

Stories becoming sticky

How civic initiatives strive for connection to governmental spatial planning agendas

Hetty van der Stoep

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Voor mijn ouders,
Voor Ulrik, Anna en Simon

Voorwoord

“In het begin is het altijd donker” (keizerin Moonchild in Michael Ende’s “The Neverending Story”). Er zijn nog geen vastomlijnde ideeën, wensen, en dromen. Die ontstaan gaandeweg, door de verhalen van anderen en door de gesprekken die je voert. Een proefschrift is slechts een momentopname van een eindeloos gesprek tussen schrijver en lezers. Hoewel ik opgelucht ben dat dit boek toch een einde heeft gevonden, hoop ik dat we het gesprek gaan voortzetten in de toekomst.

Op enig moment tijdens mijn studie werd ik gegrepen door de communicatieve aspecten van ruimtelijke planning, met name de vaak moeizame communicatie tussen burgers en overheid in ruimtelijke vraagstukken. Ik ging planning steeds meer zien als communicatie en vond dit zo’n boeiende gedachte dat ik er een promotieonderzoek aan wilde wijden. Toen deze wens uitkwam, werd ik gewaarschuwd dat promoveren een eenzame activiteit is. Zeker zijn er eenzame momenten geweest, maar het geheel overziend, ervaar ik dit boek als een coproductie van een groot aantal mensen die door de jaren heen betrokken zijn geweest bij mijn onderzoek.

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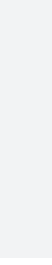
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**The dilemma of
civic engagement**



1.1 Moving mountains in the polder

In August 2011, media attention, both national and international, suddenly focused on a Dutch sports journalist who proposed to collectively design and build a mountain, two kilometres high, in the Dutch Flevopolder. He wanted a mountain to facilitate mountain-related sports like cycling and skiing. The initiative was called *Die Berg Komt Er*, which can be translated as 'That Mountain Will Be There'¹. I remember being amazed and thinking it was an absolutely ridiculous and unrealistic idea. Who would want to destroy the archetypal open landscape of the Flevopolder and beyond? And why on earth should we want such an enormous project if we had so many more urgent problems to solve? On the other hand, like probably every planner or landscape designer, I was intrigued by the mountain idea that contradicted every spatial vision that had ever sprouted from national government offices, but also revived malleability ideals of the post-war reconstruction when engineers used to make land out of water (again the Flevopolder).

Over a short period of time, the initiative managed to excite and mobilize many companies, architects, consultants, knowledge institutions, and government organizations. It did so mainly by using social and mass media. From one person's wild idea, the initiative seemed to spontaneously grow into something big and serious. A year after its emergence, the initiative had 5,000 followers on Facebook and 3,600 followers on Twitter, and 96 companies and knowledge institutions that individually or collectively produced drafts and design alternatives for multifunctional use of a mountain. It strove to remain as autonomous as possible by attracting private financing, like shareholders, and by building social support.

¹ I refer to it as 'The Dutch Mountain'. More information: www.diebergkomter.nl

The massive media attention on The Dutch Mountain was caused not only by the shocking images of a radical landscape transformation, but also by the fact that the initiative started unexpectedly with a few passionate cyclists who wondered 'what if there were a mountain...?' It is widely considered as an inspiring example of civic engagement and self-organization, and its proponents are invited to all kinds of symposia and seminars on that subject (e.g. the national participation conference *I Love Citizens*). The initiative is also being discussed on fora of planning practitioners and is referred to as 'flash-mob planning' and 'the ultimate bottom-up planning'.

To me, The Dutch Mountain, as a 'seed of change' spontaneously emerging from civil society, is a nice metaphor for the phenomenon that this book aims to understand: self-organizing civic initiatives and the way they engage in, and connect to, planning practices aimed at the improvement of the quality of places.

1.2 The driving seat of planning

The key challenge of spatial planning is, in the words of Healey (2006, p. 321), addressing collective concerns about the quality of local and regional environments by focusing policy attention on the social and natural forces that lead to change in the qualities of places and by offering ideas about the processes of governance through which stakeholders work out what to do and how to act. Planning as a governance endeavour, aimed at managing co-existence in shared spaces, has in modern societies generally been associated with what governments do (Healey, 2006). However, the emergence of other powerful actors, collectives, and self-organizing civic initiatives like The Dutch Mountain, who also claim ownership in the planning domain, confront governmental planners with serious questions about their role in an increasingly fragmented and dynamically changing society (*Swyngedouw*, 2005; Healey, 2008). This certainly is the case in the Dutch context of spatial planning, which has been portrayed as a 'planner's paradise lost' in reference to the state's problems in managing change in accordance with rationally designed plans and visions (Bontje, 2003; Korthals Altes, 2006; Boelens, 2010).

Planning for the people

For a long time, the activity of planning was dominated by an instrumental-rational approach in which planning work was performed by professionals 'for the people' on behalf of the government. As long as sufficient information was available, problems were assumed to be manageable by objectively establishing diagnoses and by relating means (how to do things) to ends (what should be achieved) in logical, systemic, and value-free ways (Friedmann, 1987; Faludi & Van der Valk, 1994; *Allmendinger*, 2002). This linear way of thinking about the

management of change, i.e. the idea that socio-physical systems could be made and steered like a machine, has been criticized since the 1960s (Allmendinger, 2002; Healey, 2006; Hillier & Healey, 2010).

Those who challenged the instrumental–rational model considered it unrealistic to think that situations could be understood objectively and sufficiently to be able to identify and assess all possible alternatives. Even if such rational planning were possible, it was considered idealistic and unrealistic to think that politicians would stick to the resulting plans (Healey, 2006; Allmendinger, 2002). It was recognized that what happens in practice is actually a combination of serendipity and strategy in which planned interventions play a catalytic but not a controlling role (cf. Gilchrist, 2000).

The recognition that the instrumental model is not well suited to deal with unpredictable and capricious change, i.e. non-linearity, has led to a continuous search for alternative approaches (De Roo & Silva, 2010; Hillier & Healey, 2010). In reaction to the instrumental–rational approach, new planning approaches emerged, focusing on bounded rationality, incrementalism, and contingency (Lindblom, 1959; Andersen, 2003). Advocacy planning (Davidoff, 1965) and research focusing on the implementation of plans (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984) emphasized the interactive and bottom-up nature of ‘doing planning work’ (Healey, 2006, p. 27). Out of such approaches, participatory and communicative approaches were developed to deal more effectively with the postmodern challenges of an increasingly complex, fragmented, unpredictable, and pluralistic society (Healey, 1997; Forester, 1999; Innes, 1995).

Planning with the people

The communicative turn in planning theory and practice is the term used for the movement that emerged two decades ago and calls for a more inclusive and deliberative approach to planning to manage change more effectively. It implies a shift in focus from means–end thinking to the interdependencies and social interactions between stakeholders as critical factors in change (Healey, 1997; Forester, 1999; Innes, 1995). In the communicative or interpretive perspective of planning, it is considered unrealistic to objectively know a reality that is ‘out there’ and to design interventions that fit to that reality. Instead, reality is considered to be socially constructed. The reality we know is interpreted, constructed, enacted, and maintained through discourse (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Weick, 1995).

The communicative turn encompasses a wide range of different participatory approaches originating from political science, policy science, and planning, such as consensus-building (Susskind & Cruikshank, 1987; Susskind et al., 1999; Innes, 1995, 2004), collaborative problem solving (Gray & Trist, 1989; Aarts & Leeuwis, 2010), social learning (Leeuwis et al., 2002; Wals, 2007), network approaches

(Kickert et al., 1997; Rhodes, 1997), collaborative planning (Healey, 1997), and deliberative planning (Fischer & Forester, 1993; Forester, 1999). Many of these approaches co-evolved and were inspired by one another.

The ideal of these participatory approaches is that collaboration and deliberation will lead to a better fit with perspectives of relevant stakeholders on social reality. Collaborative approaches are considered to improve the rationality and quality of decision making through deliberative processes in which stakeholders exchange and combine different forms of local and expert knowledge (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Forester, 1999; Healey, 1997). Moreover, achieving as inclusive a representation of stakeholders as possible is supposed to enable consensus building and social support, thus improving the effectiveness and democratic legitimacy of decisions (Innes, 1995, 2004; Ellis, 2000). Collaborative approaches are considered to stimulate both active citizen involvement and self-organizing capacity (Innes & Booher, 1999; Booher & Innes, 2002). Consequently, the communicative turn is accompanied by a call for a shift from hierarchical forms of steering to more participative modes of governance, commonly phrased as the shift from government to governance (Peters & Pierre, 1998; Pierre & Peters, 2000; Rhodes, 1997), with the intention of fitting policymaking and planning better to specific contexts and different sites of governance and decision making (Healey, 2006). The different strands in communicative approaches have in common a strong normative focus on how planning should be done, and on how professional planners should create optimal conditions for dialogue between the stakeholders and for relating outcomes to policymaking and politics (Healey, 2006; Innes & Booher, 1999; Susskind et al., 1999; Forester, 1999).

Citizen participation and government self-centredness

Although communicative or collaborative approaches have become normal practice in western planning practices (Booher, 2008; Healey, 2006; Aarts & Leeuwis, 2010), there has also been a great deal of criticism concerning the difficulties experienced by collaborative approaches to meet the promises of more realistic, qualitative, and democratic decision making (Aarts and Leeuwis, 2010; Van der Arend, 2007; Van Bommel, 2008; Turnhout et al., 2010; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Hillier, 2003; Yiftachel & Huxley, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 1998).

The central problem addressed is that participatory approaches run the danger of falling into an instrumental–rationalistic trap, reflecting a continued belief in the malleability of the planning process (Swyngedouw, 2005; Brand & Gaffikin, 2007; Van der Arend, 2007; Uitermark & Van Beek, 2010). In the strive to achieve consensus and support, planners and facilitators, acting on behalf of the government, define the ‘invited spaces’ for the collaboration of selected stakeholders as well as the rules for the dialogue in these invited spaces. Participatory approaches are said to focus too much on what should be done and too little on what is actually done by stakeholders (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002; Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). Like the instrumental–rational model,

collaborative approaches are criticized for focusing too much on the design and architecture of the process, the rules for decision making, and creating the right circumstances for a dialogue which produces effective solutions shared by all involved (Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000; Chettiparamb, 2007).

The consequences of a strong focus on managing and conditioning participation are two-fold. First, critics point to the problem of consensus-oriented styles of process management suffocating agonistic discourse, which is the source of creativity and unexpected viewpoints (Hillier, 2003; Aarts & Leeuwis, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2005; Taylor, 2007). Trying to create a Habermasian power-free ideal speech situation in order to reach consensus among all participants is not only an illusion, but also leads to undesirable smoothening of 'sharp edges' and passion in the discussion. Thus, the innovative potential of the collective effort is left untapped. Too much managerial control of planners constrains creativity and transformative energy, thereby leading to saltless compromises that do not bring sustainable solutions (Torfing & Sørensen, 2008; Aarts & Leeuwis, 2010). The result is that plans or policies are more 'symbolic expressions' of incomplete consensus building (Hillier, 2003, p. 52) than realistic visions on the future.

Second, a focus on process management diverts attention away from what the groups targeted for participation actually do to achieve their goals (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002). Not everybody is willing to participate in invited participatory processes; this can lead to uneven representation and biased outcomes (Nienhuis et al., 2011; Van Bommel, 2008). Some stakeholders may decide to achieve their goals and influence policy and planning agendas through other routes of communication (Hillier, 2000), such as lobbying through media, informal access to politicians, speaking at public hearings, and so forth. Moreover, participants within the invited spaces may use power inside and outside the boundaries of the participatory process in ways that are difficult to grasp or that are unexpected. Participatory approaches are criticized for neglecting or downplaying such influences of power differences and relations on the process and the outcomes (Taylor, 2007; Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000; Hillier, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Swyngedouw, 2005). Participatory processes are like other policy making arenas politically constructed spaces predicated on acts of exclusion (Torfing and Sørensen, 2008). 'Hence, public deliberation is premised on a certain agenda setting, a hegemonic storyline and a particular truth regime' (ibid. p. 398).

It is argued that the instrumentality of participatory processes can partly be blamed on a top-down managerial strategy of government agencies to 'tame citizens' protest' (Healey, 2008) as a necessary step in achieving social and political support (Turnhout et al., 2010; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Van Assche et al., 2011; Van der Arend, 2007; Innes & Booher, 2004). Administrators tend to use citizen participation, not to empower citizens and to change things, but to empower themselves, by regularizing conflict and legitimizing decisions

(Healey, 2008; Uitermark & Van Beek, 2010). Citizen participation in that view is merely a way to get support for already developed solutions, a 'public support machine' (e.g. Woltjer, 2002; Van Assche et al., 2011).

The above-discussed criticisms indicate that participatory approaches manifest a great deal of self-centred behaviour on the part of the initiators and facilitators of such processes (Chettiparamb, 2007; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). Collaborative planning is developed within the regimes of public government and 'the methods used to bring forth citizen involvement are frequently largely based on government preconditions' (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011, p. 103). Government-centred participation pre-fixes process, content, and place or scale; this works counterproductively when, during the process issues, people and developments occur which do not fit in these pre-defined boundaries. When participatory processes do not generate expected outcomes, diagnoses and advices usually point to the methods and techniques of participation. This in effect reproduces the tendency of planners to get control over the participatory process (Innes & Booher, 2004; Hillier, 2003; Turnhout et al., 2010). In sum, planners face the dilemma that they want to involve citizens from the outset of planning processes, but are 'hardly able to think beyond the confines and path-dependencies of government' (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011, p. 116).

Therefore, it is argued that, to understand and influence civic engagement, the focus should be shifted from the activities of planners acting on behalf of governments (what planners should do) to the actions of other stakeholders (what is actually done by stakeholders), not only inside the participative process, but also outside (Van der Arend, 2007; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Aarts & Lokhorst, 2012).

Planning by the people

In reaction to disappointment about government-led citizen participation, attention is increasingly being paid to self-governing and self-organizing movements in civil society (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Aarts & Leeuwis, 2010; Aarts & Lokhorst, 2012). In the literature, renewed political attention is signalled for planning work where citizens 'take the driving seat in developing policy ideas and project briefs' (Healey, 2008, p. 379; Booher, 2008; Torfing & Sørensen, 2008). Civic engagement is not limited to formal participation arenas. 'Civic engagement happens "in the flow of interaction" throughout strategy formation processes and is likely to be part of the ongoing "flow of life" of all those who "encounter" urban governance processes in some way' (Healey, 2007, p. 259). Similarly, Booher (2008) refers to forms of citizen-driven engagement that seek to put pressure on public institutions and private firms by using modes other than the regular channels of political representation and decision making.

Self-initiatives and ‘do-it-yourself’ or ‘make-it-yourself’ initiatives (e.g. Booher, 2008; Gibson, 2006; Van Dam et al., 2008; Van Twist et al., 2009) are being promoted by the state, which is seeking to decentralize and off-load public responsibilities like the management of public space to the voluntary and business sector and to private individuals (Healey, 2006). It is believed that self-organizing forms of citizen participation can remove policy deadlocks as well as mobilize private resources and energies of civic society (Torfing & Sørensen, 2008; Healey, 2008). There is a growing belief that people are able to construct their own places by developing capacity to envision possible futures and constructing relevant governance structures as well as legitimacy to act (Albrechts, 2008; Booher, 2008).

