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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Living apart (or) together—neighbours' views and experiences on their relationships with neighbours with and without intellectual disabilities

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Background: Neighbours play an important role in the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. Neighbouring in general might help understand the social interactions between neighbours with and without intellectual disabilities. Our study focuses on gaining insight into neighbouring patterns and how people with intellectual disabilities fit in them.

Method: 26 interviews were conducted with 29 neighbours of people with intellectual disabilities on their norms and behaviours towards neighbours with and without disabilities.

Results: Four patterns were identified: feeling an outsider, fleeting contacts, individualized neighbourliness and sense of community.

Discussion: Participants perceived neighbours with intellectual disabilities as different: they are difficult to approach and show inappropriate behaviour. The groups shared most general perceptions, but there were differences. The first two groups mostly had fleeting encounters, whereas the last groups seemed more open to communal activities and assisting neighbours. In enhancing social inclusion, staff should be aware of these neighbouring patterns.

KEYWORDS
neighbouring, people with intellectual disabilities, qualitative research, social inclusion

1 | INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, growing numbers of people with intellectual disabilities have started living in ordinary neighbourhoods (Beadle-Brown, Mansell, & Kozma, 2007). However, they do not automatically feel included when living in the general community (Cobigo & Hall, 2009; Cummins & Lau, 2003; Hall, 2005; Overmars-Marx, Thomése, Verdonschot, & Meininger, 2014). Social inclusion in the neighbourhood is not only determined by the personal characteristics of the people with intellectual disabilities themselves, but also by the way neighbours respond to them (Cobigo, Ouellette-Kuntz, Lysaght, & Martin, 2012; Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek, & Leahy, 2015). Complex interactions between personal factors and social and cultural aspects of the neighbourhood affect individuals' experience of social inclusion (Martin & Cobigo, 2011; Van Alphen, Dijker, Van den Borne, & Curfs, 2010). Studies into the relationships between neighbours with and without intellectual disabilities identify a variety of facilitating and obstructing factors for the interaction between the two groups of neighbours (e.g., Bredewold, Tonkens, & Trappenburg, 2015; Van Alphen et al., 2010; Wiesel & Bigby, 2014). Studies identify the following barriers: people with intellectual disabilities invading the privacy of neighbours; unconventional and unexpected behaviour; neighbours perceptions of the group homes; and the idea that the residents of the homes need more care than neighbours without intellectual disabilities were willing to provide. Neighbours without intellectual disabilities also considered themselves lacking the skills to interact with people with intellectual disabilities. Positive experiences were greeting

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and engaging in small talk (Bredewold et al., 2015; Wiesel & Bigby, 2014).

The studies mentioned above provide information on isolated factors affecting the relationship between neighbours with and without intellectual disabilities. However, relationships between people with and without intellectual disabilities are part of local neighbouring patterns, which are embedded in urban and non-urban contexts (e.g., Keane, 1991; Thomése, 1998). Citing Henning and Lieberg (1996, p. 6), Mollenhorst (2015) characterizes neighbourhood relations as “unpretentious everyday contacts”: interaction is usually limited to relatively impersonal contacts and exchange of instrumental support. Still, it is a typical role relationship, and normative expectations about the way neighbours should behave inform actual interactions between neighbours (Auhagen & Hinder, 1997). Despite many suggestions that neighbourhood communities are declining (Wellman, 1979), research suggests that neighbour relations are still important in the daily lives of residents (Mollenhorst, 2015). However, neighbouring has individualized; neighbour relations are less defined by collective structures and norms, are more guided by individual norms (Linders, 2010) and have become embedded in personal networks (Wellman, 1979).

The concept of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 2000) may help to understand the complex interactions between people with intellectual disabilities and their local neighbours (Bollard, 2009; Overmars-Marx et al., 2014). Social capital refers to social networks that share a value system including core values as trust and reciprocity (e.g., Cobigo et al., 2012). This value system consists of underlying social norms, and these norms play an important role in the ways in which neighbours develop their relationships with other neighbours. Several social norms may inform neighbour relations (Ajzen, 2005; Kusenbach, 2006; Linders, 2010; Stokoe & Wallwork, 2003). The first is friendly recognition, which demands that neighbours greet one another and sometimes engage in small talk (Kusenbach, 2006), so people are familiar with one another (Blokland & Nast, 2014). At the same time, neighbours find it important to maintain their privacy. Wilmott (1986 in Crow, Allan, & Summers, 2002) calls this the norm of friendly distance. Second, neighbourhood relations usually involve an obligation to help each other, as and when this is necessary (Bayertz, 1999). Bayertz (1999) argues that this norm of solidarity originates from bonds between people, based on, for example, shared history or interest. Related to solidarity is the norm of generalized reciprocity: I will do this for you without immediately expecting anything in return, confident that down the road you or someone else will return the favour (Gouldner, 1960; Putnam, 2000).

The present authors propose to contribute to the literature in two ways. First, the present authors will strengthen the small body of literature (e.g., Linders, 2010) which differentiates neighbour relations in the same neighbourhood. Most studies generalize relationships within a neighbourhood (Forrest & Kearns, 2001) or only focus on individuals’ networks (Völker, Flap, & Lindenberg, 2007). The question what types of neighbour relations (co-)exist within the same local area remains unanswered. Second, the present authors know of no studies which link general neighbouring patterns to the relationships between neighbours with and without intellectual disabilities. Do neighbours see people with intellectual disabilities as part of their neighbourhood and their neighbouring patterns or as a separate group? And does this vary with different types of neighbour relations? Information on how neighbours relate to people with intellectual disabilities may offer insights into opportunities for social inclusion. The present authors aim to make recommendations to group home staff members to use the identified neighbouring patterns in enhancing social inclusion.

