol

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Q-studies
Pilot study
Main study
Focus groups

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Q studies (2021-2022)

- Study of subjective viewpoints among the population of interest.
- A representative 38-statement Q set spanning the eight WHO domains was used.
- The statements were translated into Standard Arabic and Turkish.
- Interviews were conducted in the four largest cities in the Netherlands.

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Pilot study (2022-2024)

- Around 2000 potential participants were selected from Rotterdam's municipality registers (around 500 per group).
- Data collection from February to August 2023.
- Questionnaires were in Dutch, Standard Arabic and Turkish.

Pilot study (2022-2024)

- Potential participants were visited at home by interviewers to encourage/help participation.
- A total of 862 participants filled in the questionnaire.

Dutch respondents $n = 300$ (65% response rate).

Turkish respondents $n = 211$ (50% response rate).

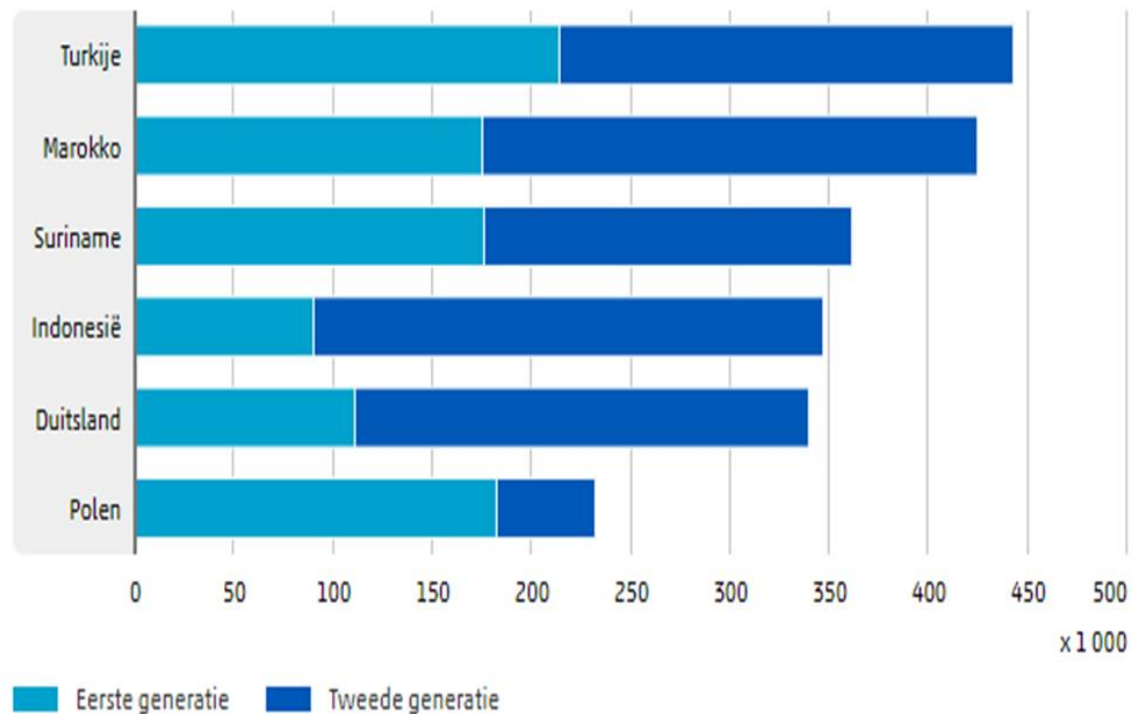
Surinamese respondents $n = 200$ (45% response rate).

Moroccan respondents $n = 151$ (35% response rate).

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**Age-friendly Communities and Well-being
Realization among Moroccan Older People
in the Netherlands**

Top 6 herkomst inwoners met migratieachtergrond, december 2022*



Migration & Aging



These migrants plan to stay here and now age in places that differ from their home country

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How can we support Moroccan older adults to
age in place?

Ezafus

Explore the views of Moroccan older adults on their needs for aging in place.



Inform more inclusive policies for aging in place.



Build age-friendly cities that meet the demands of diverse groups of older people.

Erasmus

Explore the views of Moroccan older adults on their needs for aging in place.



Inform more inclusive policies for aging in place.