In the Netherlands, current financial problems in spatial planning and budget cuts are strengthening government calls for more civic engagement and civic initiative. Uitermark & van Beek (2010, p. 3) speak of a ‘participation rage’ (*‘participatiedrift’*) on the part of the Dutch government. This is accompanied by the emergence of a significant focus on active citizenship and local initiatives of citizens, companies, and interest groups. This attention comes from politicians, policymakers, mass media² as well as research (Van Gunsteren, 2006; Tonkens, 2006; Van Dam et al., 2008). It is also referred to as the ‘doing-democracy’ (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, 2012; Van Twist et al., 2009; Van de Wijdeven & Hendriks, 2010; Van de Wijdeven, 2012) and do-it-yourself initiatives of citizens (Van Dam et al., 2008; van der Heijden et al., 2011). Practitioners and researchers have been pointing to the phenomenon and potentials of emerging local initiatives of citizens who produce unsolicited proposals and plans for place making, or who take responsibility for implementation and maintenance (Aarts & During, 2006; Floor & Salverda, 2006; Rotmans, 2011). These initiatives are citizen driven and go beyond traditional participation coordinated by the government.

Political and professional attention on active citizenship is manifested in professional conferences, policy programmes, and research programmes. For example, in the last few years there have been many conferences on the topic of do-it-yourself and active citizenship. Political attention on citizen engagement and active citizenship is reflected in policy programmes and reports (e.g. Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, 2012; Raad voor het openbaar bestuur, 2012; Raad voor de Leefomgeving en Infrastructuur, 2012). In spatial planning practices, the topics of civic engagement, do-it-yourself initiatives, and active citizenship³ are also manifested. For example, a popular topic in the current talk of Dutch planning practitioners is ‘the spontaneous

2 The doing-democracy was the subject of a series of publications in the newspaper *Trouw* in 2012 and 2013 (for example ‘The Doing Citizen now organizes his own healthcare too’, 21 August 2012,

3 Examples of these conferences and events: *Dag van de Ruimte: Doe-Het-Zelf* (10 November 2011); *Joint Venture. Burgers Maken de Stad* (July 2011); *I Love Burgers* (2011); *Doe-Het-Zelfrevolutie* (Studium Generale Universiteit Utrecht, 9 October 2012); *Actief Burgerschap: How to Make it Work?* (9 September 2012, workshop series Felix Meritis Amsterdam)

city', also known as 'organic development', both referring to adaptive planning and self-organization of owners and end-users of places (Buitelaar et al., 2012; Luijten, 2011; Uitermark, 2012). It is proposed as an alternative to large-scale planning projects orchestrated by governments, and it stresses spontaneous and small-scale forms of cooperation between citizens, entrepreneurs, project developers, interest groups, and so on (Rotmans, 2011).

Parallel to the attention in politics and policy and planning practices on active citizenship and self-organizing civic initiatives, scientific attention seems to be shifting from the methodology of citizen participation to understanding the phenomenon of social self-organization and its meaning for spatial planning. For example, Boonstra & Boelens (2011) analyse examples of self-organizing citizens in urban planning contexts. Research about vital coalitions is similar, citizens who self-organize and build coalitions with other public and private stakeholders (Hendriks & Tops, 2005; Horlings et al., 2009; Horlings, 2010; Van Ostaaïjen et al., 2010; Van de Wijdeven et al., 2006). Another example, in a rural planning context, is research about self-organization and active citizenship in relation to the preservation and development of landscape values or sustainable agriculture (Poppe et al., 2009; Klerkx et al., 2010; Klerkx & Aarts, 2013; Aarts & Lokhorst, 2012; Floor & Salverda, 2006; Aarts & Daring, 2006; Buizer, 2008). These studies have in common that they aim to understand the circumstances in which self-organizing initiatives overcome the problems of government-led citizen participation as previously presented, and how they can actually bring transformative change.

Transformative potential or business as usual

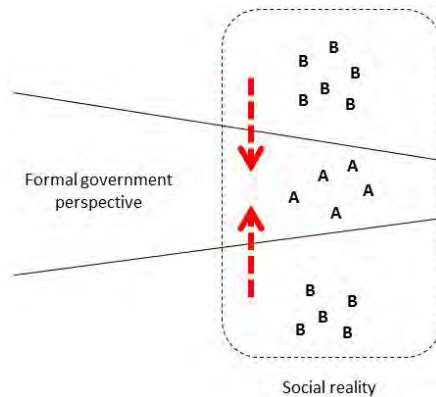
When civil society actors self-organize to start a collaborative project, they will encounter government at some point, for example when they require financial support, building permits, knowledge, or other resources (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Aarts et al., 2007; Floor & Salverda, 2006). Complete self-governance is not likely to occur in the increasingly fragmented, complex, and multi-layered polity in which public and private actors are interdependent (Torfing & Sørensen, 2008).

Concern is expressed about what happens when civic initiatives encounter government actors. Similar to the critique about the instrumentality and government-centrism of collaborative planning approaches, it is argued that the promotion of the idea of civic engagement is just political rhetoric, and that citizen-driven engagement will be 'regularized' and adjusted to fit in existing government procedures and frameworks which define content, place, and process (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Torfing & Sørensen, 2008). Healey (Healey et al., 2003; Healey, 2006) found in her own research, as well as in other literature on new forms of collaboration, many situations where the flow of creative learning to other governance sites was blocked by the structures and routines of established governance processes and administrative practices. It is feared

that transformative energy will be squeezed out of movements emerging in civil society and that civic engagement will return to business as usual (Healey, 2008; Booher, 2008; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

Established practices and governance processes are produced and reproduced through a strong self-referentiality that blocks out innovation arising in new ways and in sites not recognized by those practices. Even despite an agenda searching for new perspectives, new concepts, and innovative ideas, existing government organizations are inclined to reproduce traditional concepts and structures, which form institutional constraints for innovation (Wagemans, 2002; Elzen et al., 2004; Chettiparamb, 2007; Van Assche & Verschraegen, 2008; Van Herzele & Aarts, 2013). The government is only receptive to what is meaningful and relevant within its formal perspectives, or frames, on society (Wagemans, 2002; Rein & Schön, 1996). Planning agencies, like any social system, select and interpret every new piece of incoming information in accordance with self-referential frames that consequently reproduce those frames. Local civic initiatives that do not fit into self-referential perspectives of government organizations are overlooked, even though they may contribute to governments' ambitions (see Figure 1.1). It is also possible for self-reference to result in absorption and integration of local civic initiatives such that dominant interpretations are no longer disputed (Horlings et al., 2006; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

Figure 1.1: Limited perspective of government on social reality and effort of civic initiatives to attract government attention (adapted from Wagemans, 2004).



To overcome institutional blockages, civic initiatives would have to make greater efforts to be noticed and simultaneously remain vital and energetic (Horlings et al., 2006; Horlings, 2010). Citizens are in an unfavourable situation because the formal domain is not easily understandable or familiar to them as it is fragmented and peppered with many detailed technical and legal concepts. If initiatives want to express their views and be heard, they need knowledge of dominant policy frameworks as well as a great deal of communicative skills, creativity, and persistence (Wagemans, 2002; Turnhout et al., 2010). Securing not

only political attention but also transformative power would entail developing a capacity to travel to different sites of governance by invoking a flow of ideas, rules, and resources (Healey, 2006).

This raises the question of how the planning work of civic initiatives relates to governmental planning, why some initiatives manage to overcome the blocks of existing governance processes, and how they transform policy and planning, whereas other initiatives fail in such attempts.

1.3 Research goals and objectives

The goal of this research is to contribute to insights about how planners can make better connections with civil society initiatives without falling into the trap of government-centrism. It is argued that a more responsive and enabling planning practice should give careful attention to where civic initiatives emerge and to the meaning they have for planning practices that promote liveable and sustainable places (Healey, 2006; Booher, 2008; Albrechts, 2008). This requires an 'outside-in' approach to civic engagement in planning practices (cf. Boonstra & Boelens, 2011); and this entails understanding the dynamics of social networks beyond the boundaries of formal planning processes. The focus of analysis, therefore, should not be on how planners engage citizens, but on how citizens engage planners in their planning work.

We have still little understanding of this process, how civic initiatives organize themselves and relate to government-led planning and policy practices, and the circumstances under which they manage to overcome the blockages of a self-referential government and transform planning agendas for regional spatial development (e.g. Healey, 2006). If we understand better how civic initiatives connect to government organizations and engage in planning practices, it may be possible to develop alternative directions for planners to establish meaningful connections with civil society in ways that do not reduce but embrace complexity, that is, the interdependence in the myriads of interactions and relations that result in dynamic and sometimes unexpected socio-spatial change.

This results in the following central question for the research:

How do civic initiatives connect to government organizations, and how can we understand outcomes of these connections in terms of the achievement of ambitions of civic initiatives and planning agendas for regional spatial development?

We focus on civic initiatives that propose alternative plans and visions for improving the spatial quality of places, not just at local but also at regional level. The focus is on the influence of civic initiatives on decision making at both local and regional governance levels to address the extent to which they may contribute to the transformation of spatial policies and ultimately spatial

transformation. Moreover, a focus on civic initiatives that produce proposals concerning local-regional governance levels enables inquiry into how they engage with multiple government actors to achieve goals.

We consider initiatives that consist of multiple stakeholders who share concerns or ambitions; the initiatives are civic in the sense that they start out as initiatives of a small group of citizens, interest groups, or business entrepreneurs. We follow the process of coalition building in which initial small groups connect to other stakeholders, both private and public. Civic initiatives in this research can be indicated as local and regional as they concern the planning, design, and management of places that are sometimes indicated as local and sometimes as regional when issues go beyond municipal boundaries. By government organizations, we refer to all tiers of government, organizations, and (sub) departments, at the local, regional, and national level, that deal with regional planning. Which government organizations are part of the process depends on the perspective and actions of civic initiatives, because this research takes civic initiatives as its starting point, not the formal planning system.

The word 'connect' in the research question points to the ways in which civic initiatives engage and interact with professional planning agents and government organizations to achieve their ambitions. Following an outside-in approach, we start from the civic initiatives' perspectives on social reality, their ideas about the futures of places, and we follow their efforts to connect with other stakeholders in planning practices to mobilize support and attention.

1.4 Research strategy

In the thesis, we develop an interpretive view of policymaking and planning, with an emphasis on the way policy agendas are constructed and filled with meaning through interactive social processes (Healey, 2006; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Yanow, 2000, 2006). Therefore, we have operationalized 'connecting' in terms of agenda-setting strategies, and outcomes in terms of changes in governments' policy and planning agendas. The mobilization of attention is an important notion for the question of how self-organizing civic initiatives connect with government agents who tend to overlook events and initiatives that fall outside their self-referential views on what is meaningful and important. Framing processes play an important role in this mobilization of attention. Framing theory and policy agenda-setting theory are therefore used to build the analytic construct elaborated in Chapter 2 (Shifting agendas: framing and storytelling).

The strategy for data collection and analysis involved two in-depth case studies of local-regional civic initiatives which over a long period of time tried to mobilize attention and support for their unsolicited proposals concerning regional spatial development: New Markets Heuvelland (Heuvelland case) and

Landscape Development in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard Urban–Rural Fringe (Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case). The way these case studies were analysed using an interpretive strategy is elaborately discussed in Chapter 3 (A tale of doing interpretive analysis).

Heuveland Case

The Heuveland case contains three stories that in the end competed with each other for attention and (financial and political) support. All three started with the New Markets initiative to build a community of capital rich entrepreneurs who would invest in landscape qualities through new product–market combinations which were assumed to generate economic returns (improved tourism). However, this initiative could not mobilize enough support from entrepreneurs and relevant governments and stagnated, while at the same time stories about Healthy Living and Regional Branding emerged, around which a number of participating entrepreneurs self-organized. This latter initiative was very successful in mobilizing support and, like the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, resulted in investments of some 8 million euros in a regional branding campaign.

Gouda-Krimpenerwaard Case

The initiative of citizens in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe area led to successful agenda-setting of landscape values over a period of 25 years. The initiative started because governments were paying only limited and fragmented attention to the area in question, and this was perceived by the initiative as a big threat to natural and historical landscape values. After 25 years, the attention and support of local and regional governments was mobilized, and this resulted in the investment of several millions of euros in the protection and development of landscape values.

1.5 Structure of the book

This book is structured as follows. An elaborate discussion of the theoretical framework and methodological considerations is found in, respectively, Chapter 2 (Shifting agendas: framing and storytelling) and Chapter 3 (A tale of doing interpretive analysis). The chapters that report the two case studies (Chapters 4 and 5) read as separate stories about how civic initiatives in the Heuvelland and Gouda-Krimpenerwaard cases tried to bring alternative perspectives on local–regional development to the attention of governments, and why they did or did not succeed. In Chapter 6 (Sticky stories: conversations, connectors, and opportunities), we compare the outcomes of the case studies. In the final Chapter 7 (Planning as connective storytelling: conclusions and discussion), we summarize the research findings, and we present a model that may be of help in other inquiries into agenda-setting processes. The book ends by discussing the meaning of the findings for future planning research and practice.



**Shifting agendas:
framing and
storytelling**

Planning practice is about organising other people to give attention to certain issues. It is a political activity that focuses on mobilising bias. It defines the issue that the planning process is about. And this is a political endeavour surrounded with ambiguity and uncertainty.

(Forester, 1989)



The growing discourse of self-organization, self-governance, and citizen-driven planning, discussed in Chapter 1, suggests that civic initiatives can perform as the 'seeds' of smaller and bigger policy change or institutional change when they manage to overcome institutional blockages. Although the established policy science literature suggests that individuals and groups of individuals have a limited possibility of making a difference, and that policy change is rather the result of randomness (Kingdon, 1984, 2003), 'punctuated' resistance of policy systems to change (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), or shock events that shift policy attention (Cobb & Elder, 1983; Sabatier & Jenkins, 1993), policy science is also open to the possibility that, under certain circumstances, individual agents can influence or even create conditions for change. Analytic frameworks, inspired by Giddens's structuration theory (1984), like discursive institutional perspectives (Leroy & Arts, 2006; Schmidt, 2008) and sociological institutionalism (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Healey, 2006a/b; Scott, 2001), are based on the idea that policy change can be explained by the dialectic of human agency and the structural forces and routines that are both medium and outcome of actions of individual agents.

Macro forces interact with the micro-politics of the daily life of governance, and structuring forces are continually encountered by, and shaped by the power of agency. (Healey, 2006, p. 326)

Thus, change cannot be managed, preplanned, or controlled, but it is prepared and navigated by people (cf. Birkland, 1997; Huitema & Meijerink, 2010; Olsson et al., 2006). Taking an agency-centred perspective, this chapter builds an analytical framework that helps to elucidate how civic initiatives connect to governments to get support for their ambitions, under which circumstances they may be successful, and how their proposed alternatives may travel to other governance arenas, sometimes leading to policy change and governance change (cf. Healey, 2006a/b).

2.1 Understanding planned and unplanned change

Change as order without a boss

Policy change (and stability) seems far less the result of rational choice than the result of coincidence, interdependencies, and context. In policy, planning, and organization studies, attention is increasingly focused on the non-linearity and unpredictability of social change (e.g. Aarts et al., 2007; Burnes, 2005; Gilchrist, 2000; Innes & Booher, 2010; Morgan, 1986; Silva & De Roo, 2010; Stacey et al., 2000; Van Woerkum et al., 2011). It is argued that, although policymakers often still perceive policymaking in terms of the 'clockwork universe' – a machine with somebody who controls the switches – we can also perceive social systems, like policy systems, as 'order without a boss' (Van Ginneken, 2003; Van Gunsteren, 2006), i.e. as the result of self-organization. In complexity perspectives on planning and policy that build on the works of among others Holland (1998), Johnson (2001), and Luhmann (1995), socio-spatial change is explained as the unpredictable and spontaneous outcome of interactions of elements in complex systems and subsystems, which all act on the basis of self-referential reactions to the world outside. As a consequence, complex systems cannot be controlled from outside, and there is no superordinate centre that governs change.