The following questions will be addressed:

1. Which neighbouring patterns can be identified?
2. How do neighbours with intellectual disabilities fit into these patterns?
3. How can group home staff members use their awareness of neighbouring patterns to enhance social inclusion in the neighbourhood?

2 | METHOD

To answer these questions, a study among neighbours of people with intellectual disabilities living in group homes was condcuted. Focusing on people with intellectual disabilities living in group homes increases the chance that neighbours are aware of the presence of people with intellectual disabilities and the present authors could rely on actual experiences of neighbours with residents of the group homes. People with intellectual disabilities who are supported in their individual home situation often are less visible in the neighbourhood. Consequently, neighbours may not be aware of their status as having an intellectual disability. However, the present authors do realize that people with intellectual disabilities living independently might also or even more benefit from interactions with neighbours. During the interviews, topics were discussed related to the group homes but a broader perspective was also taken, for example, by focusing on the relationship between neighbours and people with intellectual disabilities in general.

2.1 | Research settings

The study was conducted in two neighbourhoods in the eastern part of the Netherlands, where eight group homes for on average 15 people with intellectual disabilities were located in different parts of the neighbourhood. The group homes included in our study locate people diagnosed with mild-to-moderate intellectual disabilities. In one group home, there were residents who also have mental health problems, and in four of the homes, there were a few residents with an increased need of physical care. Two of the group homes also provided care to people with more severe intellectual disabilities. The group homes employed full-time staff who support their residents 24 hrs per day. The neighbourhoods were situated in moderately low-urbanized areas and are known as neighbourhoods where neighbourliness traditionally played an important role. The neighbourhoods differed in their level of facilities. Both offered shopping, catering and leisure facilities, but one had a greater availability of the various facilities that attracted people from across the region, while the other had more of a village-like atmosphere. Both neighbourhoods had fairly similar sociodemographic characteristics, with a relatively high percentage of people aged above 65 years (23% and 26%, compared to 17% of the Dutch general population; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2014). The average income of neighbourhood residents was defined as just below the average income of the general Dutch population (€29,500): between €24,400 and €26,600 gross per year. The present authors approach the neighbourhood as "a set of nested zones which subdivide the environment around one's home into sections of distinct spatial, social, and emotional nearness" (Kusenbach, 2008). Using this definition, the present authors studied respondents' subjective perceptions of their neighbourhood. In our study, the present authors focus on the stories of residents about their views and experiences regarding their neighbour relations with people with and without intellectual disabilities.

2.2 | Recruitment of neighbours

The recruitment of neighbours was carried out by going from door to door. The present authors wanted to increase our chances of recruiting participants who actually had encounters with people with intellectual disabilities and therefore approached people who lived within two blocks from their group homes. Each neighbourhood was visited once to recruit potential participants. In the interviewing stage, extra participants were recruited during the day and early evening hours. The person who opened the door was given information about the research. Neighbours who agreed to participate and neighbours who wanted to think it over were handed a flyer describing the aim and design of the study. The researchers recorded the personal details of the person they had spoken to. One week later, the researcher called the potential participant to make an appointment for the interview. This resulted in 26 interview appointments.

2.3 | Interview and topic list

29 neighbours were interviewed, representing 26 households, who lived close to the group homes for people with intellectual disabilities. Table 1 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of our participants.

The interviews were guided by a topic list, which focused on the relationships between neighbours; how do respondents characterize their relationships with neighbours (actual behaviour) and what social norms play a role within these relationships (e.g., expected behaviour related to meeting each other in the street). The present authors also focused on concrete situations to elicit more stories from neighbours; by particularly asking about conflict situations or disturbances. Most participants had limited experience with people with intellectual disabilities. To gain more insight into neighbours'

TABLE 1 Participants—sociodemographic characteristics

Town A				Town B			
	Sex	Age	Household		Sex	Age	Household
A1	Couple	74 and 66	Married	B1	Male	72	Single
A2	Male	61	Together with partner and resident children	B2	Male	67	Married
A3	Male	37	Single (joint custody)	B3	Male	39	Married with resident children
A4	Female	31	Single	B4	Male	84	Single
A5	Female	70	Single	B5	Female	34	Married with resident children
A6	Female	50	Together with partner and resident children	B6	Female	46	Married with resident children
A7	Female	65	Single	B7	Female	64	Single
A8	Female	36	Single	B8	Female	57	Married with resident children
A9	Female	76	Single	B9	Female	84	Single
A10	Female	75	Married	B10	Female	47	Together with partner
A11	Female	86	Married	B11	Male	60	Married with resident children
A12	Couple	71 and 59	Together with partner	B12	Female	70	Single
				B13	Male	65	Married
				B14	Couple	62 and 64	Married

views and experiences regarding their contact with people with intellectual disabilities, the present authors used, when necessary, fictitious scenarios or asked them to expand on their personal experiences within or outside the neighbourhood. In the findings section, the present authors list whether participants responded to a fictitious situation or spoke from personal experience.

2.4 | Data analysis

All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. An inductive approach was used for analysis using ATLAS.ti. The first stage of our data analysis was open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During this stage, which the present authors called first-order analysis, little attempt was made to categorize codes (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012).

In the second stage of data analysis, open codes were categorized into more abstract, so-called second-order themes (Gioia et al., 2012). Strauss and Corbin (1990) call this stage "axial coding." Seven themes emerged as follows: perceived neighbourhood identity, perceived opportunities for social contact, chance encounters: the importance of being recognized, pre-arranged social contact and expectations, neighbour assistance, social control versus privacy and experienced disturbances.

The coding was done by one researcher. During the first and second stage of analysis, four interviews were coded and categorized by two researchers. Discussion of the outcomes led to small adjustments in the labelling of the themes that had emerged.