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Erasmus

Q-methodology



World Health Organization's global age-friendly cities guide

Least Important ← → Most Important

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4

Sorting Grid

Q-methodology



Ezra

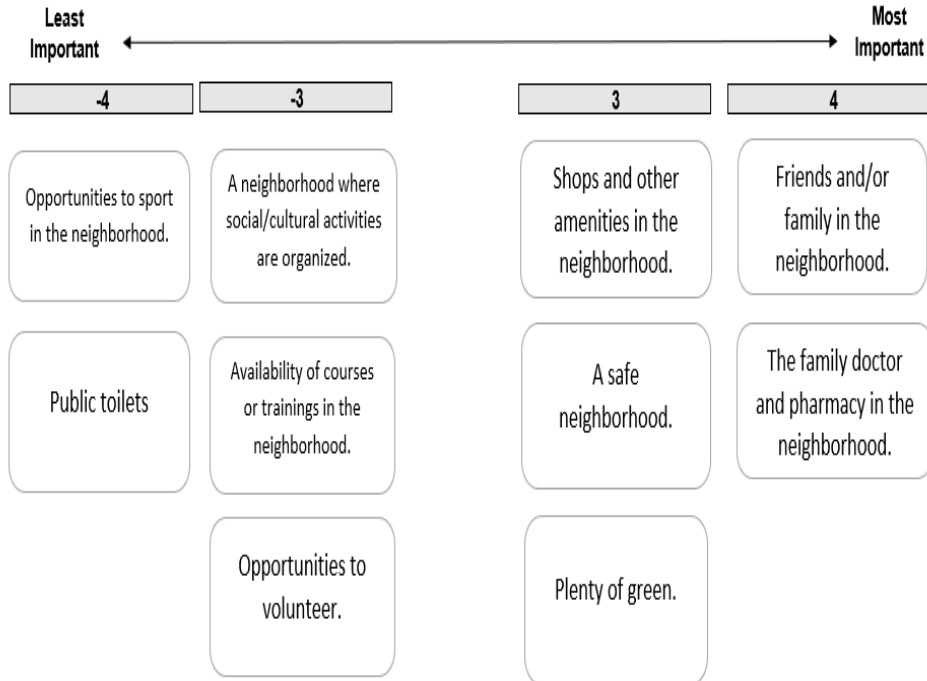
Findings: 4 viewpoints



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Home Sweet Home

Mostly women who live alone.

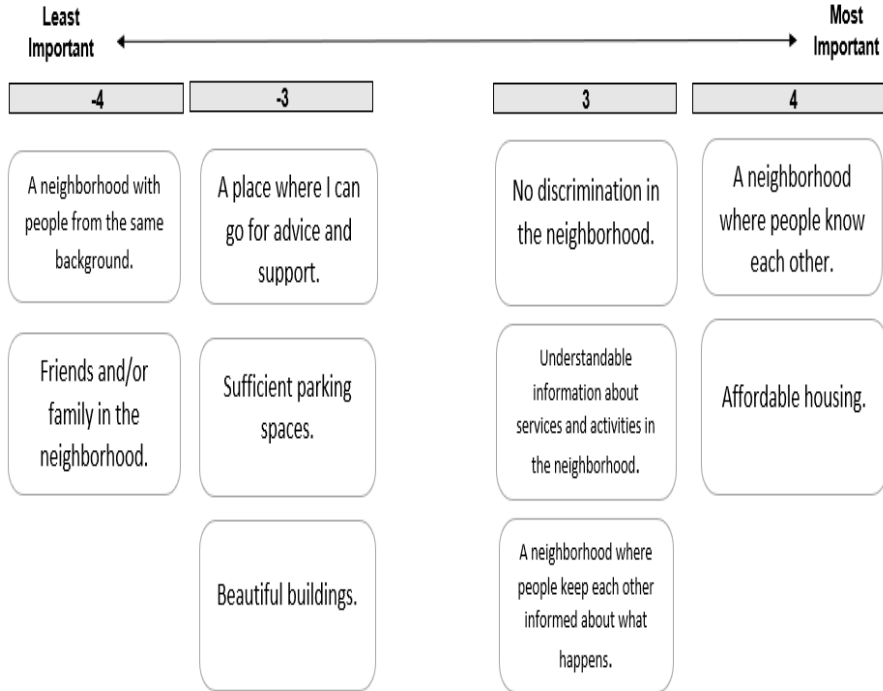


"We are not used to going to all kinds of social activities. We prefer to sit quietly at home because we have always lived that way."

"For me the most important thing is that my family lives very close by."

Connected, well-informed & engaged

All men who live with others.