Byrne (2003) points out that complexity science and planning are not strangers. The concepts of complexity and self-organization appear to be especially used to understand cities as complex systems in which order emerges without central coordination (e.g. Allen & Sanglier, 1981; Webster & Wu, 2001; Garmestani et al., 2007; Alfasi & Portugali, 2007; Portugali, 2008; Devisch, 2008). Geography too has been informed by various theories of complex systems¹. There is also growing attention on social self-organization and complexity in relation to change processes in the physical environment (see e.g. Chettiparamb, 2007a, 2007b, 2013; Van Assche & Verschraegen, 2008; De Roo & Silva, 2010; Innes & Booher, 1999, 2010; Innes et al., 2011).

Notions about complexity and self-organization point to a more humble role for the planner. Devisch (2008) observes a shift in 30 years from planners as technocrats to planners as spectators. The planner is no longer the engineer who can determine change, but an observer or participant (Portugali, 2000). A complexity perspective on policy and planning acknowledges that planning interventions have a limited effect on change, because change can equally result from change by chance, change from social interaction, or combinations of these causes (Van Woerkum et al., 2011). The question thus is how policy and planning practice is the result of a combination of serendipity and strategy (cf. Gilchrist, 2000).

¹ See Portugali (2006) for a discussion of different theories of complex systems and how they have been applied in geography (Haken's synergetics, Prigogine's dissipative structures, Bak's self-organized criticality, Mandelbrot's geometry of fractals, and Kohonen's self-organizing maps).

Critical junctures for change

The notion that change cannot be controlled, and is the result of an interplay between serendipity and strategy, i.e. a concurrence of circumstances at particular junctures, is also addressed by various policy science models, such as the multiple streams model (Kingdon, 1984, 2003; Zahariadis, 2007), the punctuated equilibrium framework (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), and transition management e.g. Elzen et al., 2004; Rotmans et al. 2001). The critical junctures to which these frameworks refer are labelled tipping points (Gladwell, 2000), windows of opportunity (Kingdon, 1984; Birkland, 1998; Zahariadis, 2007), punctuations (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), or acceleration phase (Geels, 2004; Rotmans et al., 2001). They all refer to junctures at which the critical mass is reached for a situation to change rapidly into another situation. The way policies change is often represented as an initially stable system that is continuously balancing around an equilibrium, but, under the influence of external forces and under certain circumstances, flips into another state of being (e.g. Coleman, 2006; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005).

In the multiple streams model (Kingdon, 1984, 2003; Zahariadis, 2007), the more or less sudden changes on policy agendas are understood as the coupling of three streams at critical junctures: the problem stream, which represents the identification of issues as problems in society; the policy stream, in which solutions are constructed for various problems; and the politics stream, in which decisions are taken about priorities. *Windows of opportunity* is the term used for the critical junctures at which the three streams come together. The agenda-setting literature pays much attention to the role of *focusing events* that open up policy windows, and particular agents, called *policy entrepreneurs*, who establish couplings between the three streams of problems, policy, and politics. Research on policy entrepreneurs focuses on the way these individuals couple the streams through manipulation strategies and by taking immediate action when windows of opportunity occur. Focusing events are usually portrayed as potentially harmful or shocking events (Birkland, 1998; Wiering & Immink, 2006; Veenman et al., 2009) that shift attention to particular issues. Based on Cohen et al.'s (1972) garbage can model, the multiple streams model assumes that solutions and ideas float around for a longer period of time before they become connected to problems and events. In that context, change is portrayed as gradual rather than radical.

In the punctuated equilibrium framework (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), change is perceived as punctuated. Stability is the norm because policy systems are resistant to change, but, under the influence of outside forces, suddenly new items can arise on policy agendas causing a punctuated pattern. Again, this points to sudden changes at particular junctures at which various circumstances together lead to a shift on the agenda.



In innovation and transition studies, such sudden change is also noticed and described as a 'take-off' of initial novelties from a niche level to large scale adoption of innovation at a regime and a macro level (Geels, 2004; Elzen et al., 2004; Rotmans et al., 2001).

Self-referentiality and institutional resistance to change

The resistance of policy systems to change is explained in social systems theory (Luhmann, 1995, 2006; Morgan, 1986; Kickert, 1993) as the result of the self-reproduction (autopoiesis) and self-reference of social systems. The term *autopoiesis*, originally used by Maturana & Varela (1980) to define the self-maintaining chemistry of living cells, indicates that all organizations and clusters of individuals tend to self-organize into a fixed structure in which system elements are continuously reproduced. The values and beliefs that constitute the social system form the frames of reference used to interpret, select, and respond to information about the 'world out there'. Thus, groups, organizations, and networks, in order to survive, continuously reproduce their own identity, and thereby create stability.

In an optimistic view on self-reference, social systems have self-organizing capacity and are resilient to changes in the environment. In a pessimistic view, self-referentiality is interpreted as 'bureaucracy never dies' (Kickert, 1993, p. 73), meaning that governments are inclined to reproduce traditional concepts and structures that form institutional constraints for innovation. By filtering incoming information through self-referential frames, some issues are highlighted, whereas other issues remain in the shadow because they are considered irrelevant in light of the dominant policy frame (Schön & Rein, 1994; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). Other concepts used to indicate the self-referentiality of policy systems that continuously reproduce existing practices and routines are policy paradigms (e.g. Hall, 1993), hegemonic policy discourse (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005), or policy monopolies (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991).

The consequence of self-referentiality is that innovation arising in new ways and sites is not recognized in established policy practices (Wagemans, 2002; Elzen et al., 2004; Chettiparamb, 2007; Van Assche & Verschraegen, 2008; Van Herzele & Aarts, 2013). Civic initiatives that do not fit into self-referential perspectives of government organizations are thus overlooked, whether or not they may contribute to the ambitions of governments; or self-reference of government organizations results in absorption and integration of local civic initiatives into existing government policies and programmes, such that dominant policy frames are no longer disputed (Horlings et al., 2006; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

The metaphor of *attractors* (Coleman, 2006; Coleman et al., 2007) helps to elucidate how self-referentiality is the basis for self-organization of people, explaining both institutional resistance to change and conditions in which that resistance may be broken.

Attractors and overcoming barriers to change

Coleman et al. (2007) explain that individuals' self-organization takes place around attractors, defined as sets of beliefs, feelings, and ideas, or frames of reference, that guide people's actions. In system-theoretical terms, an attractor is a state or a pattern of changes toward which a dynamical system tends to evolve over time, i.e. is attracted to, and to which the system returns if perturbed by an outside influence. This implies that persons or a group, clustered in an attractor, may encounter alternative ideas and actions, but only the ideas and actions that are consistent with the attractor are embraced as relevant and credible (Coleman et al., 2007, p. 5). The consequence is that, if an individual within a cluster changes his or her opinion, other members of the cluster will try to bring him or her back into the fold. So, if elements of a system tend to move to another attractor, forces are triggered that pull the system back into the original attractor.

The idea is that there are dominant attractors, for example particular policy systems with their policy frames and related policy networks, and there are latent attractors² of, for example, citizen groups who propose alternatives for the development and management of qualities in a particular place or region. Both attractors are visualized in Figure 2.1. The basins represent attractors in which individuals self-organize around sets of beliefs, feelings, ideas, and so forth. Change takes place when the system (the ball in the figure) under the influence of pulling or pushing forces moves to another attractor. The system is always moving between a state of equilibrium (the basin) and the attracting force of alternative ideas and actions (other attractors). Certain events, e.g. the previously mentioned focusing events, can push a group out of its current basin of attraction (attractor) into an alternative latent attractor, marking a tipping point or juncture. The attractor landscape may also be changed such that the dominant attractor embraces and incorporates a latent attractor, meaning that the range of ideas that are accepted as relevant and meaningful becomes wider. In the words of Sherif & Hovland (1961), the 'latitude of acceptance'³ of the dominant attractor towards new ideas then becomes wider.

For this research, it is important to note that an analysis of changing planning agendas should consider the forces that form and maintain attractors, i.e. the sets of ideas and beliefs around which people self-organize, and the forces that make their attraction stronger or weaker. In this research, the efforts of civic initiatives to promote their alternative proposals can be perceived as latent attractors exerting influence on dominant policy and planning frames. The attractor notion shows that policymakers and planners, clustered in a dominant

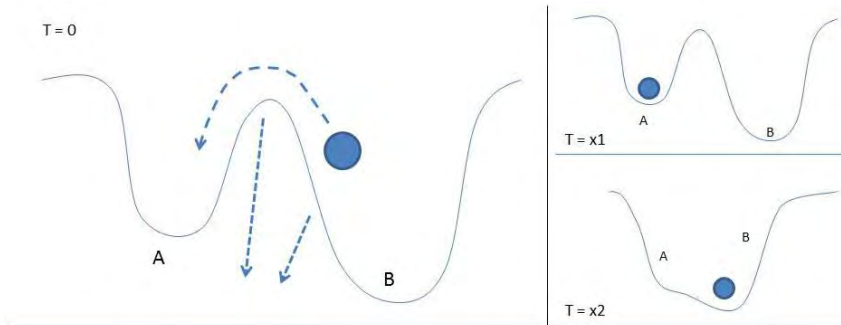
2 A latent attractor is described by Vallacher et al. (2007, p. 11) as follows: 'Several attractors may co-exist in a system. At any one time, only one attractor will capture the dynamics of the system. The existence of other attractors will not be visible in the system's dynamics and thus can be considered latent as opposed to manifest.'

3 The range of ideas that a person sees as reasonable or worthy of consideration (cf. Sherif and Hovland, 1961).



attractor, will embrace alternative ideas as credible and relevant when they are consistent with the dominant attractor. Moreover, attractors may change shape, changing the level of acceptance and responsiveness, under the influence of certain circumstances and events.

Figure 2.1: A dynamical system with two attractors, start situation, and possible results of forces ($t=x1$ and $t=x2$).



Source: adapted from Coleman et al. (2007, p. 6)

Note: Attractor A represents a latent attractor. In Figure 2.1, situation $t=0$ represents an initial stage in which the system is residing in attractor B with forces that pull on the attractor landscape (the hill between A and B) and forces that pull and push the ball over the hill because of the attraction of attractor A and possibly other factors (external events or internal problems in B). If forces pulling the ball over the hill are dominant (see situation $t=x1$ in the figure), the latent attractor A becomes the dominant attractor influencing actions in the policy system. This would mean that the cluster of individuals is now embracing an alternative set of ideas and beliefs that are different from the previous ones. Here, we can speak of system innovation (e.g. Geels, 2004). Pulling the hill down (situation $t=x2$ in the figure) would mean that attractors A and B become one attractor that holds a broader set of ideas and beliefs that are deemed credible and relevant.

The question is which combinations of forces, such as focusing events and efforts of policy entrepreneurs, change the shape and attraction of latent and dominant attractors? In other words, which conditions and forces hinder or enable the embracement of alternative ideas and issues? Can we identify tipping points, and, if so, by what events and processes are these preceded?

2.2 Framing as an agenda-setting strategy

The policy science literature points to the efforts of policy entrepreneurs⁴ (Kingdon, 2003; Mintrom, 1997; Zahariadis, 2007) to manipulate attractors and overcome institutional resistance to change. Policy entrepreneurs are

4 Change agents in policy science are also referred as policy advocates (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993), boundary spanners (Noble & Jones, 2006; Williams, 2002), or innovation brokers (Winch & Courtney, 2007; Klerckx & Leeuwis, 2009; Klerckx & Aarts, 2013).

challenged to develop strong latent attractors to become noticed 'inside' policymakers' perceptions of social reality and what they consider relevant and meaningful. Such latent attractors may concern the development of alternative policy frames (Schön & Rein, 1994; Rein & Schön, 1996), policy images (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), transition agendas (Van der Brugge et al., 2005), or storylines (Hajer, 1995). The strategies frequently addressed (e.g. Kingdon, 2003; Mintrom, 1997; Jones and Baumgartner, 2005) are: framing issues as problems, building coalitions and networking to influence policy communities, recognizing and exploiting windows of opportunity, and recognizing, exploiting, and creating multiple venues for agenda setting.

The colouring of issues as problems is critical to agenda-setting strategies. 'The chances of a given proposal or subject rising on an agenda are markedly enhanced if it is connected to an important problem' (Kingdon, 2003, p. 198). Agenda-setting researchers seek to explain why some problems catch the attention of governmental officials more than others. 'The process of fixing attention on one problem rather than another is a central part of agenda-setting' (Kingdon, 2003, p. 115). Issue proponents highlight indicators of problems, point to conditions that violate important values, and classify conditions into one category rather than another to identify them as problematic. Issue proponents dramatize problems, they create situations that focus policymakers' attention on a certain problem, they use symbols to make the problem more salient, and they assign meaning to certain events that will enable coupling of problems to political attention or to specific policy proposals (Kingdon, 2003; Mintrom, 1997; Zahariadis, 2007). Much of the work of issue proponents involves developing and crafting arguments that will persuade others to support ideas and shape the terms of the debate (Mossberger & Stoker, 1997).

The words shaping, colouring, dramatizing, packaging, and portraying of information, issues, and arguments point to the importance of framing strategies in agenda setting. Framing refers to the selective interpretations of information to make it possible to make sense of the world and to be able to decide on a course of action (Gray, 2002). The essence of framing is the notion that individuals constantly struggle to make sense of the world around them and subconsciously or consciously use cognitive frames of reference (schemata) to decide on actions (Goffman, 1974). Frames, according to Goffman, are: 'schemata of interpretation that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large' (1974, p. 21). Essentially this means that people give meaning to the world around them by selecting pieces of information and interpreting some aspects as more important or relevant than other aspects. 'Framing essentially involves selection and salience' (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Media agenda-setting researchers acknowledge framing as a powerful agenda-setting strategy (McCombs & Shaw, 1993; Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Scheuffele & Tewksbury, 2007; Weaver, 2007). The central idea is that in agenda setting, it is



not only 'what issues to think about', but essentially influencing 'how to think about issues', that is important (McCombs & Shaw, 1993, p. 62). Thus, agenda setting is not only about a ranking of issues, but essentially about how issues get meaning in terms of problems, causes, solutions, and motivations for action. Both the selection of objects for attention and the construction of frames for thinking about these objects are powerful agenda-setting roles.

The policy science also points to the importance of framing and discourse in politics, planning, and policymaking, also called the argumentative turn (Fischer & Forester, 1993) and the deliberative turn (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). The framing of issues is judged to be an important precursor to more detailed policymaking (Hajer, 1995; Schön & Rein, 1994). Framing is discursive power that is constitutive of power exerted through more material entities, such as money, labour, land, and regulations (Hajer & Laws, 2006; Healey 2006a/b; Arts & Van Tatenhove, 2004; Flyvbjerg, 1998). Thus, policy entrepreneurs develop framing strategies as part of their negotiating and networking skills (Mintrom, 1997).