The third and final stages of our analysis consisted of identifying neighbouring patterns in the second-order themes. During this stage, participants were classified on the content of their responses to the seven themes (see also Table 2). Combining these responses resulted in the identification of four neighbouring patterns: feeling an outsider, fleeting contacts, individualized neighbourliness and sense of community. These neighbouring patters were discussed with three researchers involved in the study. All participants could be categorized into one of the identified patterns. Five participants reported social norms and behaviour classifying them in two different neighbouring patterns.

The steps of our analysis are visualized in Figure 1.

3 | FINDINGS

In the first part of this section, the seven themes which emerged from the second-order analysis are presented and participants' social norms and/or behaviour regarding neighbouring in general and their neighbours with intellectual disabilities are discussed. After a description of the themes, the four neighbouring patterns are explained.

3.1 | Perceived neighbourhood identity

In the first theme, participants described how their perception of neighbourhood identity related to the traditional form of neighbourliness ("noaberschap") and how people with intellectual disabilities fit into this neighbourhood identity.

Many participants refer to the traditional neighbourliness typical of this area ("noaberschap"). Participants defined "noaberschap" as the obligation to help each other if necessary. In connection with "noaberschap," participants mentioned a traditional custom which is called "buurtmaken" ("making community"). This starts with inviting your neighbours over for a drink when you move into a neighbourhood.

Based on the stories of participants, "noaberschap" is perceived in three different ways. The first group of participants has a (strong) sense of neighbourliness. They feel obliged to help neighbours and in some cases also refer to the importance of "buurtmaken":

> *"In this street 'buurtmaken' is normal. Inviting everyone over when you are new. If you don't, it's rather strange."*
>
> *(participant B6)*

> *"A lot of neighbours come from the small hamlets were the customs that have to do with 'buurtmaken' are normal. Women visit each other on birthdays, and when someone dies, neighbours go to the house."*
>
> *(participant B11)*

The second group of participants stressed that there is still a sense of neighbourliness, but that the traditional form of "noaberschap" is in decline, because of the arrival of people from outside the region. This new form of neighbourliness was described as helping each out in cases of emergency but participants call this kind of help normal and do not attribute this to a sense of community.

The third group of participants are the newcomers mentioned by the second group. This group feels they are outsiders and report they have difficulty making real contact with the existing residents: "I know everyone but still feel an outsider. You can't make real contact." (participant A9).

All participants see the presence of people with intellectual disabilities as normal. As one participant puts it: "These two people have intellectual disabilities but somehow they are completely settled in our village." (participant A6).

They run into neighbours with intellectual disabilities in the street and in shops and see this as positive: "You run into people with intellectual disabilities, because they work in shops or help out in a pub, which is good." (participants A4).

3.2 | Perceived opportunities for social contact

The second theme covers the stories in which participants refer to meeting areas that provide opportunities to establish and maintain social contact with neighbours.

TABLE 2 Composition of the neighbouring patterns

	Themes			
Neighbouring patterns	**Perceived neighbourhood identity**	**Perceived opportunities for social contact**	**Chance encounters: the importance of being recognized**	**Pre-arranged social contact and expectations**
Feeling an outsider	Feeling an outsider	Not or limited involved in associations/community centre/ clubs	Greeting and small chat—important	Not present or selective— desire for more neighbour contact
Fleeting contacts	Diminishing *"noaberschap"*	Not involved in associations/ community centre. Some involvement in clubs.	Greeting and small chat—important.	Limited present—only spontaneous, no obligations —satisfied with superficial contact.
Individualized neighbourliness	Positive neighbourlines, diminishing *"noaberschap"*	Not or limited involved in associations/community centre. Some involvement in clubs	Greeting and small chat—important	Focus on communal activities —spontaneous and no obligations
Sense of community	Community sense related to (diminishing) *"Noaberschap"*	Some involvement in associations/ clubs/community centre	Greeting and small chat—important	Focus on communal activities with group of neighbours

Participants mentioned associations, sport clubs and a community centre as important in establishing and maintaining social contacts. Apart from these more organized opportunities, participants also approached a key person in the neighbourhood as an opportunity to connect to neighbours.

Associations, clubs and societies, which are locally organized and not on the neighbourhood level, play an important role for most participants. Participants told stories about, for example, the carnival society, annual festivals and other specific associations ("De Schutterij"). Annual festivals are also perceived as meeting opportunities: "It is a tradition were people come together." (participant A2).

Nearly half the participants mentioned their membership of different clubs, involving sports, music or card games, as important for initiating and maintaining social contacts. Seven participants from one neighbourhood described how they meet neighbours at the community centre and drink coffee and how their children play together.

About a quarter of participants mentioned neighbours who had a pivotal role in the neighbourhood. Such a person organizes activities with neighbours, for example, activities for children or drinking coffee together. This person can also be important when new neighbours move into the neighbourhood. In some cases, activities or contacts stopped when the key person moved out of the neighbourhood: "He was the 'mayor' of the street. Since he has died, there are less activities in the street." (participant B3).

People with intellectual disabilities were not mentioned in the context of local associations, clubs or the community centre. Participants said they were not visible in these contexts but some did have concrete experiences with them in shops and restaurants, as a fellow customer or as an employee or voluntary worker, for example, a waiter, which participants valued as positive.

3.3 | Chance encounters: the importance of being recognized

The third theme covers participants' stories about their encounters in the street.

Greeting neighbours, with or without intellectual disabilities, is considered normal in the neighbourhoods and villages where participants live: "Greeting costs nothing and it gives people a good feeling." (participant A5). Four participants mentioned feeling bad when ignored by neighbours: "I am unhappy if I meet and recognize a neighbour and he or she says nothing." (participant B6). Some participants expressed indifference at not being greeted: "It's their decision"; "It doesn't bother me."