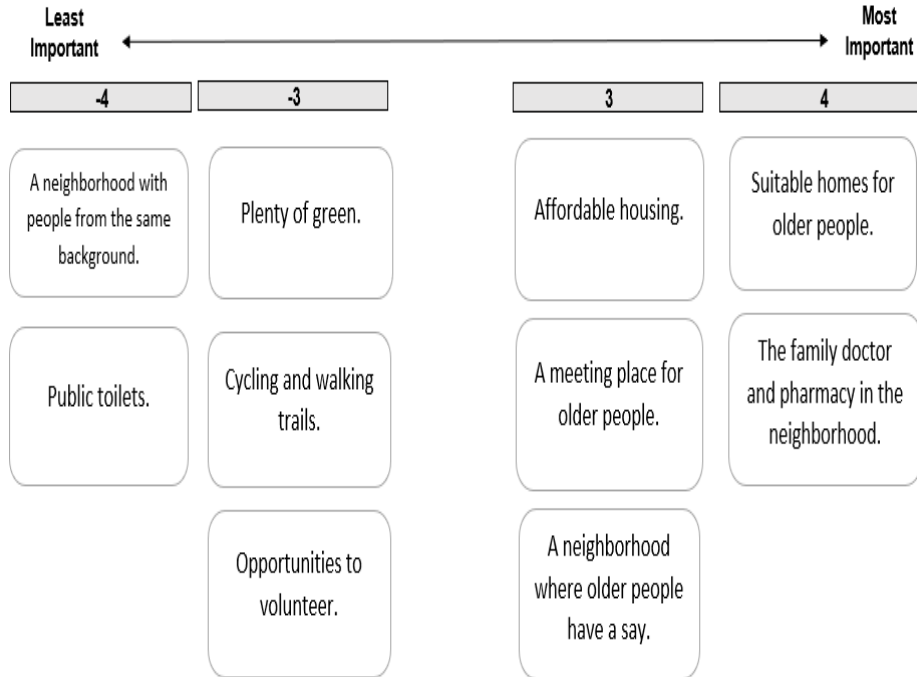


"We have a saying...: your near neighbor is better than your distant brother. So, you must have good contact with people."

Erasmus

Suitable & affordable living

More than half are men who live with others.

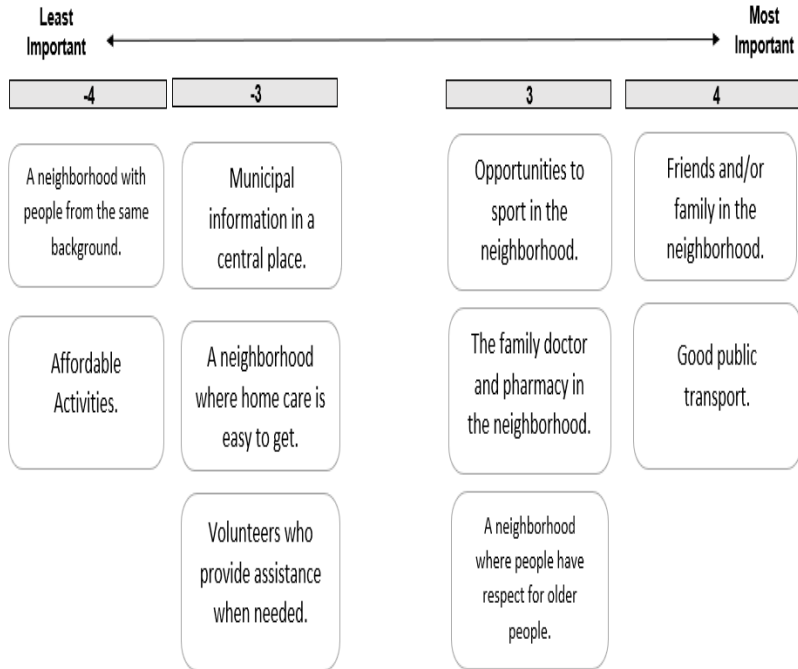


“Generally, for the houses to be ‘age-proof’; meaning that there is an elevator, that the house does not have many stairs or on the ground floor if possible”.

Erasmus

A lively neighborhood

Half are men who live alone.



"This is the most important thing for me to have friends...neighbors...to have company. We can go out together, gather...relieve stress with each other."

Erasmus

Needs for Aging in Place: Views of Older Moroccan Adults in the Netherlands

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
Article Contents
Abstract
Supplementary data

JOURNAL ARTICLE ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Needs for Aging in Place: Views of Older Moroccan Adults in the Netherlands


Hager Hussein, MSc ✉, Jane Murray Cramm, PhD, Anna Petra Nieboer, PhD

The Gerontologist, gnad154, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnad154>
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Abstract
Background and Objectives


Due to health and/or financial limitations, older migrants may become especially dependent on their neighborhoods, highlighting the importance of investigating their experiences. We explored older Moroccan adults' views on the relative importance of neighborhood resources for aging in place.