Framing in social interactions

The concept of framing had its origins in cognitive psychology (Bartlett, 1932) and anthropology (Bateson, 1972) and was later on applied in various other disciplines such as policy analysis (e.g. Schön & Rein, 1994) and social movement research (e.g. Snow & Benford, 1986; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). The framing concept is interpreted and operationalized in many different ways (see Dewulf et al., 2009, for an overview of framing research traditions and interpretations of framing). In the context of agenda setting and coalition building, a relevant interpretation is that used in research on social movements and collective action. In this line of research, framing is regarded as an important dynamic in collective action and in the building of support for ideas (Benford & Snow, 2000).

The framing concept is used to understand both how people interpret incoming information based on their cognitive frames (*frames in thought*) – which refer to their life experience, cultural values, and belief systems – and how people strategically frame messages (*frames in communication*) to mobilize support for certain problem definitions and proposals for solutions (e.g. Entman, 1993; Dewulf et al., 2009; Chong & Druckman, 2007). In the context of collective action and social movements, Benford & Snow (2000) understand framing in terms of 'simplifying and condensing aspects of the "world out there", in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists' (p. 614). This intentional type of framing aimed at coalition building is also highly relevant to framing as an agenda-setting strategy. Framing as a strategy involves selecting 'some aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described' (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

In his definition of framing, Entman emphasizes that analysis should be focused on the precise ways in which communicating texts (written or spoken) influence the human consciousness. In other words, framing is accomplished largely through the use of language (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Language is understood not only as something that represents what to think about and how to think about it (McCombs & Shaw, 1993), but also as something that people use to accomplish things (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Language-in-action is performative, it does something to reality (Drake & Donohue, 1996). It can provoke frames of listeners who may mobilize to some form of (collective) action. Language-in-action mobilizes political attention. Therefore, it is argued that analysis of the dynamics of agenda setting should focus on micro-level, day-to-day interactions between people (Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Hajer & Laws, 2005):

If we accept that language interferes, that it is more than a medium of something 'outside' it (Fischer and Forester 1993), then analysis of policy work ...acquires a concrete focus on the interaction among actors and on the way in which they interactively frame a situation (Hajer and Laws, 2005, p. 262)

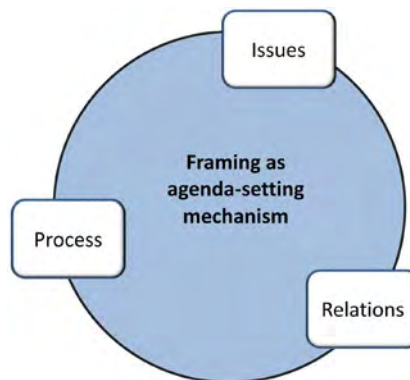
Following this principle, we understand framing as an interactional and dynamic process in which language-in-action continuously and subtly reproduces, adjusts, and transforms the frames that are communicated and applied (Gray, 2002; Snow & Benford, 1986; Benford & Snow, 2000). Strategic framing through communication (*linguistic framing*) interplays with cognitive framing, that is, people's expectations about other people, objects, events, and settings in the world (Benford & Snow, 2000; Entman, 2003). Framing can be understood as a co-construction between communicator and receiver; this makes the process of framing dynamic and unpredictable. The dynamics of framing are even clearer when we realize that receivers become communicators and communicators become receivers during social interactions. Information changes subtly during interactions in which messages are constantly being interpreted and communicated in specific ways. It is like the game of passing on a story through a line of participants by whispering it to a neighbour who passes it on to the next, and so on until the final participant is reached. At the end of the line, the message is adjusted or maybe even transformed as some information has been left out and new information added during the interactions. What remains of the original information are the pieces that were most salient to the teller-listeners in the chain, and, depending on the participants' frames of reference, the information may have acquired a totally different meaning and may perform in a different way than was originally meant. Thus, framing concerns not only selection of information, but also 'resemiotization' (Iedema, 2001) as people talk and listen to one another and subtly reframe their own perspectives on the basis of an understanding of one another's frames (Van Herzele & Aarts, 2013).

What gets framed?

Agenda-setting analysis focuses on the framing of issues as urgent problems to raise attention. In this research, this concerns the framing of problems relating to the quality of places and spaces. However, a wider array of ‘things’ that are framed are of relevance for the mobilization of action. In social movement research (e.g. Snow & Benford, 1986; Gerhards & Rucht, 1992; Benford & Snow, 2000), three categories are distinguished: 1) diagnostic framing: problem identification and attributions (who and what is to blame); 2) prognostic framing: articulation of a proposed solution to the problem and strategies for implementation; and 3) motivational framing: a ‘call to arms’ or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action. Together, the three forms of framing are used to explain how support and action are mobilized among actors.

Dewulf et al. (2009) argue that framing can also concern the relations that are needed to achieve ambitions (*relation framing*); for example, emphasizing a strong role of a particular government actor as a condition for success. Relation framing concerns talk about the actors, coalitions, and relations that are considered as necessary or undesirable. In this process, identities of ‘self’ and ‘others’ are discursively constructed. Besides issue framing and relation framing, framing can also concern the process of interaction itself. In the agenda-setting context, we think of talk about the formal and informal communication needed to achieve ambitions. Framing may include a perspective on how to connect to specific policy procedures that will enable a desired action or situation; and it can also concern informal communication strategies to engage influential politicians in the ambitions that are being pursued. See Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Agenda-setting strategies: interplay of issue, relation, and process framing



When issues, relations, and processes are connected to one another, normative-prescriptive stories may emerge that provide sense of what the problem is and what should be done about it (Rein and Schön, 1996). It is widely acknowledged that stories play an important role in disseminating a vision or a message (Hajer, 1995; Gabriel & Connell, 2010; Throgmorton, 1996).

2.3 What's in a story?

Stories and storytelling are viewed as powerful change agents in various disciplines. Connected to the interpretive turn in social science, attention has turned to the role of stories or narratives as conveyors of meaning and constitutors of social realities (Yanow, 2000). In organizational studies, storytelling is a hot topic, as the many books, articles, and social media groups on the theme demonstrate. Storytelling is viewed as an important way to both enable and resist innovation and change in organizations (Bate, 2004, 2005; Gabriel & Connell, 2010; Boje, 1991; Czarniawska, 1997). Storytelling is also used as an explanation for sudden shifts in public opinion (Gladwell, 2000; Heath & Heath, 2007; Van Ginneken, 2009). A growing stream in policy science uses insights about storytelling to understand dynamics in policymaking and to help find ways out of complex policy controversies (Hajer & Laws, 2005; Rein & Schön, 1996; Schön & Rein, 1994). In planning research as well, attention is growing in relation to the importance of storytelling in how planners interpret and prioritize their decisions and actions in situations characterized by uncertainty, ambiguity, and limited time and information (Forester, 1999; Baum, 1997; Mandelbaum, 1991; Marris, 1997; Sandercock, 2003; Throgmorton, 1996, 2003; Innes and Booher, 1999; Innes & Booher, 2010).

Storytelling is a way of ordering and constructing shared meaning (Boyce, 1996). Stories provide a plot with a more or less logical course and coherence of events. They contain a structure with a beginning and an end, key characters, often a transformation from one situation to another, and a moral (Sandercock, 2003). It is a framework for interpretation to which listeners can attach their own understandings, experiences, and emotions. Thus, stories and the interactive development of plots help to deal with ambiguity and to coordinate different realities (Throgmorton, 1996; Forester, 1999; Van Dijk, 2011). By ordering meaning, storytelling assists the setting of priorities in the face of little time and conflicting goals and interests, that is, making claims about what is to be taken as important, relevant, and worth time and attention (Forester, 1999). Storytelling not only helps actors to understand situations in a certain way, but also contains moral tension and motivation for action (Sandercock, 2003; Hajer and Laws, 2005)⁵. Stories therefore mobilize or galvanize people into action (Bate, 2004; Rein & Schon, 1996; Hajer & Laws, 2005). Rather than moving to action based on facts and figures, people are moved by emotion. 'Once upon a time...' is the best way to emotionally connect people to our agenda (cf. Gottschall, 2012).

The emotions of fiction are highly contagious, and so are the ideas. ...In fact, fiction seems to be more effective at changing beliefs than nonfiction, which is designed to persuade through argument and evidence. ...And in this there is an important lesson about the molding power of story. When we read nonfiction,

⁵ Sandercock (2003) gives an example of how stakeholders were mobilized into action by presenting to them success stories that demonstrated that change can actually happen.

we read with our shields up. We are critical and sceptical. But when we are absorbed in a story, we drop our intellectual guard. We are moved emotionally, and this seems to leave us defense-less. (Gottschall, 2012, p. 110, 111)

Baker (2010) shows that storytelling performs in many different ways. Besides dealing with ambiguity and constructing new organizational realities, stories help to improve the negotiability of issues because they are more inclusive of actors. Stories invite listeners to share their experiences and contribute to the story in their own way and become tellers themselves. People are not pushed into a prescribed form of participation but invited to join in a way that is relevant and logical for them. There is room for multiple interpretations. Moreover, stories provide a way to give meaning to factual arguments and findings and to connect these to imagination of possible futures. By being inviting, stories also enable access to various knowledge sources. Normally, it is difficult to access tacit knowledge, but as storytelling invites sharing personal experiences, tacit knowledge is also shared. In this way, it is possible to tap alternative forms of knowledge and to integrate them in the discussion. By tapping and constructing knowledge and linking knowledge to action, stories create potential for innovation.

Design and visualization can contribute to the on-going construction of inviting and imaginative stories (Van Dijk & Beunen, 2009; De Jonge, 2009). 'Design turns ambitions into stories... Designs fill in the gaps regarding the precise intention of a project, examining the consequences of planning by confronting abstract ambitions for the future with practical restrictions and the range of possibilities for the physical present. Designs also touch the emotional, associative, persuasive modes of human thought, speech and behaviour' (Van Dijk, 2011, p. 131).

Stories are highly performative as they provide a framework for understanding, decision making, and action, and improve negotiation and knowledge creation. Stories are not only persuasive but also constitutive (Throgmorton, 1996; Forester, 1999). 'They do work by organizing attention, practically and politically, not only to the facts at hand, but to why the facts at hand matter' (Forester, 1999, p. 29). They do descriptive work, moral work of constructing identities and character, political work of identifying friends and foes, interests, and needs, and deliberative work of values and options, and what is relevant and significant (Forester, 1999). Stories can become self-fulfilling (Watzlawick, 1984)⁶. When we tell stories, listen to stories, discuss them, and pass them on, we are reproducing and subtly changing ourselves and our behaviours. We are creating the future that the story is representing (Van Dijk, 2011); or, in the words of Sandercock (2003, p. 16), 'We become our stories'. This implies that stories do much more than provide a framework for understanding complex realities. They actually create new patterns and reshape those complex realities.

6 A self-fulfilling prophecy is 'an assumption or prediction that, purely as a result of having been made, causes the expected or predicted event to occur and thus confirms its own "accuracy"' (Watzlawick, 1984, p. 95).

Stories are shaped in social interactions

As described above, stories influence and constitute policymaking and social reality; but stories cannot themselves cause change. The concept of storytelling emphasizes that stories emerge in interactions between people and that they are constantly being reshaped in those interactions (Hajer & Laws, 2005). Stories are narrated by people, they cannot tell themselves. This requires interaction between tellers and listeners who then become tellers themselves.

A story is as much the product of the listener as it is the product of the teller (Boje, 1991; Baker, 2010; Throgmorton, 2003). When listeners hear a story that involves experiences of the other, they are reminded of things they experienced themselves. So what triggers in a story depends on the personal perception of the listener who will retell the story according to his own personal interpretation (Baker, 2010). 'Our personal experience mingles with what we hear and then see. As listeners, we are coproducers with the teller of the story' (Boje, 1991, p. 107). A nice metaphor for this reader-response principle is the famous children's book *The Never Ending Story* by Michael Ende. Main character, Bastian, starts reading a story, becomes part of the story, and is challenged to determine the plot (he decides whether Fantastica is destroyed or not). Like Bastian, we also become participants in stories by telling and retelling them. We add aspects and leave out other aspects depending on our own experiences and imaginations.

Telling, listening, and retelling in interactions implies not only that stories are changeable, but also that stories are able to 'travel' and obtain a large 'telling community'. Stories are elastic in the sense that there is room for the interpretations and experiences of others (Baker, 2010). Listeners are invited to incorporate the story within their own frames and then pass it on to others in ways that are meaningful and relevant to them (Baker, 2010; Van Dijk, 2011). This elasticity enables stories to travel among a wider audience.

If listeners reshape stories and can even change the plot of the story, we may wonder what elements of stories remain in the on-going interactions between tellers and listeners, and why. Many stories can be told about the future of places, and this raises questions about how competing stories are interpreted, valued, and compared (Throgmorton, 2003; Sandercock, 2003). How can we explain why some stories become strong attractors of attention and support, whereas other stories fade?

How stories become strong attractors

The challenge that civic initiatives face is to construct and share stories that are considered meaningful and relevant by government actors from whom they seek support. These stories have to fit with existing policy stories and government actors' self-referential frames. So when do stories resonate in planning offices and government departments, i.e. how do they become strong attractors?



In his book *The Deliberative Practitioner*, Forester (1999) asks a similar question. He wonders how planners learn from other people's stories when they read, hear, and listen to them and thereby become not only reflective practitioners (cf. Schön, 1983), but also deliberative practitioners acting and interacting with others. He suggests that planners may learn from 'practice stories', as we learn from friends. The point stressed is that we learn when people tell us stories that matter to us because they are appropriate to the situations we are in. This requires storytellers to have knowledge of, and to be able to empathize with, our particular situation, needs, and possibilities. This is also an important assumption in Benford and Snow's ideas (2000; Snow and Benford, 1986) about the conditions in which people get positive responses to proposed stories.

Responsiveness and frame alignment

Snow & Benford's concepts of frame resonance and frame alignment processes (Snow & Benford, 1986; Benford & Snow, 2000) help conceptualize how stories become strong attractors and effectively mobilize attention and support. These concepts form an explanatory framework that elucidates how alternative stories are fitted strategically to existing stories in order to become noticed and get a positive response from targeted supporters.

Frame alignment processes concern framing that is directed at linking up interests with those of the targets of mobilization. There are four basic alignment processes (Benford & Snow, 2000): *Bridging* concerns linking ideologically similar but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem. *Amplification* refers to the idealization, exaggeration, or reinforcement of existing beliefs and values. *Extension* concerns inclusion of issues and concerns which are thought to be important to potential supporters and that extend beyond primary interests and frames. And finally, *transformation* is the situation in which old frames are changed into new understandings and meanings. Storytellers can employ each of these strategies depending on targeted actors' level of receptivity. Sometimes stories do not have to change much to persuade listeners to join in, whereas in other cases the plot needs to be transformed to get the required (political) support.

The concept of frame resonance concerns the conditions that influence listeners' responsiveness, that is, whether they will accept a story as credible, relevant, and meaningful. The neutral term *resonance* may also be associated with negative responses, leading to opposition, but that is not how Benford & Snow (2000) understand the concept. Resonance increases the chance that targets of mobilization will support the initiative or proposal. When stories resonate among listeners, the latter are more inclined to participate in storytelling. The resonance concept points to the crucial role of the listener who interprets and (re) frames incoming information. To get a positive response (to be heard, read, and remembered), a story should fit with the self-referential frames of the listener.

The two basic elements that determine whether stories get a response are their perceived credibility and salience to listeners. Stories are salient when targeted listeners believe that the underlying beliefs, values, and ideas of the story are essential to their lives (*centrality*). Moreover, salient stories connect with the personal, everyday experiences of listeners (*experiential commensurability*) and are therefore not too abstract or distant. And finally, salient stories connect to the culture with which listeners identify themselves (*narrative fidelity or cultural resonance*).