When asked how they would feel if the person who ignored them was a neighbour with intellectual disabilities and limited social skills, participants reported they would not experience any negative feelings towards a "non-greeting neighbour."

Most participants are open to a chat in the street. Sometimes, these chats turn into more extended conversations. Participants report feeling uncomfortable when such a conversation takes a turn into unwanted curiosity or an invasion of privacy. One participant said: "Every time I left the house, he was there. I was not always in the mood for a chat but I didn't want to offend him because he's my neighbour. Now I tell him I'm in hurry and that works fine." (participant B7).

Extended conversations with people with intellectual disabilities were not mentioned. About one-third of participants have chats with neighbours with intellectual disabilities: "The people are usually very spontaneous. They like it if I stop for a chat." (participant A9). One participant mentioned always being greeted by a number of people with intellectual disabilities when they get off the bus "but I don't think you can have a normal conversation with them." And when people with intellectual disabilities walk by in a group, this creates

Neighbour assistance	Social control versus privacy	Experienced disturbances	View on neighbours with intellectual disabilities
Emergency and minor assistance	Social control related to safety	Some experiences—importance of communication	Limited contact—willing to help but not structural
Emergency and small assistance.	Social control related to safety.	Some experiences—live and let live.	Limited contact—willing to help but not structural—no obligations.
Individual support. Direct reciprocity not important	Social control mostly related to safety—limited alertness	Some experiences—show neighbours some courtesy	Limited contact—open for activities and help
Individual and community support. Direct reciprocity not important	High level of social control	Disturbance—seeking for a solution together	Limited contact—open for activities—feeling a connection but no obligations

a barrier for having a chat or even greeting each other, according to participants (see also Van Alphen et al., 2010).

3.4 | Pre-arranged social contact and expectations

Participants not only told stories about chance encounters in the street, but also about pre-arranged social contact (theme four). This theme of pre-arranged contact both covers views on how to introduce yourself when you move into a neighbourhood and organized activities on an individual, small group or neighbourhood level. According to four participants, new neighbours are expected to invite their neighbours over when they move into the neighbourhood. Some participants mentioned the traditional form of neighbourliness and saw inviting your neighbours over as part of the customs

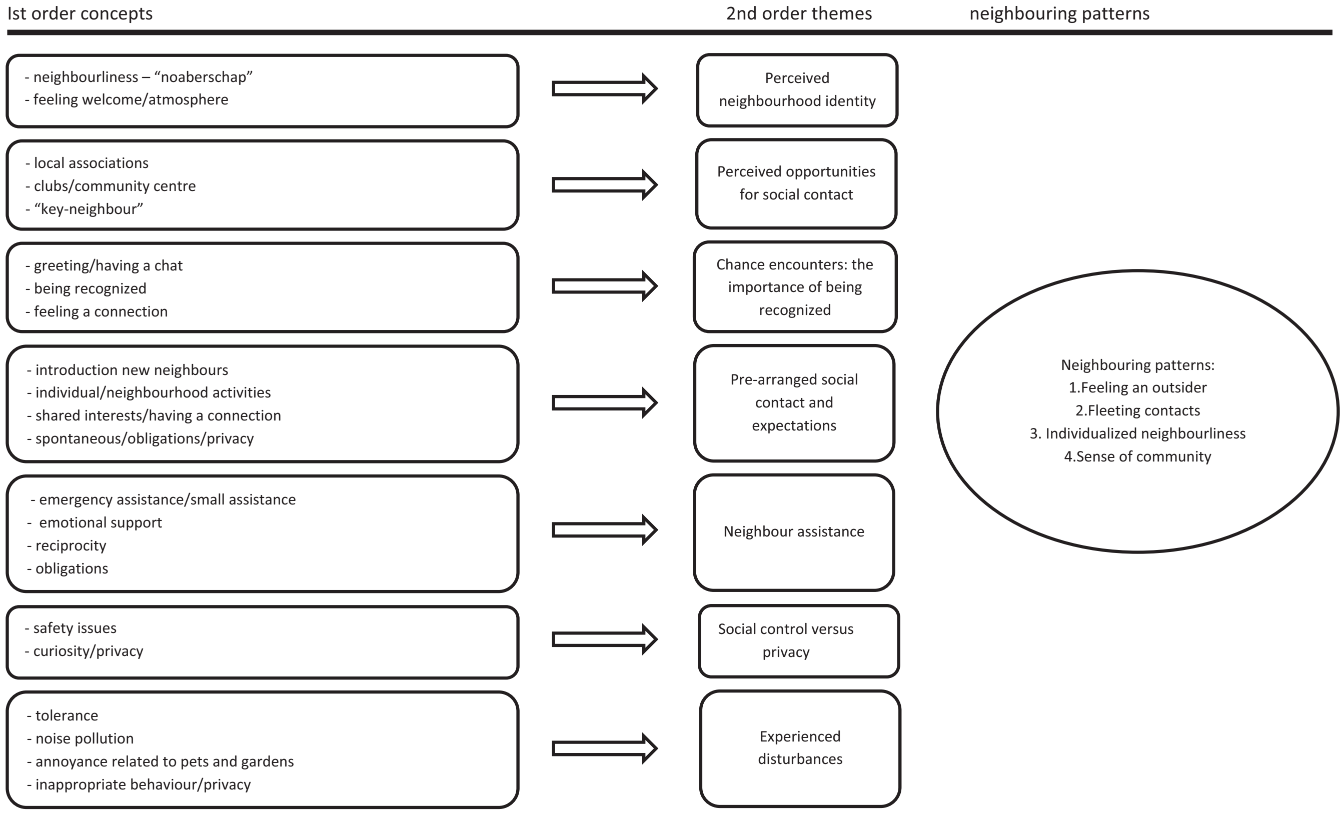
Ist order concepts
2nd order themes
neighbouring patterns
- neighbourliness – "noaberschap"
- feeling welcome/atmosphere
Perceived neighbourhood identity
- local associations
- clubs/community centre
- "key-neighbour"
Perceived opportunities for social contact
- greeting/having a chat
- being recognized
- feeling a connection
Chance encounters: the importance of being recognized
- introduction new neighbours
- individual/neighbourhood activities
- shared interests/having a connection
- spontaneous/obligations/privacy
Pre-arranged social contact and expectations
- emergency assistance/small assistance
- emotional support
- reciprocity
- obligations
Neighbour assistance
- safety issues
- curiosity/privacy
Social control versus privacy
- tolerance
- noise pollution
- annoyance related to pets and gardens
- inappropriate behaviour/privacy
Experienced disturbances
Neighbouring patterns:
1.Feeling an outsider
2.Fleeting contacts
3. Individualized neighbourliness
4.Sense of community