PDF

CITATIONS  1

VIEWS  229

ALTERNATIVE METRICS  ?

 More metrics information





Ezra

Do the individual characteristics of older Moroccan migrants influence their needs for ageing in place?

A person-environment fit perspective

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A person-environment fit perspective

- Person-environment fit focuses on the interaction between characteristics of the individual and the environment.
- Our study found that **age**, **marital status** and **multimorbidity** were significantly associated with environmental needs for ageing in place among older migrants.
- While those who are at an older age missed less resources, those who were single and those with multimorbidity missed more resources in their neighborhoods.

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Missing neighbourhood resources for ageing in place

- Single older Moroccan participants

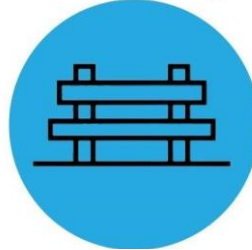
Social Participation



Health Services and Community Supports

- Older Moroccan participants with multimorbidity

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



Housing



Social Participation



Respect and Social Inclusion



Civic Participation and Employment

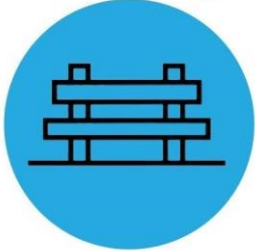


Health Services and Community Supports

Discrimination & Ageing in place

- Older Moroccan participants who experienced feelings of discrimination missed more resources in these domains.

Outdoor Spaces
and Buildings



Housing



Respect and
Social Inclusion

Communication
and Information



Health Services
and Community
Supports

Ezafus

**Age-friendly Communities and Well-being
Realization among Native-Dutch Older
Adults**

Urban demography in the Netherlands

- Four largest cities in The Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht
- Increasingly ethnically diverse neighborhoods (Crul, Scholten & van de Laar, 2019)
- Dutch cities are both spatially and socially segregated (Musterd & Ostendorf, 2009; Crul & Lelie, 2023)

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Urban-dwelling older adults

- Approximately 20% of the Dutch population are older adults, 85% of this group is native-Dutch (Statistics Netherlands, 2024)
- They make up between 10-17% of the population of the largest cities (Statistics Netherlands, 2023)
- Older adults spent the majority of their time in their own neighbourhood (Horgas, 1998)
- Native-Dutch older adults are more likely to experience negative effects stemming from neighborhood deprivation compared to older migrants (van der Gref & Droogleever Fortuijn, 2017)

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Q-Study: exploring views of native older adults

- Three viewpoints identified:

“Well-equipped and Connected: Living Beyond the Neighborhood”

“Afraid and Frail: In Need of a Safe and Socially Connected Neighborhood”

“Green and Clean: Wanting to Feel Safe and Connected in a Well-Maintained Neighborhood”

- The importance of ethnic diversity within the neighborhood

A stylized, handwritten-style logo for Erasmus, featuring a large, flowing 'E' followed by the word 'Erasmus' in a cursive script.

Viewpoint 1: Well-equipped and connected

- **Key Characteristics of Respondents:**

- 7 respondents (6 female, 5 with low education, 5 with multimorbidity, 2 lived in majority-migrant neighborhoods).

- **Key Neighborhood Preferences:**

- **Essentials Accessibility:** Proximity to basic facilities like supermarkets, GP, and pharmacies is crucial due to reduced mobility.
- **Social Interaction:** Supermarkets as social hubs; importance of neighborly interaction.
- **Public & Specialist Transport:** Essential for engaging in activities outside the neighborhood; concerns over affordability and reliability.
- **Affordable Housing:** Concerns about financial security and potential need for relocation due to health.

- **Views on Neighborhood Diversity:**

- **Cautious Acceptance:** Support for moderate diversity to avoid segregation.
- **Concerns:** Fear of ghettoization and discomfort with activities dominated by specific groups.
- **Dutch Identity:** Emphasis on preserving Dutch norms and values in diverse neighborhoods.

- **Quotes**

- "If it was a major undertaking to go [to the GP], then I'd really need to be dying to actually go there... I'd really visit less, I'd carry on suffering from ailments." [Respondent 24]
- "It'll cause an 'us-versus-them' situation... if you keep everyone separated, people won't get to know each other... we need to mix!" [Respondent 22]

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Viewpoint 2: Afraid and frail

- **Key Characteristics of Respondents:**

- Seven respondents, all with low education levels; four men, five with multimorbidity, six with disabilities; two in majority-migrant neighborhoods.