Stories are perceived as credible when they are consistent, empirically credible, and when the storytellers are considered credible (Benford & Snow, 2000). Consistency means that the communicated frames should be consistent with the actions of the articulators. Simply said, actions have to conform to the claims. One has to walk the talk. Empirical credibility refers to the consistency of articulated frames with events that are considered relevant by listeners. Evidence is not about providing facts that can be observed objectively, but about pointing to events that, by at least part of the listening group, are considered relevant and important. Here, we can see a relation with experiential commensurability. 'Empirical credibility is in the eyes of the beholder' (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995, p. 496). A last important element attributing credibility to stories is the perceived credibility of the storytellers. Benford & Snow (2000), referring to the social psychology literature (e.g. Aronson & Golden, 1962; Hass, 1981; McGuire, 1985), argue that speakers and writers who are considered more credible are more persuasive, and that their persuasiveness is associated with status, expertise, and credentials. 'Hypothetically, the greater the status and/or perceived expertise of the frame articulator and/or the organization they represent from the vantage point of potential adherents and constituents, the more plausible and resonant the framings or claims' (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 621).

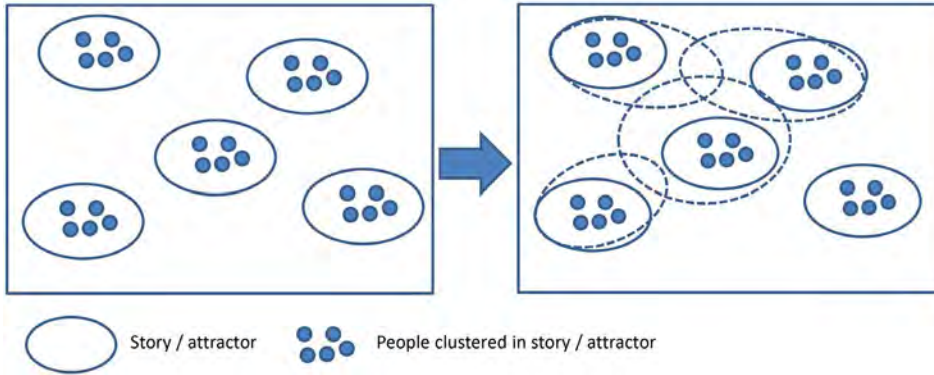
In sum, promoters of alternative stories face the challenge of enhancing the attractiveness of their story, and the chance of a positive response, by framing it into targeted supporters' latitude of acceptance (Sherif & Hovland, 1961; Sherif et al., 1965). In order to do this, strategic fitting takes place (Snow & Benford, 1986), resulting in continuous reproduction, adjustment, and resemiotization in social interactions (Van Herzele & Aarts, 2013). This is not always an intentional process. It cannot be predicted beforehand what will happen in social interactions and how conversation partners will subtly change their talk as they improvise and anticipate on what is being told. As Van Woerkum et al. (2011, p. 146) point out: Dynamics of group discussion follow an unpredictable path. 'Our discussions, especially in an informal setting, show a lot of variation. In this interaction, "the future is under perpetual construction" (Stacey, 2000, p. 128)'.

Strategic fitting requires new stories to be fluid and elastic to incorporate the frames and stories of targeted supporters. This principle is illustrated in Figure 2.3. The story changes shape over time, and the frames and stories of people participating in storytelling change as well. As a consequence, the clustering



and self-organization of people around stories is also fluid and elastic. If a competing story gets stronger, becomes a strong latent attractor, then people might disconnect from their original cluster and join another.

Figure 2.3: Clustering of people around elastic stories



Slow warming up and focusing events

The ideas about frame alignment and strategic fitting support the arguments in agenda-setting research that, although change sometimes may seem radical (punctuated), tipping points are often preceded by an enduring process of ‘softening up’ the policy system (Kingdon, 2003). The softening-up process is a matter of many social interactions in which tellers and listeners continually tell, retell, and change stories in more or less subtle ways. During this process, the imagination of listeners needs to be triggered or warmed up in order to seize opportunities when they occur. Storytelling can be compared to the warming-up exercises before hard physical activity (Baker, 2010). Like warming-up exercises, storytelling involves taking time and effort to open up the imagination. Thinking processes will only loosen if the image-creating part of listeners is tapped. The warming-up process of storytelling therefore necessarily takes time; and this requires patience and perseverance from storytellers.

Stories can become strong attractors when they coincide with windows of opportunity (Throgmorton, 1996; Rein & Schön, 1996). These windows of opportunity often result from focusing events that shift attention to new issues (Cobb & Elder, 1983; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). Such a momentum of shifting attention can be used to direct attention to a new story. To be inviting to listeners, a latent story should be so elastic that it can incorporate focusing events that are considered important by these listeners. Thus, fitting a story to potential supporters’ existing stories through frame alignment strategies and continuous resemiotization also involves fitting stories to the events that are considered relevant and important by these potential supporters.

2.4 Towards a framework for analysis

This chapter provides the theoretical concepts with which the central question of this research is operationalized. Our question concerns the process in which civic initiatives connect to government organizations, and how we can understand the outcomes for planning agendas relating to regional spatial development. The starting point for the empirical research is the efforts of civic initiatives to get connected to the self-referential perspective of government actors in order to secure attention and support. The question is how they do this and which circumstances increase the chance of such connections occurring.

The concept of attractors was used to illustrate how self-reference is the basis of the self-organization of people around sets of beliefs, convictions, and values that are continuously reproduced. The concept also illustrates how civic initiatives, forming latent attractors, may exercise attracting forces on a dominant attractor (formal government perspectives) to become noticed and become considered as meaningful and relevant. Government organizations and policy networks, which reside in a particular attractor, move continuously in different states of being under the influence of other attractors who exert influence. Under certain circumstances, they can flip to another attractor, or embrace a wider range of ideas and values, when the attractor in which the system resides changes shape.

On the basis of the policy science literature discussed in this chapter, we argue that policy entrepreneurs' agenda-setting strategies as well as focusing events are important forces that can change the shape of attractors. Framing and storytelling have been identified as important agenda-setting strategies. Framing is dynamic and interactive, and involves the continuous negotiation, reproduction, and alteration of frames in and through daily interactions between people. Stories and storytelling have been described as effective forms of framing in which problem definitions, solutions, strategies, and motivations for action are brought together in a coherent whole, providing an interpretive framework for listeners to make sense of ambiguity and decide on future actions. Some stories become strong attractors and manage to effectively mobilize support and attention. Other stories fade away. The question is under which circumstances alternative stories, which form latent attractors, become so attractive to people that they become accepted as meaningful and relevant to government actors and may even transform planning agendas.

From the theory presented in this chapter, we can derive the following principles and sensitizing concepts which are the basis for inquiry in two case studies (see Chapter 3). First, stories will mobilize attention and be more attractive if they resonate with targeted listeners' ambitions and frames. Framing in interaction concerns the alignment of the promoted story with listeners' personal experiences, ambitions, and experiences. Stories become strong attractors when they are framed and resemiotized such that listeners, thinking

from their own frames of reference, consider them relevant, credible, truthful, and emotive. Therefore, it is important in this research to consider how frame alignment processes in day-to-day human interactions enhance the chance of civic initiatives eliciting a positive response to their storytelling. Second, it was argued that the attraction of stories is enhanced when they are connected to events that open policy windows or cause a momentum of shifting attention. In the meanwhile, audiences are warmed up to the unfolding story and invited to participate in storytelling, which enables seizing opportunities as they occur. Together, the processes of frame alignment and resemitotization in relation to focusing events and windows of opportunity may elucidate how stories 'tip'. Within this framework, with its strong focus on framing and storytelling as drivers of change, the empirical analysis must continuously confront 'who is telling what to whom in what context and why'. In the next chapter, we discuss how this interpretive work was performed.



A tale of doing interpretive analysis

'Tell me one last thing,' said Harry. 'Is this real? Or has this been happening inside my head?' Dumbledore beamed at him, and his voice sounded loud and strong in Harry's ears even though the bright mist was descending again, obscuring his figure. 'Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?'

(J.K. Rowling, 2007. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, p. 579).

3

3.1 Interpretive approach

Interpretivists believe there is no single reality, but rather multiple interpretations of realities that come about inside and between the heads of people. Interpretive research starts from the ontological and epistemological assumption that (social and physical) realities and knowledge are constructed in and out of interactions between people (Crotty, 2003; Geertz, 1973; Yanow, 2000). 'There are no "brute data" whose meaning is beyond dispute' (Yanow, 2000, p. 5), as objectivist research suggests. Interpretations of the world can be useful, fulfilling, rewarding, and so forth, but there are no true or valid interpretations (Crotty, 2003).

We position this research, with its focus on human interactions, communication processes, and struggles for meaning in spatial planning contexts, within the interpretive research tradition. It contributes to the growing body of interpretive work that has appeared ever since the interpretive or argumentative turn in policy and planning science (Fischer & Forester, 1993; Yanow, 2006; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Healey, 2006). An interpretive approach to policy and planning processes focuses on the various meanings that people give to the world around them (events, objects, actions, etc.), and how people through these meanings express and exchange their feelings, values, and beliefs (Yanow, 2000). This enables understanding of how actors and organizations (re)frame their interests and arguments in order to solve a problem. It adds to institutional analysis or analysis of interests a tool to understand the dynamics of policymaking and planning by focusing on how changes in meanings and arguments can result in changes in politics and policymaking (Van den Brink & Metze, 2006).

This research is based on the assumption that people's actions are guided by the meanings they construct for phenomena that they consider relevant to their actions, and that the meaning of such things derives from, is handled in, and modified through social interaction with other people (cf. Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1974). Language plays a crucial role in these inter-human interactions. Dialogues between people reflect people's perceptions, feelings, and attitudes, and enable interpretation of their meanings and intent. Most interpretive researchers analyse (symbolic) language, such as texts, talk, and non-verbal behaviour and visuals, as they are the mediums in which interpretations and their underlying meanings are manifested (Crotty, 2003; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). The focus is on the way language shapes what things we see, how we see them, and how this shaping of things constitutes reality (Crotty, 2003).

In the wide spectrum of interpretive methods and methodologies (see e.g. Wood & Kroger, 2000; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Van den Brink, 2009), such as narrative analysis, poststructuralist discourse analysis, and discursive psychological analysis, framing analysis is used to focus on what happens between the 'noses' and 'ears' of people when they engage in conversation (Dewulf et al., 2009; Entman, 2003; Goffman, 1974; Benford & Snow, 2000). In this research, we used framing analysis to understand the nature, process, and outcomes of social interactions between civic initiatives and their targets of mobilization (both governmental and non-governmental actors). The verb 'framing', in contrast to the noun 'frame', emphasizes the dynamic activity of constructing and reconstructing frames over time (cf. Yanow, 2000).

3.2 Writing a meaningful and convincing scientific narrative

Interpretive research requires the researcher to engage in double hermeneutics (Giddens, 1984; Yanow, 2006), or even triple hermeneutics (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2009; Yanow, 2009). Like the interpretations of people under study, the researcher's interpreting is not a neutral or objective activity. Researchers' interpretive work is guided by their own values, background, and the questions, assumptions, goals, and concepts that have informed their analysis. To justify the claim that interpretations of the studied phenomena are meaningful and plausible, researchers have to meet certain scientific criteria.

The criteria for interpretive analysis differ from what counts as good research in objectivist research because interpretive analysis does not aim for universally valid explanations and causal relations, or for generating general laws by testing hypotheses, or for enabling predictability. 'Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs' (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 224). 'What is going on here and why' cannot be adequately answered with a priori hypotheses about what is going on because 'what is going on here' depends on the context-specific interpretations of the people being studied. Interpretive analysis requires an open abductive approach in empirical research without fixed a

priori assumptions about what is going on (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003; Yanow, 2000). Therefore, the criteria of validity, generalizability, and reliability are not appropriate in interpretivist research (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012; Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Silverman, 2001). However, as in objectivist research, interpretive researchers have to account for the meaningfulness and trustworthiness of their interpretations (Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Van Bommel & Van der Zouwen; 2003).

A scientific narrative

Good interpretive research can be considered as creating scientific narratives that are both meaningful and convincing to their readers and listeners (cf. Czarniawska, 1997, 2004; Yanow, 2009; Flyvbjerg, 2002; Van Bommel & Van der Zouwen, 2013). A scientific narrative is meaningful when readers consider it relevant and important, that is, when they do not raise the 'so what?' question. A scientific narrative is convincing when it meets criteria for trustworthiness, which are different in each scientific community, and does not prompt readers to ask: 'did it really happen?' (Van Bommel & Van der Zouwen, 2013).

Like any narrative, a scientific narrative should contain a plot, and a beginning with a puzzle or tension, a middle, and an inspiring finale (Czarniawska, 2004; Van Bommel & Van der Zouwen, 2013; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012) that invites readers to participate, share, and continue the story. Scientific narratives can actually be considered never-ending stories because the research and the narration about research will continue. To accommodate both meaningfulness and plausibility, a scientific narrative should interweave in a natural flow a theoretical plot and an empirical plot or plots. This book contains case narratives that tell the empirical plots of the case studies. These necessarily serve goals with respect to the theoretical plot and therefore involve a selective narration of what has happened, based on a framework of sensitizing concepts. At the same time, the theoretical plot is connected to the empirical plot and unfolds, while reflection on the case narratives leads to refinement of sensitizing concepts.

Sensitizing concepts and the hermeneutic circle

To make sense of what happened in the cases, I used sensitizing concepts, which do not have fixed definitions but direct our attention to relevant aspects of the phenomenon under study and form a preliminary interpretive framework (cf. Blumer, 1969). These preliminary sensitizing concepts and frameworks were refined as I went up in the hermeneutic 'circle' or 'spiral' (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). A hermeneutic circle or spiral reflects the idea that there is no fixed starting point for analysis. The process begins with getting a first rudimentary understanding of what is happening with the help of what is known at that moment, including the terms and concepts that enable sense-making at that moment. Next, understanding evolves as concepts and frameworks for interpretation are refined and become more specific over time in a continual process of sense-making of, and reflection on, both the practice



under study and the concepts and meanings that are considered meaningful and useful (Crotty, 2003; Van den Brink & Metze, 2006; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). 'This doesn't mean that interpretive researchers are on "shaky" or "loose" ground. Rather, it means that, like captains of a ship, they are more attuned to changing weather conditions and riding the resulting waves, instead of strictly following the initial course that they might have laid out on dry ground' (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 36).

Criteria for interpretive analysis

To arrive at a trustworthy scientific narrative, I used criteria that are widely accepted in interpretive research (Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985): thick description, transparency, systematics, reflexivity, triangulation, and feedback from informants and peers.

A thick description is the contextualized description of the most important events, settings, persons, interactions, and so forth in which interpretations are embedded (cf. Geertz, 1973; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). It accounts for the extent to which the researcher has succeeded in understanding the specific historical, social, cultural, and political context of the practice she is studying and how she has integrated that in her own interpretations of what was going on. A thick description adds the 'whys' and 'hows' that underlie the (thin) description's 'whats' by providing all historical, demographic, geographic, economic, and cultural context and details that are relevant to the research questions of the researcher. Thickness is a relative measure: the level of detail is related to the research question as well as what the readers already know (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

I created thick descriptions of the case studies by systematically collecting and analysing events and relevant data and reporting these in the form of case narratives following Flyvbjerg (2002, 2006) and Throgmorton (2008). In both case studies, the challenge was to find a way to get thick descriptions that were meaningful and that could be easily connected to a more analytical reflection. I did that in the form of case narratives. My case narratives served to elucidate the process of agenda setting and outcomes over time in the context of other events and related issues. They served to uncover and elucidate what things and processes preceded tipping points in the agenda-setting process. Both narratives are simultaneously detailed and selective. They are not exhaustive overviews, but for the sake of telling the story selections of issues and events are described in detail. This helps readers to find their own paths of interpretation.