FIGURE 1 Data structure

within the neighbourhoods involved. There were also participants who were not explicit about how the first introduction has to take place. Both parties involved can take the initiative and do not have to be arranged but can also come about by meeting each other in the street.

Regarding the introduction of neighbours with intellectual disabilities living in group homes, participants would appreciate an introductory meeting arranged by the group homes. This would create a better understanding and it would be reassuring and sometimes useful to know the neighbours with intellectual disabilities: "Then you know what's going on, what kind of people live there and you get to know the people."(participant A7).

Pre-arranged social contact between neighbours also takes place in communal neighbourhood activities. Two types of neighbour activities can be distinguished as follows: neighbourhood activities organized for all neighbours and neighbour activities involving only one or a small number of neighbours.

Activities organized for all neighbours are for instance a barbecue, a drink, "burendag" (Neighbours' Day) or activities like playing bridge, organized within the apartment block. The impact of this kind of activities on the social contacts between neighbours is significant, according to some participants. They provide an opportunity to catch up with neighbours or meet (new) neighbours: "By having communal afternoons, we all know each other in the apartment block."(participant A10).

In general, people with intellectual disabilities are not involved in general neighbourhood activities but they are welcome. As they are present in the neighbourhood they should be invited, just like other neighbours: "If you invite the neighbourhood, you invite everyone." (participant B10). But this opinion does not always correspond with the actual situation, as one participant puts it: "I've never thought about it. They invited us over for a barbecue but we didn't invite them. I don't know the reasoning behind it." (participant B13). Other participants mentioned that the group home is not in their street and therefore the people with intellectual disabilities are not invited to neighbour activities. When participants were asked, in the context of a fictitious situation, about the importance of group home staff being present during activities, about one-fifth of participants answered they would appreciate their presence. They thought staff members would be able to recognize problems sooner, as they are aware of the needs and capabilities of their residents. Two participants had previous experiences with neighbours with intellectual disabilities who had an active role during the activity, for example, tapping beer. People with intellectual disabilities enjoyed these roles: they contributed to a sense of pride, according to participants. Taking the initiative in organizing an activity would be highly appreciated by more than half of the participants. These kinds of meetings create opportunities for getting to know one another. One participant put it as follows: "If they become more open, this might give neighbours a taste for more." (participant A3).

Seven participants are involved in activities with one or a small number of neighbours, sometimes as a spin-off from general neighbourhood activities. An important condition for these contacts is feeling a connection. These activities can be of a structural or incidental nature: "Sometimes I go for a walk with my neighbour. I send her a message through Whatsapp, 'do you feel like having a walk together?'" (participant B6). Most participants emphasize the importance of spontaneous contact and do not want to feel any obligations. If the contact is not spontaneous, too frequent or unwanted, it feels like an invasion of their privacy.

About one-third of participants are open to individual activities involving people with intellectual disabilities. Some participants had experience with these kinds of activities and are still willing to, for example, drink coffee or play a game together. These participants find it important to feel a connection and they do not appreciate too frequent or unwanted contact. Just as in the relationship with other neighbours, participants do not want to feel obliged to engage in a structural, for example, weekly, activity. Sometimes, fear of "claiming behaviour" is based on warnings by staff members. This creates a barrier to inviting neighbours with intellectual disabilities. One participant mentioned it would be a shame if contact ends because of this behaviour. This participant had the experience that being clear and direct helps to maintain a healthy relationship. In response to fictitious situations, some participants mentioned the importance of information by staff about how to cope with certain behaviours (psycho-education), such as claiming behaviour, but also making noises or an epileptic seizure. "Feeling like a staff member or volunteer," is mentioned as a barrier for individual activities with people with intellectual disabilities.

3.5 | Neighbour assistance

Participants told stories about the assistance they exchanged with neighbours, why this was important and the significance of reciprocity. These are combined in the fifth theme.

All participants stressed the importance of helping out in the case of an emergency. This is what characterizes a good atmosphere in the neighbourhood, according to some participants. Other types of assistance participants mentioned were borrowing goods, moving a new washing machine or putting out the rubbish for a neighbour. Participants saw this kind of assistance as normal: "I was raised with the idea that it is normal to help each other out." (participant B12).

Around three-quarters of participants told stories about more extensive support received from or given to neighbours. In most cases, this kind of support was only exchanged with one or a small number of neighbours. Five participants exchanged more extensive support with more neighbours, sometimes the entire street. More extensive support consists of, for example, cooking for each other, taking someone to the hospital, shopping for groceries or taking care of each other's pets. These kinds of assistance are related to the traditional form of neighbourliness.