- **Key Neighborhood Preferences:**

- **Safety:** Top priority, especially to feel secure and comfortable.
- **Social Interaction:** Desire for sociocultural activities and meeting places for older adults.
- **Special Transport:** Valued for mobility and reducing barriers due to disabilities.
- **Affordable Housing:** Important for future stability and avoiding relocation.

- **Views on Neighborhood Diversity:**

- Cautious about diversity; some discomfort with cultural differences and language barriers, though others value mixed environments.
- Concerns about crime and the presence of non-native youths; support for increased police presence

- **Core Quotes:**

- "Safety is simply the most important thing. If you feel safe somewhere, it's also pleasant to live there." [Respondent 7]
- "I've tried it a few times and even though the leader or supervisor says 'you have to speak in Dutch,' they talk in their language and then you feel very left out..." [Respondent 13]

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Viewpoint 3: Green and clean

- **Key Characteristics of Respondents:**

- Nine respondents; six female, five with low education levels, six with multimorbidity, two with disabilities; six in majority-migrant neighborhoods.

- **Key Neighborhood Preferences:**

- **Greenery:** Essential for well-being; desired for mental health and visual appeal.
- **Cleanliness:** Important for comfort; frustrations with garbage collection.
- **Safety:** Critical, especially at night; influences willingness to engage in activities.
- **Public Transport:** Valued for accessibility, affordability, and convenience.

- **Views on Neighborhood Diversity:**

- Respondents in this group generally valued multiculturalism, appreciating its role in broadening experiences and learning. However, they expressed a preference for a balance where multiculturalism does not overshadow the Dutch identity and where neighborhood cohesion is maintained.

- **Core Quotes:**

- "I'd feel extremely unhappy if all I saw around me was stones... I have to see trees and bushes and things like that, otherwise I know I'll waste away." [Respondent 6]
- "I think multiculturalism is fine, you just learn something from each other. As long as it preserves a bit of the Dutch identity..." [Respondent 14]

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Neighborhood Characteristics for Well-being

- **Well-Equipped and Connected Neighborhoods:** Importance of having basic amenities like grocery stores and healthcare services (Wu, Prina, and Matthews 2022) nearby for older adults' well-being. In addition, reliable and well-connected public transport are important facilitators for well-being enhancing activities (Rambaldini-Gooding, 2021). Accessibility to these services is crucial for maintaining independence and avoiding institutionalization .
- **Afraid and Frail:** A safe environment is crucial for older adults' well-being (Choi and Matz-Costa 2018; Cramm and Nieboer 2013; 2014; Won et al. 2016), including a reduced risk of crime and the presence of supportive social networks. Safety impacts the willingness to engage in social activities and leave the house, which is crucial for mental health and well-being.
- **Green and Clean:** Green spaces and clean environments contribute positively to mental health (Dennis et al. 2020; Finlay et al. 2015). Respondents emphasized the value of green surroundings for their overall happiness and the negative impact of neglect and poor maintenance.

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Ethnic Diversity in the Neighborhood

- Although no respondent directly expressed a preference for an (ethnically) homogenous neighborhood (S23), almost all spoke about immigrants in the interviews.
- Many accepted multiculturalism as reality in urban neighborhoods but pointed to a need to respect local values and avoid segregation.
- The respondents noted the importance of communication and language proficiency as a facilitator of positive interethnic contact.

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The Role of Solidarity in the Neighbourhood

Why care about solidarity?

- Diversification of Western societies, especially in urban areas, complicates solidarity.
- People show more solidarity towards their own ethnic group, weakening community sense in diverse neighborhoods (Kruse 2023).
- Neighborhood solidarity is crucial for the wellbeing of vulnerable groups like older adults (Cramm and Nieboer 2014).

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Instrument development

- Despite various studies, there is no empirically validated instrument for measuring neighborhood solidarity.
- A quantitative instrument would enhance understanding and enable exploration of causal linkages between solidarity and factors like ethnic diversity and wellbeing.
- This study develops an instrument based on Lindenberg's solidarity norms and validates it using data from older adults in Rotterdam, including native Dutch and migrants.

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Instrument validation

- The instrument was validated using confirmatory factor analysis and tested for construct validity.
- Measurement invariance was established across four groups: native Dutch, Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese older adults.
- Stronger neighborhood solidarity norms were positively related to solidary intentions and behaviors, supporting the hypothesis that norms influence behavior.

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Conclusions

- Ageing in place requires supportive neighbourhoods
- Alignment of neighbourhood resources with older people's needs is important (depending on frailty status, cultural background, and SES)
- Age-friendly communities support realization of multiple well-being needs and development of solidarity within and between groups in the neighborhood