Trustworthiness is about whether the interpretation of raw data into results is credible (Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). This involves dependability, whether other researchers with the same approach would come to the same sort of conclusions taking changing circumstances into account. Trustworthiness is further supported by transparent and systematic

data collection as well as systematic data analysis in which interpretations are related to theoretical concepts and frameworks. Transparency is important to all choices that are made during the research process. The remainder of this chapter about the case studies (section 3), the methods of data collection, and analysis narrated in section 4 are devoted to providing transparency about my interpretive work and to account for how I systematically collected and analysed data. Computer-aided qualitative analysis is used increasingly to meet criteria of trustworthiness by improving transparency and systematics. It enables a systematic approach by relating data to concepts and by recording the steps that have been taken to develop interpretations. For information about how I used the software Atlas.ti, see section 5.

Reflexivity involves a critical reflection by the researcher on her own interpretations, and adaptation of interpretation methods if necessary. To achieve this, I organized feedback from peers for both cases in different ways. For the case study about New Markets Heuvelland, I discussed findings and interpretive frameworks formally and informally with other researchers within the framework of the project, Vital Coalitions. Colleagues on that research team were involved in the same case study. I also discussed findings and interpretations with experts involved in the New Markets process. Although there was no such research setting and team for the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case study, I was able to check my interpretations with two key stakeholders. Moreover, I presented and discussed findings and interpretations of both cases in seminars with colleagues, at conferences, and of course with my supervisors.

Triangulation involves combining different methods, theories, perspectives, and information sources. 'This form of comparison derives from navigation, where different bearings give the correct position of an object' (Silverman, 2001, p. 233). However, it does not so much enable a more objective or correct account of what is happening, as add complexity, wealth, and depth to the study. Triangulation enables making sense of one perspective by involving another. It enables deeper and multi-perspectival understanding of the studied situation and improves credibility. In this research, triangulation was an important strategy to get detailed information about events and interactions, and relations between them. I used interviews and (policy) document analysis in both cases, I gathered visual data, and in the case of Gouda-Krimpenerwaard I added analysis of newspaper articles as well as (e-mail) correspondence containing real-life and real-time interactions between actors.

Holistic, evolutionary, and comparative perspective

I aimed to get meaningful and convincing interpretations through a holistic, evolutionary, and comparative research approach (cf. Blok, 1977). This entailed essentially getting a deeper insight into cases by understanding them in their context (Aarts, 2009). A holistic perspective implied an effort to shed light on the connections between, and interactions of, various phenomena in a greater



whole, in line with the complexity assumptions that underlie this research. A focus on relations between phenomena that happen simultaneously starts from the idea that every social phenomenon happens in a wider framework and can only be understood in terms of that wider web of relations.

In relation to a holistic perspective, I used an evolutionary perspective to uncover how events and phenomena in the past affected following events and phenomena. Social change is a process in which actions build on one another and can only be understood in terms of their historical context. I followed this principle by analysing developments over time and by addressing how past events and new events concur.

A comparative perspective enabled refinement of interpretations produced in the separate case studies, as well as of the concepts and frameworks used to create interpretations. Comparison of similar phenomena generates interpretations that go beyond the specificity of the one case or occurrence (Blok, 1977; Howarth, 2005). The perspective of one case or occurrence can cast new light on the other, because it de-sediments and de-familiarises our existing understanding (Howarth, 2005). Comparison in this research thus did not involve sampling and comparing data based on a prefixed set of concepts, variables, or hypotheses, as is common in positivist traditions (e.g. Gerring, 2004; Mahoney & Goertz, 2006), but involved 'unfolding learning' about key concepts as the research progressed (Yanow, forthcoming). I arranged a comparative perspective by selecting two case studies that contained the same phenomenon central to this research (self-organizing civic initiatives and the way they connect to local and regional governments), but provided different contexts (type of civic initiative, time, place, culture, institutions, and so on). The next section provides more information about the position and comparison of the two cases in this research.

3.3 Case studies

Interpretive analysis frequently entails a research design with case studies, because meaning construction can only be understood within its specific and unique contexts (time, place, history, culture). Case studies offer a good way to generate context-dependent interpretations and in-depth and multi-perspectival understanding of social phenomena that cannot be grasped with general laws and rules (Flyvbjerg, 2001, 2006; Yanow, 2000). Flyvbjerg points to the limitations of summarizing cases on the basis of preconceived notions about what might be going on. He advises keeping the case open and preventing the loss of details that contribute to the complexity of the case. Phenomena should be explored broadly (including the 'backstage' and 'side streets') before categorization takes place on the basis of theories or hypotheses. 'Good studies should be read as narrative in their entirety' (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 241).

Selection of the cases

Selecting cases prompts the question "what are the cases a case of?". According to Haverland & Yanow (2012, p. 406):

An interpretive researcher's answer at the beginning of the research would be, "I do not know, although I have some informed expectations, and I want to find out more." In this sense, an interpretive researcher is concerned with what Ragin calls "casing" (1992, 17), in which the study's goal is to find out what the entity studied is a case of, rather than to speculate or specify that ahead of time.

Denzin & Lincoln (2005) argue that the researcher should select a case which offers the most opportunity to learn, for example because it is most accessible or because the researcher can spend more time with it. Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012, p. 147) argue that interpretive researchers are engaged in 'mapping the variety of people, places, events, texts etc., to expose the researcher to multiple perspectives on the research question.' Following these strategies, I chose two cases that corresponded with respect to the phenomenon under study, that is, self-organization of civic initiatives and their agenda-setting strategies, and varied as much as possible on other aspects. I was already familiar with the two cases which improved my possibilities to access data and learn about the specific contexts of the cases.

The case studies concern two different types of civic initiatives in two different metropolitan regions in the Netherlands (see Figure 3.1). The first case is about initiatives of prominent business entrepreneurs within the framework of the project, New Markets Heuvelland, in the Heuvelland region (southern part of Limburg Province). The second case concerns citizens' initiatives to protect and strengthen landscape values in the southern urban-rural fringe of the city of Gouda (Zuid-Holland Province). Both case studies entail forms of self-organization of people around shared ambitions for spatial development



of places that are valuable to them in one way or the other (working, living, recreation, and so on). In both cases, civic initiatives developed their own proposals for local/regional development and tried to connect to local and regional governments, resulting in varying outcomes in terms of achievement of their ambitions and government agendas for regional (spatial) development.

Figure 3.1: Location of the two case studies



As figure 3.1 shows, the cases are both situated in urban–rural areas. Urban–rural areas are characterized by complicated multi-level governance processes which provide extreme cases of civic initiatives trying to overcome the blockages presented by these governance contexts to mobilize support and attention. Urban–rural regions are characterized by a governance gap at the regional level (Van den Brink et al. 2006; Hajer et al. 2006). Although many government bodies at the municipal, provincial, and national level are involved and work together in different steering groups for different issues, nobody has exclusive power to act in regional governance matters. In such situations, it is not at all evident which government representative or department should be addressed.

The variation between the cases serves comparison in terms of shedding new light on each unique case (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Variation therefore did not involve preconceived variables that were the same for the selected cases, or a priori assumptions about how variations would influence outcomes in order to enable generalizations. Our interpretive approach involved accepting that I did not yet know what sort of differences would matter. Therefore I looked for maximum variance to enrich the information and improve understanding of the findings in the unique cases through a secondary analysis with refined concepts. The contextual differences between the two cases (such as scale, evaluated time period, entrepreneur initiative vs. citizen initiative) enabled a critical reflection on the significance and scope of the findings (cf. Blok, 1977). Important characteristics of the cases are summarized in Table 3.1.

The choice of time periods evaluated in the cases needs some more explanation. For the New Markets initiatives in Heuvelland, I analysed the period 2004–2009. I have set the start date for the analysis at 2004 because this was the year in which the initiative for New Markets first occurred, and at that time I did not consider it relevant to consider possible forerunning initiatives in the past. The analysis was limited to the constraints and opportunities that the initiatives encountered in the process after 2004. The end date was set at 2009 when the regional branding initiative entered a take-off phase at the cost of another New Markets initiative. Of course the story continues, and storylines provided by other initiatives (or New Markets) take on a new life in other regions or as adjusted ideas or business plans; but for the sake of our research, I stopped with the success of Regional Branding, which marked a meaningful and illustrative tipping point in the agenda-setting process.

The case of civic initiatives in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe concerns agenda-setting processes from halfway the 1980s to 2010. Civic initiatives in the fringe sprouted from older civic initiatives which emerged about 1985 and concerned the protection and rehabilitation of heritage in the city of Gouda. The narrative stops in 2010 when local and regional governments decided to implement and finance plans for restoration of a canal lock that had historical



significance, which was an important goal for civic initiatives. By that time, many of the issues promoted by civic initiatives were successfully put on government agendas.

Table 3.1: Summary characteristics of the two cases: Gouda-Krimpenerwaard and New Markets Heuvelland

Characteristics on which cases differ	Civic initiatives southern fringe Gouda-Krimpenerwaard	New Markets Heuvelland initiatives
Location	Southern urban–rural fringe of city of Gouda, connecting to Krimpenerwaard polder region	Urban-rural region Zuid-Limburg (Heuvelland)
Initiative	Citizens, interest groups	Prominent business persons and invited experts
Ambition	Securing attention and (financial and political) support for the protection of landscape values (nature, historical landscape structure, historical canal lock)	Integrated improvement of (tourist and rural) economy and landscape quality: founding of a business community around New Markets
Ambition achieved?	Yes	No/yes (one initiative did, others did not)
Connection to what sort of government agendas?	Local and regional development plans (spatial, economic, rural)	Regional development plans (spatial, economic, rural)
Demography	Demography stable	Shrinking region (city and countryside)
Landscape	Peat meadow landscape, cattle farming, meadows with medieval rational parcelling	Hilly and varied landscape, horticulture, mixed farming
Evaluated period	1985–2010 (25 years)	2004–2009 (5 years)

Short description of the cases

New Markets Heuvelland

New Markets Heuvelland, in the south of Limburg Province, is an initiative of the provincial government to bring together a group of entrepreneurs from different economic sectors with the aim of boosting the rural economy in the region, while safeguarding or strengthening rural landscape values. For some, the project was about an innovative approach to area development (regional and local), starting from economic activities instead of spatial visions.

In 2005, Heuvelland (Hilly Land) was designated a National Landscape (NL) by the national government because of its special landscape values and characteristics: contrasts between extensive plateaus and steep slopes and narrow valleys, river terraces, the history of human occupation from prehistoric times, and many cultural historical elements such as steep earth walls engineered to prevent erosion, and orchards of standard fruit trees (Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied, 2005). One reason for the NL status designation was urban pressure causing increasing fragmentation of the landscape and worsening the conditions for agricultural activities. The NL status was supposed to provide an extra stimulus for the relevant authorities to protect Heuvelland's landscape qualities. Another problem in the region was the shrinking population, leading to vacant properties, including valuable historic farmsteads and cloisters. The provincial government was tackling these problems through a long-term programme for rural development and had adopted a Landscape Vision as a framework for subsidized investments in the Heuvelland National Landscape.

Another problem was the rapid decline in tourism, traditionally one of the most important economic sectors in the region. The decline was said to be caused by structural problems in the tourism sector (ZKA et al., 2005; Mommaas & Janssen, 2008). Experts and public officials argued that tourism was being threatened by a deterioration in the rural landscape due to the increasing scale of agricultural production and urbanization, which made the landscape less attractive to tourists. The provincial government argued that it was necessary to do something to improve the tourism economy that would also preserve the quality and identity of the region. This resulted in the New Markets Heuvelland initiative.

In 2004, invited experts came up with the New Markets Heuvelland programme to connect tourism and landscape protection to other business sectors and to develop together with business entrepreneurs innovative product-market combinations. Provincial officials and experts decided to offer these business leaders as much opportunity as possible to develop their own ideas on the economic regeneration of Heuvelland. They were afraid that the process might become bogged down in discussions between provincial government officers and executive councillors; this is why the provincial government did not participate actively in the planning process (Horlings & Haarmann, 2008; Mommaas & Janssen, 2008).

The case narrative tells the story about how the initiative to form a regional network organization with entrepreneurs, NGOs, and governmental organizations failed, whereas separate initiatives of entrepreneurs (Healing Hills and Regional Branding) were more successful in agenda setting and were adopted to a certain extent by local and regional governments. The case study focuses on the question of how these varying outcomes can be understood as well as the preceding process, conceptualized as an agenda-setting process.

Protecting landscape values in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard urban–rural fringe

The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard urban–rural fringe is situated to the south of the city of Gouda and borders on the other side the Krimpenerwaard polder, which is part of the National Landscape, Het Groene Hart (The Green Heart). The landscape in the fringe area fits in that of the Krimpenerwaard polder, which is generally characterized as a wet meadow landscape. The openness of the area as well as the sharp contrast between city and countryside are regarded as important landscape values. Other landscape values in the fringe area concern several historical assets, such as a canal lock, the medieval parcelling structure, and the architectural heritage in the Stolwijkersluis community. These tell the story of the struggles against water in the area as well as the historic relations between the countryside and the city.

Twenty-five years ago, policymakers' attention on the area can be described as limited to viewing it as a backyard or an appendix to the city of Gouda. In 1964, the area became the territory of Gouda to enable expansion in the future. Policymakers' attention focused only on the city itself, on the north side of the river. The area south of the river was more a place where on an ad-hoc basis new urban developments took place, such as a wastewater plant, an asphalt plant, and a road bypass through the area. These ad-hoc urban developments, and the lack of an integral perspective on the part of the municipality on the future of the area in relation to the city and the bordering rural region, resulted in an initiative by a small group of citizens from the city to protect landscape values in the fringe area. By presenting and promoting their own plans, they tried to convince local and regional authorities that an integrated plan for the fringe should be designed to prevent further congestion.

Although for a long time this seemed an impossible mission, the initiative and the coalitions they built over time were able to achieve most of their ambitions over a period of 25 years. In recent years, the fringe has become valued by local and regional governments as an area with great recreational potential for both the city of Gouda and stakeholders in the Krimpenerwaard polder. It is perceived as a recreational node between the city and the countryside that strengthens the position of both the city and the countryside. The area is being developed as a nature park accessible to visitors and inhabitants. The province has embraced the renovation of the lock and the development of the nature park as projects of regional importance and has translated this into major financial investments, complemented with contributions from local authorities.

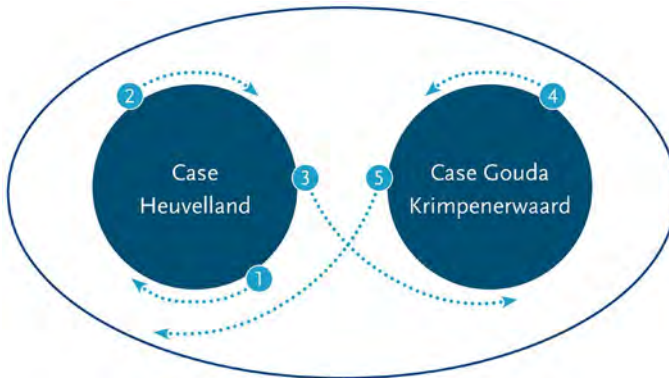
The story about civic initiatives in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe is intriguing as, in the beginning, not one of the involved authorities seemed to take an interest, whereas, at the end, they not only started collaborating and coordinating actions but also invested a substantial amount of money. The case study explores how this happened and what process preceded the successful inclusion of landscape values in the fringe on the policy agenda.