Over half the participants who told stories about reciprocity were very clear: there is no direct need for a favour in return: "If worst comes to worst you can rely on your neighbours. Knowing that is enough." (participant B3). Some participants even explicitly mentioned they would rather give than receive support.

When it comes to providing help to people with intellectual disabilities, most participants are willing. In most cases, this assistance is not a reality at present, but the willingness to help was expressed within the context of a fictitious situation. One participant mentioned that the 24 hr support provided by staff members gives the impression that no further assistance from outsiders is needed. A few neighbours had experience assisting people with intellectual disabilities. Their stories largely correspond with the stories about assistance between neighbours in general. Fifteen participants were willing to provide help with shopping or other minor tasks. All of them mentioned they did not want to feel any obligation and that assistance should not be structural. Four participants stressed that the boundary between occasional help and voluntary work should be clear. Five participants said they only wanted to assist neighbours in the case of an emergency or spontaneously in the street, for example, if someone has a problem with his bicycle. Receiving help from people with intellectual disabilities did not come up in participants' stories. Participants made clear that reciprocity would not be important to them when assisting people with intellectual disabilities. Participants stated that if you can make someone feel happy that is enough. The social contact is more important than a favour in return.

3.6 | Social control versus privacy

The sixth theme covers the stories of participants which focus on the trade-off between social control and privacy.

During the interviews, almost all participants expressed their desire for a certain degree of social control. Over half the participants mentioned alertness about safety issues and uncommon situations. As one participant puts it: "If someone touches my property, enough neighbours notice this." (participant B3).

Participants perceive this kind of social control as normal. The actual form social control takes, deliberate or incidental, varies among participants.

Half the stories of participants on social control extended beyond security concerns and also dealt with minor issues like leaving the key in the door or forgetting to turn off the car lights. Moreover, neighbours' alertness can extend to social issues as well: noticing that someone is ill or being aware of family problems. In most cases, participants perceive this kind of social control as pleasant. Some participants mentioned they feel uncomfortable when social control turns into curiosity and invades their privacy. Gossip and neighbours knowing all the ins and outs of their private life is not appreciated: "He doesn't have to know where I was at three in the morning, just because he saw my car wasn't there." (participant B7).

Three participants told stories about experiences with social control in relation to the group homes where people with intellectual disabilities live. Participants appreciate being informed about what is happening in the group home, for example, if there has been a burglary or if there are problems with residents. One participant mentioned, for example: "When a resident is mad and walks away, as a neighbour you can have a small talk if you run into this person. You can ask: What's going on or why are you mad? If you are informed, you become more alert and it is easier to contact a staff member." (participant A6).

3.7 | Experienced disturbances

The final theme focuses on participants' stories about disturbances they have experienced.

Over half the participants had experienced some kind of disturbance in their neighbourhood and about one-third of participants had never dealt with any kind of disturbance. The latter group reported that either there really was not anything to it or that they did not want to make a fuss. The degree of tolerance varies among participants and depends on their relationship with neighbours.

In general, participants did not experience serious disturbances from people with intellectual disabilities living in the group homes. Only one participant mentioned he avoids two residents because of drug use, but he did not experience any other disturbance. Some other incidents were discussed, for example, yelling outside, noise pollution and throwing stones in gardens. These incidents were usually resolved in a satisfying way. In this kind of situations, the support of staff members is welcomed. Short lines of communication with staff members are appreciated. In some cases, certain behaviour is perceived as unremarkable: "One resident always leaves the bus yelling, that has become normal. It doesn't surprise me anymore." (participant B3).

Participants have different ways of coping with disturbances caused by people with intellectual disabilities. Some participants would discuss their irritations with the people involved, but most would turn to a staff member to help them out. Some participants expect staff members to warn group home residents not to cause any kind of disturbance. One participant, who works with people with intellectual disabilities, would have difficulties with noise and screaming from residents: "I tell you honestly. We once discussed this among colleagues. Residents who shout and make loud noises; we wouldn't want to have them living next-door to us. Integration is a two-way process. You have to know which people you place in an ordinary neighbourhood." (participant B7).

3.8 | Neighbouring patterns

In the third stage of the analysis, the present authors identified four neighbouring patterns: feeling an outsider, fleeting contacts, individualized neighbourliness and sense of community (see Table 2).

1. *Feeling an outsider*. This group of participants would like to have more contact with neighbours, but contact stays limited to greeting and an occasional chat. Four participants mentioned having difficulties connecting with the original residents of the neighbourhoods and surrounding area. Most participants within this group would appreciate assistance in emergency situations

and minor assistance. Social control is expected on safety issues.

These participants accept the presence of people with intellectual disabilities. They would appreciate an open day organized by the group home to get acquainted with the home and its residents. Their contact with people with intellectual disabilities is limited to greeting. In most cases, participants do not feel the need to have more contact. Participants are open to offering assistance but not on a structural basis.

2. *Fleeting contacts*. The neighbourly relations of half the participants primarily consisted of fleeting encounters in the street. This kind of contact is often limited to greeting each other and small talk. The norm of friendly recognition (Kusenbach, 2006) is felt strongly within this group. Participants have positive feelings towards their neighbours. In most cases, they are satisfied with the more superficial contacts. Regarding assistance and social control, this group's attitudes are similar to the first group's. Assistance is often limited to helping in cases of emergency or minor assistance, for example, accepting a parcel for a neighbour. In several cases, participants have one or two neighbours they can rely on for more intensive support if the need arises. Social control is mainly focused on safety issues. Participants do have some experiences with disturbances, but in most cases these experiences did not have much impact. In general, participants favour the idea of "live and let live."

Like the group considering themselves outsiders, these participants welcome an open day organized by the group home. Participants are open to contact with neighbours with intellectual disabilities in the street, but contact should be spontaneous. Participants are willing to provide incidental assistance, just as the first group of participants.

3. *Individualized neighbourliness*. About one-quarter of participants consider social activities with neighbours and helping each out important aspects of neighbourly relations. Participants undertake activities with neighbours, which vary from drinking tea together to activities on the neighbourhood level. However, contact with neighbours is more selective than the neighbourly relations described in the fleeting contact pattern. Participants within this group are dedicated to helping, although in practice this often only amounts to minor assistance, such as lending something out or taking out the rubbish. In some cases, help consists of driving someone to hospital or being present when someone dies. This help is based on individual relationships and not embedded in any collective form of solidarity. This is line with Linders (2010). Participants stated that direct reciprocity was not important. They are confident that when they need assistance, neighbours will return the favour (Putnam, 2000). Social control is mostly focused on emergency situations, as in the first two groups. Regarding disturbances, participants generally feel it is important to show your neighbours some courtesy.

According to this group of participants, people with intellectual disabilities are welcome in the neighbourhood. They sometimes actively engage with them. Some participants had visited an open day of the group home and had experienced this as positive. Participants do not object to people with intellectual disabilities being involved in neighbourhood activities and most participants show willingness to undertake a joint activity or to help. In most cases, however, participants object when it comes to structural activities and assistance.

4. *Sense of community*. Four participants feel they are part of a community within their neighbourhood. This sense of community resembles "modern noaberschap" as described by Abbas and Commandeur (2012). Social gatherings are important in their contact with neighbours. These participants are strongly involved with their neighbours as a community, and helping each other is not based on an individual relationship but support is provided to everyone who is considered part of this community. The norm of solidarity (Bayertz, 1999) plays an important role in this group. As with individual neighbourliness, direct reciprocity is not an issue (see also Putnam, 2000). Participants perceive their street or block as an integrated whole and all its residents as part of their community. The way in which participants express their sense of community varies. Participants mentioned traditional customs, for example, gathering when someone dies, communal group activities and social support. Assisting and supporting neighbours is seen as obvious, even more so than in the third group. Participants report a higher level of social control than in the other patterns: neighbours take action when they notice someone has not left the house for a couple of days or watch each other's house during the holidays. Some participants reported that when there was a disturbance, neighbours tried to solve the problem together.

All participants stated that people with intellectual disabilities were welcome at neighbourhood activities and generally they were open to individual contact or even had experiences with it. However, participants did stress that it was important to feel a connection.

4 | DISCUSSION

Our study shows that various social norms and behaviours related to neighbouring can be grouped in different patterns, the act of grouping provides further insight into the concept of neighbouring. Apart from minor differences, all patterns show that neighbours feel they should be able to rely on each other. How this reliance is shaped varies among the patterns. Differences in neighbouring style not only result from individual characteristics but also from situational context, for example, moving into a new neighbourhood or the departure of a neighbour who held the neighbourhood together.

Within the same context, various neighbouring patterns were found. Neighbours with a strong sense of community, those with individualized neighbourliness and those with fleeting encounters live together in the same neighbourhoods. This new knowledge on neighbouring patterns might be useful to gain more understanding about how people with intellectual disabilities can be part of a neighbourhood. Contact is generally limited to friendly recognition at the most (Kusenbach, 2006; Wiesel & Bigby, 2014). Neighbours included in our study experience these fleeting encounters as normal and find it important to recognize and be recognized by their neighbours. In the case of fleeting encounters, they do not seem to make a distinction between their neighbours with or without intellectual disabilities. Several studies show that, besides neighbours, people with intellectual disabilities also benefit from this recognition in the street (e.g., Blokland & Nast, 2014; Bredewold, Tonkens, & Trappenburg, 2016; Van Alphen, Dijker, Van den Borne, & Curfs, 2009).

However, we found that although the involved neighbours in our study live close to the group homes, this does not automatically mean there is contact between neighbours and the people with intellectual disabilities living in the group homes. And concerning more intense forms of neighbouring, people with intellectual disabilities seem to be assigned an exceptional position in the neighbouring patterns. People with intellectual disabilities are not mentioned in relation to (minor) neighbour assistance and social control. This can be considered an implicit form of exclusion, as it effectively bars them from more involved types of neighbouring. The present authors have no information on the reasons for this exclusion. It may have something to do with the perception neighbours have of people with intellectual disabilities: participants mentioned that people living in the group homes do not need help because there is staff present. Participants also expressed fears people with intellectual disabilities might invade their privacy and supposed one cannot have a normal conversation with them. These assumptions may be influenced by various contextual factors, such as the fact neighbours see them walking by in groups, accompanied by staff members and the relative isolation of the group homes. Walking by in groups in the presence of staff members creates a certain distance between them and the neighbourhood. Participants in our study might not be inclined to provide individual help or invite people with intellectual disabilities to a neighbourhood activity, because they perceive the group home as a unit separate from the neighbourhood, which can take care of itself. These results seem to be in line with earlier studies that show that neighbours respond differently towards individuals with intellectual disabilities than towards the group home were people with intellectual disabilities are located (Hudson-Allez & Barrett, 1996; Schwartz & Rabinovitz, 2001; Van Alphen et al., 2010). The relative isolation of group homes might also be due to the fact that people with intellectual disabilities living in group homes mainly move in circles where other people with intellectual disabilities are present, for example, with regard to social contacts, (sheltered) work and leisure activities (e.g., Cummins & Lau, 2003; Cobigo et al., 2012; Overmars-Marx et al., 2014).