Comparing the cases

The two cases enable a comparative perspective, but not in terms of a comparison based on pre-fixed variables and indicators. The aim of our comparison is not generalization of knowledge but improving insight into every unique case to get in-depth understanding (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

I used a sequential hierarchical case study approach to enable moving up the hermeneutic spiral, as illustrated in Figure 3.2. The case comparison was executed with a refined set of concepts.

Figure 3.2: Sequence of cases and steps in refining sensitizing concepts



Step 1

In the first step, I collected data on the New Markets Heuveland case with the help of an initial set of sensitizing concepts and questions. My initial way to approach the New Markets initiatives was with (policy) network concepts and tracking discourses to understand the relation between the initiatives and policymaking. I aimed to look at formal and informal communication to see what happened in the communication between relevant governments and the initiatives, and what sort of strategy had effect.

Step 2

When I confronted these concepts with the data and simultaneously read literature, I started thinking about the case study in terms of an agenda-setting process. Therefore, I interpreted the data with the interrelated concepts of coalition building, issue framing, and relation framing. Moreover, not surprising in light of the agenda-setting framework, the data pointed to the role of coincidence, or rather concurrences of events.

Step 3

These findings and new set of concepts formed the starting point for the conceptual design of the second case study, Gouda-Krimpenerwaard. I collected data with the framework of agenda-setting mechanisms, which I then understood as the relations between coalition building, issue framing, relation framing, and the role of trigger events.

Step 4

In the Heuvelland case, in the framing analysis, I missed people's 'talk' about the relevant and necessary strategies and procedures of formal and informal interaction, including references to formal policy and planning processes. I included this in the questions about how people tried to get attention and mobilize support. When special roles of individual agents ('policy entrepreneurs') came out of the raw data, I decided to take these into account too. As my analysis intentionally had not aimed to identify such policy entrepreneurs or investigate their characteristics, but rather the activity of constructing meanings in social interactions, I decided to focus on the connecting roles of particular people. As I started writing the narrative about what had happened and tried to make sense of the raw data, I first identified tipping points in the agenda-setting process based on pivotal shifts in coalitions and/or storylines. Next, I analysed the circumstances that preceded those tipping points: 1) the construction of storylines around the proposed issues through the interaction between groups and individuals in the region; 2) the events and concurring circumstances that enabled frame alignment, and 3) the role of particular individuals who connected people, frames, resources, and contexts, and thereby also enabled the spreading of stories across a wider network. I started labelling these individuals as connectors (after Shirky, 2008, and Gladwell, 2000).

Step 5

Next, I used the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard results to see how this would enrich the results of the Heuvelland case, and vice versa. This secondary analysis focused on the relations between the spreading of 'sticky' stories, conversations as mediums of framing and storytelling, concurring events, and connectors. This process elucidated the unique agenda-setting processes in the two cases.

3.4 From data to case narratives

The analytical approach for the two cases followed approximately the line that Yanow (2000) proposes for the analytical process. I first established initial questions for analysis. I identified the interpretive communities (initiatives, coalitions, other) that were at play as well as the artefacts (talk, texts, actions) that carried the interpretations of those groups and actors. I identified how actors, groups, and coalitions talked and acted with regard to the issues that

civic initiatives addressed, or that competed for attention. Furthermore, I identified how different interpretations and storylines conflicted or fitted, and whether and how interpretations in the form of storylines shifted over time.

Both case studies were performed by using triangulation of methods and information sources. In addition to using information sources such as documents, interviews, and newspaper articles, I used participant observation to a certain extent because of my engagement as a consultant and researcher in parts of the investigated processes. In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, I coordinated a collaborative process to develop a plan for the urban fringe together with civic initiators, government representatives, and experts (2004–2006). However, at the time I was not aware that I would later use the information for my dissertation. Technically, in order to call this participant observation, I should have had certain research questions and concepts in mind that were relevant for this book. However, my ‘way of knowing’ (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012) is to a great extent related to my activities in that period, which are quite similar to what is defined as participant observation (Silverman, 2001): a field strategy that simultaneously combines document analysis, respondent and informant interviewing, direct participation and observation, and introspection. Moreover, my encounter with civic initiatives that initiated the plan-making process and mobilized all kinds of other actors was one of the reasons that I started this research in the first place. It has inspired the current formulation of the research problem and research question in this book. Although later on I collected many other data to provide answers to my research questions, I still feel that my earlier involvement in another role was crucial as a way of knowing. It enabled ethnographic sensitivity, even though later on I used more distant research methods.

What I did in Heuveland

Getting data

My journey in the New Markets process started in 2006 when the group of business entrepreneurs was working together with experts on further developing New Markets. They experienced problems in implementing and further crystallizing ideas to get concrete business cases. That is why the research institute, Alterra, was asked to facilitate a multi-stakeholder process in which a community of practice would be founded for collectively collecting and constructing relevant knowledge. I was invited to join for my own purpose of observing, but also to give feedback about the process based on my observations (Van Mansfeld & Van der Stoep, 2008). This became embedded also in the research project, Vital Coalitions¹, in which I worked with a multi-disciplinary research team that had selected Heuveland as one of the central case studies.

¹ For more information about the project see: <http://www.transforum.nl/projecten/wetenschappelijke-projecten/item/52-vital-coalitions> (last accessed 16 August 2012).

As a first step, to prepare for data collection, I identified initial questions and sensitizing concepts that sprang from my understanding at that time. The concepts that I used were inspired by reading about, amongst others things, policy networks (e.g. Kickert et al., 1997), policy arrangements (e.g. Arts & Leroy, 2006), and discourse analysis and framing (e.g. Hajer, 1995; Hajer & Laws, 2006; Van den Brink & Metze, 2006). Moreover, an important source of inspiration at that time were the discussions in the Vital Coalitions research team about the concept of vital coalitions (Hurlings et al., 2009; Hurlings et al., 2006) and a conceptual framework inspired by urban regime theory (Stone, 2005; Mossberger & Stoker, 2001), which directed attention to actor coalitions, modes of alignment, agendas, and resources as the constituents of regimes. This seemed to resemble to a great extent the dimensions of policy arrangements (cf. Arts & Leroy, 2006), but added a focus both on informal relations and communication and on productivity and energy in coalitions.

This first conceptual 'knowing' resulted in initial questions to make sense of what was going on with the New Markets initiatives: 1) how could the network, in which the New Markets initiatives operated, be characterized in terms of actors, relations, interdependencies, and ambitions?; 2) how did vital coalitions (the New Markets initiatives) relate to dominant policy discourse about regional planning and development, and how did they talk about the perceived problem and their role?, and 3) what sort of formal and informal communication strategies were used?

While engaging in the conceptual puzzle, and trying to get to know the case, I attended, reported and gathered reports of meetings that were held in the framework of the New Markets process in the period April 2006 – April 2008 (see Appendix 1). These meetings provided information about the issues discussed, how they were framed by different participants, and how they came to agreements or not. Another important information source and a way to make sense of what was going on were the conversations with my colleague researchers tasked with facilitating the New Markets process and/or involved in the monitoring of that process. While attending meetings and trying to understand what was going on, I read relevant documents produced in earlier stages of the process and had conversations with one of the process facilitators about what had preceded the state of affairs at that time.

Next, I looked for more information about opinions and views of stakeholders in the process. This information was collected through a total of 18 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the New Markets process. First of all, I tried to get a better understanding of what had happened before and during the process by reading and analysing the transcripts of colleagues on the research team who had performed interviews with participants and stakeholders in the New Markets process for monitoring purposes. This involved a total of 8 interviews.

Next, I conducted interviews myself with stakeholders that had not yet been interviewed and that were central to the interactions between the initiators of the New Markets projects (entrepreneurs and experts) and other stakeholders, especially governmental representatives (province, municipalities). In total, this involved 10 interviews, a few of which I conducted together with another colleague on the research team. Because I still had only vague ideas of how to conceptualize and understand what was going on, and more generally how to understand and analyse the relations between self-organizing initiatives and governmental initiatives, these interviews were semi-structured based on the initial questions mentioned earlier. Interviews with participants in the New Markets process (project managers, entrepreneurs, and a representative from the Provincial Council's economic affairs department) generated data about how issues developed during the process, how this related to the goals of the participating parties, and frames about the construction of the coalitions during the New Markets process. Interviews with executive councillors, provincial government officers, and a representative from a nature conservation organization generated data about dominant policy frames on regional development and about whether and how the New Markets initiatives affected the ideas and policies of regional and local authorities and other decision-making bodies. See Appendix 2 and 3 for the list of interviewees and the interview topics and questions.

During the process of data collection, I became aware that participating entrepreneurs as well as experts called for the involvement and facilitation of provincial government actors as well as business cases in which connection with local planning agendas would be tried out. Here, it became clear that there was tension between the initial attitude of keeping the government out to remain vital and energetic and the wish to get support from provincial government in terms of embedding initiatives in provincial programmes and, together with that, financial resources and ideas to link up new markets to existing initiatives in provincial programmes. I started reading up on the province's policy programmes concerning economic development (it was especially this department that was being involved in the process), but also spatial and rural development as the involvement of this department was considered important by the Alterra project managers, but this proved difficult. I tried to understand the divide that presented itself between the province's economic policy and its policy for spatial development and rural development. I studied policy documents that I considered relevant based on what I knew at that time.

Creating interpretations in rounds

I coded interviews and records of meetings and started with an in-vivo method of coding that generated broad categories: relations between actors, roles, cooperation, conflict, issues in regional development (perceived problems and possible futures), communication strategies, and agendas (both policy agendas and agendas/ambitions of individual actors). In particular, the latter category of

agendas and a simultaneous reading of more theoretical work about agenda setting (Kingdon, 2003; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005) inspired a focus on agenda-setting strategies and processes. I identified two factors to analyse how initiatives built agenda-setting capacity. First, agenda setting involves issue framing, which involves problem identification as well as selecting a particular perspective from which to promote the issue. Second, agenda setting involves coalition building to attract supporters for the issue and improve the chances of getting the issue onto the policy agenda. I suggested that coalitions are built around powerful and appealing storylines that somehow address the collective goal of the coalition. Moreover, I considered the development (or falling apart) of coalitions between people by analysing their own interpretations of relations and coalitions. Framing analysis provided a way to study both coalition building and issue construction in agenda-setting processes.

To write findings down in a report, I started making a chronological description of how issues developed over time and which events were related. Thus, a case narrative developed that gave a contextualized account of what had happened. While writing, I started seeing relations between the shifts of coalitions and issues and the coinciding with particular political or social events. The result was a book chapter about this case study (Van der Stoep & Aarts, 2010) in the book *Vital Coalitions, Vital Regions* (Horlings, 2010), and Chapter 4 in this thesis. The arguments in the chapter are illustrated with interview quotes. I provide the original Dutch interview quotes in Appendix 7 to prevent a loss of meaning in the translating process. The numbering in the appendix corresponds with the numbers of the quotes in the chapter.

What I did in Gouda-Krimpenerwaard

The findings and conclusions in the New Markets Heuvelland case formed the starting point for an adjusted set of sensitizing concepts for the initiatives in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case. As in the Heuvelland case, I focused on issue framing as an agenda-setting strategy, identifying storylines and relation framing to understand shifts in coalitions. In conversations, people talk about the role of various actors in the process and thereby construct 'we' and 'they' groups, or i.e. coalitions and groups that compete or cooperate. In addition, I had developed the thought, based on experiences in Heuvelland as well as reading about what gets framed (e.g. Dewulf, 2009), that it was not only the framing of the required interaction process itself that mattered in the formation of coalitions and storylines. Interaction processes in our framework refer to informal and formal interactions – often in policy and planning contexts – that civic initiatives encounter when they negotiate with governmental actors. Interaction framing includes talk about the way connections can be established with on-going planning and policy processes to get the support of local and regional governments.

Another dimension of the agenda-setting process highlighted in the conclusions of the Heuvelland case was the role of trigger events and synchronicity (of events). I decided to address the issue of trigger events explicitly in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case as one of the 'things' that precede or mark tipping points.

This resulted in the following questions with which I started the case study:

- Which issues were pushed by civic initiatives, and how were they framed?
- Which coalitions developed around which issues (frames), and how did talking about actor relations result in coalition building (characterization, identity framing, relation framing)?
- How did formal and informal interaction take place between civic initiatives and governmental actors?
- Were civic initiatives' issues prioritized on government agendas, and how did they relate to the policy issues prioritized over time by governmental decision makers?
- Which events triggered the opening of policy windows, and how did they relate to other agenda-setting factors?

With these questions and their coherence, I aimed to answer the more general question of why civic initiatives succeeded (or not) in attracting the attention of governmental decision makers.

Getting data and first interpretations, round I

On the basis of prior knowledge about the initiatives in the fringe, I identified a group of citizens from Gouda, called *Werkgroep Gouda* ↔ *Krimpenerwaard* (*Working Group Gouda* ↔ *Krimpenerwaard*), as the first civic initiative that aimed to push conservation of landscape values in the fringe onto the city of Gouda's agenda. *Werkgroep Gouda* ↔ *Krimpenerwaard* seemed to be an important node in the network that supported the inclusion of landscape values in the fringe on the policy agenda, including in earlier and later years, as supported in additional information that I collected (newspaper articles, correspondence, documents).

As a first step, I aimed to track the activities and issues raised by *Werkgroep Gouda* ↔ *Krimpenerwaard* over time by reading their proposals and pamphlets and analysing articles from local newspapers. I selected 130 articles from the regional daily newspapers *Rijn & Gouwe* (1994–2005) and *AD Groene Hart* (2005–2009) by using as a search term the name *Werkgroep Gouda* ↔ *Krimpenerwaard* and a related interest group called *Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard* (*Consultation Group Gouda-Krimpenerwaard Fringe*). These documents and articles were used to find issue, relation, and process framings as well as to identify the various formal and informal communication strategies that initiatives used to attract governments' attention.



Next, I qualitatively analysed relevant policy documents and spatial plans of the municipality of Gouda and provincial and municipal policy documents about the redevelopment of the Krimpenerwaard polder. For a short time, I strayed along an unsuccessful side road trying to do a quantitative analysis of political attention shifts within the relevant rural municipalities and the city of Gouda by retrieving policy programmes of municipal executives over the period 1985–2009. I did this because I wanted to see whether I could find evidence of issues appearing on local agendas that were prompted by the civic initiatives under study and generate an overview of competing issues in the relevant governments' policy processes. When I encountered difficulties in finding the required data for a time series, I decided to leave this path. Moreover, I wanted to understand not so much which shifts occurred for all policy issues, as why certain shifts occurred that were relevant to the issues promoted by civic initiatives in the fringe. I needed to concentrate on what happened (and how and why) in relation to getting fringe-area issues onto the agenda. Policy documents could not provide that information because these reflect only the formal decisions that have been made, and rarely the discussions that preceded those decisions. I had to find other information (artefacts) that carried the meaning constructions and shifts in those constructions.