Beyond these shared general perceptions of people with intellectual disabilities, the four neighbouring patterns show subtle differences in the opportunities for social contact they offer. Participants within the first two patterns focus on the limited contact resulting from fleeting encounters. They accept the presence of people with intellectual disabilities and are open to spontaneous contact in the street. Participants focusing on individualized neighbourliness and who have a sense of community welcome people with intellectual disabilities to join neighbourhood activities and would visit activities initiated by the group home. These participants are also the most willing to help out or participate in an individual or group activity with people with intellectual disabilities. These findings suggest there are opportunities to enhance social inclusion.

Our study shows staff members can either hinder or facilitate the contact between neighbours with and without intellectual disabilities (see also Abbott & McConkey, 2006; Van Alphen et al., 2009). Although our participants do not make a distinction between their neighbours with or without intellectual disabilities when it concerns fleeting encounters, they did experience walking by in groups as a barrier for initiating, for example, a chat in the street. It would be useful to investigate whether and how group home staff members can play a role in facilitating these fleeting encounters based on the needs of both people with intellectual disabilities and their neighbours (see also Wiesel, Bigby, & Carling-Jenkins, 2013).

A more open attitude of staff members would be appreciated by the participants in our study. Participants are willing to visit activities initiated by the group homes. These activities provide opportunities for getting to know each other on an individual level, which might constitute a basis for positive encounters in the street. These minor contacts might also act as a stepping stone to create a sustained contact. Staff members have a role in encouraging these contacts based on mutual interests. Participants mentioned their desire for psycho-education and the regulation of deviant behaviour, for example, invasion of privacy and disturbance issues.

Performing social roles in the neighbourhood might not only facilitate minor neighbourly contacts, it could also help change the perceptions neighbours have about people with intellectual disabilities. Participants were positive about examples of these social roles (waiting tables in a bar or tapping beer during an activity) and, from the viewpoint of people with intellectual disabilities, social roles are an important aspect of social inclusion (Cobigo et al., 2012; Wolfensberger, 2000). Staff could offer support by finding opportunities to perform social roles in the neighbourhood.

Also, participants mentioned the importance of being a neighbour and not a volunteer. The present authors recommend to aim for neighbourly contacts that start out small but might (or might not) spontaneously lead to more intensive contact. Bredewold et al. (2015) argue that positive contact between neighbours with and without intellectual disabilities is often characterized by built-in boundaries: the rules are clear. Fixed roles and structures are helpful. Support of staff members is needed in setting out rules, ensuring compliance to these rules and clarifying roles in individual contacts between people with intellectual disabilities and neighbours.

To approach the four groups of participants with distinctive neighbouring patterns, different strategies are needed. The first two groups focus on fleeting encounters. Creating an open atmosphere and opportunities for individual encounters in the street catalyses more contact corresponding to their needs. People with intellectual disabilities benefit from encounters in the street; being recognized gives people a feeling of belonging (Blokland & Nast, 2014; Wiesel & Bigby, 2014). The third group of participants focuses on social activities and support on an individual level. These participants welcome people with intellectual disabilities and are open to more individual contact or offering some assistance. This group seems most promising for enhancing social inclusion. Staff members should be aware of these opportunities and of the obstacles regarding structural contact and obligations. It is important to cater to the needs of neighbours. Focusing on mutual interest is part of this. An individual approach is preferable. The fourth group of participants, who feel part of the community, are open to contact with people with intellectual disabilities. To reach this group, staff might benefit from using a different strategy than the individual approach. It is important to establish the group home as part of the neighbourhood and not as a separate unit. Becoming part of the neighbourhood and being present at neighbourhood activities might also lead to more individual contact based on mutual interest.

4.1 | Limitations

Although our participants live close to the group homes for people with intellectual disabilities, they had limited experiences with residents. Contact mostly consists of greeting and sometimes having a chat. For this reason, the present authors used fictitious situations (vignettes) in some interviews, to gain more insight into the views of participants about people with intellectual disabilities. Responses to fictitious situations do not always represent how participants would react in real life. Despite these limitations, the vignettes helped us gain more understanding of participants' views on neighbouring in relation to people with intellectual disabilities.

Neighbours in our study did not make a distinction based on the severity or complexity of disability but they did report barriers related to certain behaviours of people with intellectual disabilities. Our study focused on people with mild-to-moderate intellectual disabilities, where such behaviours are less prominent. The willingness of neighbours to engage with people with behaviour problems related to more severe intellectual disabilities might be different (Van Alphen, Dijker, Bos, Van den Borne, & Curfs, 2012).

It might be that neighbours willing to participate in our study have a more positive view on people with intellectual disabilities compared to neighbours who refused to be included in our study. However, the present authors did not find indications for such a bias because neighbours also referred to experiences of other neighbours and the neighbourhood in general. Next, also neighbours with little to no (recent) experiences with people with intellectual disabilities were interviewed and neighbours that shared their negative experiences and perceptions related to people with intellectual disabilities as well.

The two neighbourhoods involved seem to be quite similar regarding neighbouring. The identified neighbouring patterns were found in both neighbourhoods. Variation in the distribution of participants within the neighbouring patterns seems to be based on chance rather than based on distinct differences between the inhabitants of the two neighbourhoods. The neighbourhoods both have some unique features regarding neighbourliness. Traditional "noaberschap" still plays a role in the contacts between neighbours. Relationships between neighbours might be more intensive and more focused on assistance compared to other neighbourhoods (Van Alphen et al., 2010). In addition, most participants in our study are familiar with people with intellectual disabilities in their neighbourhood, which might be different in other neighbourhoods and could also explain the fact that anxiety around risk and protection appeared to play a limited role. Wiesel and Bigby (2014) found more contact between neighbours with and without intellectual disabilities in country towns in comparison with metropolitan suburbs. The present authors recommend further research on the differences between neighbourhoods in small villages or country towns and metropolitan suburbs.

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