For the framing analysis with regard to the coalition-building process and the construction of storylines about the fringe, I needed data concerning interactions between actors or at least addressing interaction between actors. To study real interaction processes, I could use data generated in the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis project (see Van der Stoep & Van den Brink, 2006) and the processes that developed from that project. I was involved in the coordination of the project and therefore had access to the reports of meetings organized and to the e-mail correspondence about the project. After the project ended, I stayed up-to-date with the further developments through stakeholders' e-mails. Furthermore, I found correspondence between initiatives and governments via e-mails and internet searches. Another source of real interaction was provided by the reports of meetings of local and regional government councils in which important decisions were taken about the fringe.

I analysed e-mail discussions between civic initiatives and other stakeholders concerning the inclusion of fringe-area issues on the policy agenda. E-mail discussions are a rich source of information about interactional framing in negotiations because negotiations are increasingly taking place through e-mail and other on-line formats (Friedman et al., 2007; Landry, 2000). In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, e-mails provided information about ways of reasoning and debates between governments and citizens, as well as discussions among different citizen groups. They gave unique insight into the informal and formal interactions that took place over time. Members of civic initiatives discussed and prepared interaction strategies for formal and informal negotiations not only face-to-face, but also through e-mails. E-mail was also used as a medium, next to other mediums, to evaluate and make sense of what had happened during

formal and informal meetings and encounters with targets of mobilization, and subsequently to discuss future action. Thus, e-mails carried real-time, real-life, and genuine interactions and meaning constructions that I could observe, similar to conversation analysis, but with the advantage that the 'objects' were not aware of the observer.

Using e-mails as data source is quite different from an interview setting in which respondents know about the research and about how the acquired information is processed. Whereas interviews are carefully planned beforehand and the setting of the conversation and the participants are controlled, a collection of e-mails is rather messy and uncontrollable. They contain all kinds of information about persons, and utterances of persons, but the persons involved do not know who reads their messages as they are circulating between computers. To deal with this ethically, I only once or twice used a quotation from the e-mail database and anonymized those carefully.

The database was constructed with e-mails written directly to me by stakeholders of the earlier mentioned Masterplan Stolwijkersluis project in the period 2004–2009. These e-mails contained many forwarded conversations between members of civic initiatives as well as sometimes governmental stakeholders. Framings in the on-going e-mail conversations were derived from the words and sentences (language) used. I carefully coded all e-mails to be able to create a manageable output with relevant text fragments.

I coded the e-mails and other information that I had collected up to that point. Codes were based on the questions and sensitizing concepts to enable a systematic analysis. I coded types of initiatives' formal and informal strategies to attract the attention of politicians and policymakers, issues (problems/solutions) raised, and issue frames, various events, relation frames, and results of agenda setting (e.g. decisions made or actions taken). I wrote memos connected to coded text fragments to record my on-going interpretations. I was thus able to construct a line of reasoning and to reflect on that reasoning as I went.

In an early phase, I started constructing a timetable with important events in the agenda-setting process. This table, which over time amounted to a large document of 20 pages, contains a chronological overview of events in governmental decision making and political events (like elections), as well as activities of citizen initiatives and important formal and informal meetings (as derived from utterances in talk and text). I categorized these along a number of issues that seemed most prominent in civic initiatives' activities in the fringe. These were: 1) protest against, and alternative proposals for, a bypass through the fringe, and related to that the governmental plans for a new industrial area in the fringe; 2) renovation of the historical lock, and related to that the spatial plan for the wider environment; 3) the plan to reintroduce sailing/boating in the Krimpenerwaard, and 4) related to that the sequence of plans for the rural renovation of the Krimpenerwaard polder. I tried to include all the information

collected from the various sources in this table to get a chronological account and to be able to see events and issues in relation to one another. New information (for example from interviews and e-mails) was continually added. The timetable enabled me to identify important junctures and shifts in coalitions and storylines and to get deeper understanding while I was digging for more information.

Getting data and interpretations, round II

My understanding about events that marked important turns in the process, and about what preceded those events, grew through reflection on the timetable. I observed new actors in coalitions, new issues that emerged, opportunities that arose in related decision-making processes initiated by local and regional governments. However, I still had a number of 'why' questions that could only be answered through interviews, for example questions about why initiatives had emerged in the first place, and how and why ambitions developed and were framed in a certain way. I also needed interviews to get more understanding about decisive moments (my interpretation and theirs), and why people perceived them as decisive or not. I decided to interview a small number of key stakeholders. I conducted nine semi-structured interviews in the period November 2009 to the summer of 2011 with representatives of both civic initiatives and the local governments with whom they interacted the most. I conducted five interviews with initiators of civic initiatives in the fringe, and four with representatives of local governments (from Krimpenerwaard and the city of Gouda). See Appendix 5 and 6 for the list of interviewees. The number of interviews could be limited because the focus of my analysis was especially on framing processes in real-life and real-time interactions for which I had already a large amount of data from e-mails, other correspondence (letters), and reports of meetings. The interviews with the key stakeholders served mainly to clarify and get more contextualized and detailed understanding of the relations between certain events, and the strategies and relations between actors that really mattered. They also provided more in-depth information about how issues were framed and 'storied' over time. Essentially, the interviews provided feedback on my interpretations of important patterns in the process and pointed to other patterns that were meaningful in understanding the agenda-setting process.

Again, I coded the transcriptions of the interviews with the same coding strategy as before. As in the former step, I coded in-vivo but related such codes to the basic concepts of events, strategies, issue frame, relation frame to retain a rough and always visible categorization. An important analytical step now was to find relations between different codes and memos, and support these with relevant quotations.

Finally, I decided to write the findings and conclusions down in a case narrative similar to the chapter I had written about the Heuvelland case. On the basis of the conclusions about shifting issue frames and coalitions as well as events that

were crucial to explain both the process and outcomes of the agenda-setting process, I identified tipping points, which formed the backbone of the narrative. From the timetable and the 'hermeneutic unit' that contained the raw data and text fragments, I collected the relevant information to narrate the selected tipping points chronologically. Thus, a thick description developed that gave a contextualized account of what had happened and also already gave the reader some idea of why things had happened as an overture to the theoretical plot. The result is Chapter 5 in this book. The arguments in the chapter are illustrated with interview quotes. I provide the original Dutch interview quotes in Appendix 8 to prevent a loss of meaning in the translating process. The numbering in the appendix corresponds with the numbers of the quotes in the chapter.

3.5 Computer-aided qualitative analysis

Computer-aided qualitative analysis is used increasingly to meet criteria of trustworthiness by improving transparency and systematics. It enables a systematic approach by relating data to concepts and by recording the steps that have been taken to develop interpretations. In this research, the Atlas.ti programme was used. In Atlas.ti, the researcher creates one hermeneutic unit that contains the raw data, the texts that carry interpretations of the interpretive communities under study, and the interpretations of the researcher herself. Data and analytical interpretations are linked to one another, thus enabling transparency. Coding and writing memos is an important procedure in the analysis, which involves the categorizing of raw data iteratively until hypotheses and concepts can be derived from those data. However, the use of software should not supersede the interpretation and analytical effort of the researcher.

In the Heuvelland case, I used the Atlas.ti software to code interviews and records of meetings and started with an in-vivo method of coding that generated broad categories: relations between actors, roles, cooperation, conflict, issues in regional development (perceived problems and possible futures), communication strategies, and agendas (both policy agendas and agendas/ambitions of individual actors). However, my work with Atlas.ti had generated too many codes, and I decided not to invest time in unravelling the chaos that had emerged in my hermeneutic unit. Therefore, I used a combination of mindmapping (with the MindManager programme), including other information sources (policy documents) as well, and re-coding transcripts and documents manually.

In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, I coded the transcriptions of the interviews, e-mails, and other information partly in-vivo but also on the basis of the refined set of sensitizing concepts to enable a systematic analysis. I wrote memos connected to coded text fragments to record my on-going interpretations. I was thus able to construct a line of reasoning and to reflect on that reasoning as I went. An important analytical step was to find relations between different codes

and memos, and support these with relevant quotations. I did this by creating networks in the hermeneutic unit. This networking is a matter of connecting sets of similar elements together in a visual diagram and discovering structure. Making networks is a way to build theories about the relevant relations between phenomena. I created networks to discover and support conclusions about, for example, the way different frames were aligned and how coalitions shifted through relation framing.



**New Markets
Heuvelland Coalition
Building and Agenda
Setting**

In this chapter¹, we address the efforts of civic initiatives that developed from the New Markets Heuvelland project to bring to the attention of policymakers alternative approaches to regional spatial development. It concerns an in-depth case study about civic initiatives that tried to achieve goals by building coalitions with other (governmental) actors and by relating to existing policies for regional spatial development. New Markets Heuvelland is an initiative instigated by the Limburg provincial government to bring together business entrepreneurs from different economic sectors to let them discuss strategies to improve the rural economy as well as the landscape qualities that performed as unique selling points of the Heuvelland region. The expectation was that the resulting initiatives, which focused on economic activities and private investment, would be an innovative alternative to landscape development traditionally managed by landscape architects and spatial planners working for governments.

In a nutshell, the conundrum provided by the case is why over time some initiatives managed to develop a story that successfully mobilized support and attention from governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, whereas other stories and initiatives faded. During the process, storytelling developed from 'improvement of the tourism structure by securing and strengthening the environmental qualities of Heuvelland' to a prioritization of 'Healthy Living in South Limburg' and later to an emphasis on 'regional branding' aimed at attracting and retaining young people for the region's economy. The latter story about the benefits of regional branding generated wide political support, and a collective investment of some 8 million euros by a multitude of businesses in the region as well as municipalities and the provincial government.

The research question for this case study:

What did the New Markets initiatives do to build support for their ambitions, what were the outcomes in terms of the ambitions of New Markets initiatives as well as the planning agendas of governments for the Heuvelland region, and how can these outcomes be understood?

The first section is a narrative about the processes through which the New Markets initiatives developed in the period between 2005 and 2009 and resulted in certain outcomes. We identify tipping points in agenda-setting processes in relation to changing coalitions and changes in issue framing and storytelling over time. We then analyse the processes that preceded these tipping points in terms of framing, coalition building, and changing circumstances and events. The interview quotes and text segments in this chapter are translated from Dutch interview data and text segments. The original quotes in Dutch are listed in Appendix 7 and are referred to by numbering the quotes.

1 Adapted from Van der Stoep & Aarts (2010). New Markets in Heuvelland: coalition building and agenda setting. Chapter 6 in: Horlings, I. (ed.) Vital Coalitions, Vital Regions: Partnerships for Sustainable Regional Development. Wageningen, Wageningen Academic Publishers.

4.1 Shifting agendas and stories

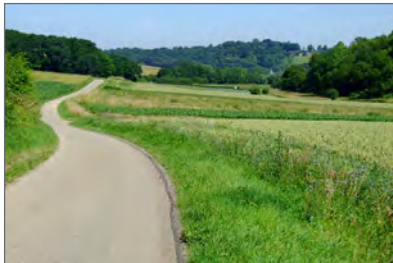
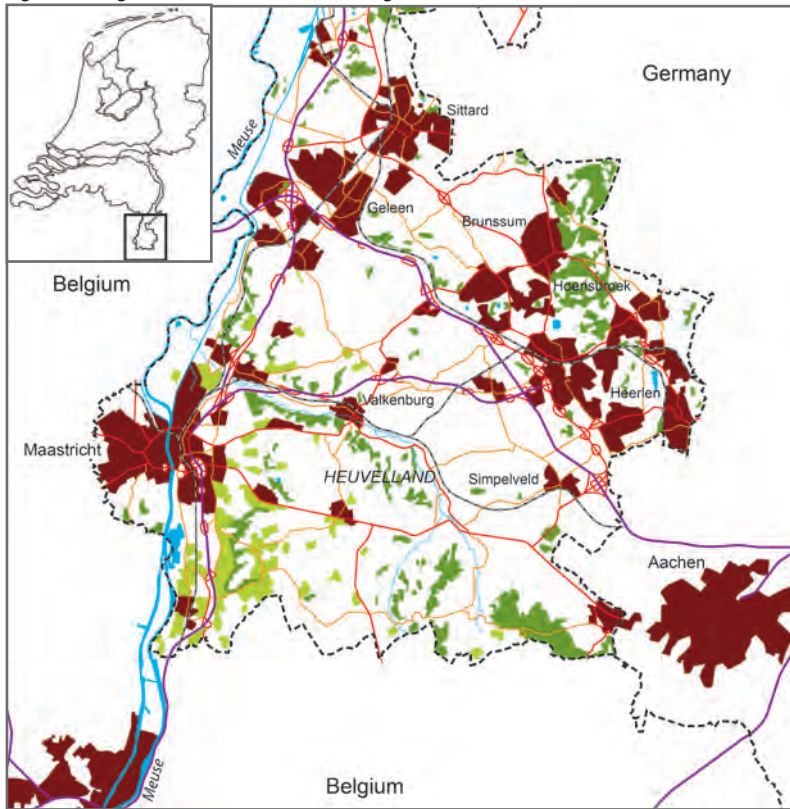
Start of the New Markets Heuvelland initiative

The New Markets Heuvelland project was launched in 2004 in response to economic problems in the rural–urban region of Heuvelland (ZKA et al, 2005). The region is located in the southern tip of the province of Limburg, borders with Belgium and Germany, and covers about 30,000 hectares. It has a population of 600,000 inhabitants and after the Randstad in the western part of the Netherlands is the second most urbanized area in the Netherlands. The three cities of Maastricht, Sittard/Geleen, and Heerlen form an urban crescent around the northern half of the rural landscape, which is commonly called Heuvelland (see Figure 4.1).

In 2005, Heuvelland was designated a National Landscape (NL) by the national government because of its special landscape values and characteristics: contrasts between extensive plateaus and steep slopes and narrow valleys, river terraces, the history of human occupation from prehistoric times, and many cultural historical elements such as steep earth walls engineered to prevent erosion, and orchards of standard fruit trees (Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied, 2005). One of the reasons for the NL designation was urban pressure causing increasing fragmentation of the landscape and worsening the conditions for agricultural activities. The NL status is supposed to provide an extra stimulus for the relevant authorities to protect the landscape qualities of Heuvelland. Another problem in the region is the shrinking population, leading to vacant properties, including valuable historic farmsteads and cloisters. The provincial government is tackling these problems through a long-term programme for rural development (Provincie Limburg, 2005; Provincie Limburg, 2006) and has adopted a Landscape Vision (Kerkstra et al., 2007) as a framework for subsidized investments in the Heuvelland National Landscape.

Another pillar in the provincial policy for regional development is economic development. The closure of the coal mines during the 1960s and 1970s and the resulting socioeconomic problems triggered policies for economic development and employment creation that are still being pursued. Stimulation programmes were designed to favour certain economic activities, first the chemical industry and services, and later medical technology, transport, and tourism (Programmacommissie Zuidoost-Nederland, 2007). In 2005, the province adopted its Acceleration Agenda (*Versnellingsagenda*: Taskforce Versnellingsagenda, 2005) to deal with its economic difficulties and develop an economic advantage over other Dutch and European regions. The ‘new economy’ is the latest buzz word in the region, reflecting a desire to create opportunities for the development of hi-tech industries, for example in the field of medical technology.

Figure 4.1. Region Heuvelland, South Limburg



O. Eckhardt, 27 mei 2012 (CC Flickr)



A. Aberson, 26 juni 2010 (CC Flickr)

Besides technology development, tourism is an important economic sector in the region. In the late 19th century, South Limburg was the first region in the Netherlands to attract tourists, and by the beginning of the 1990s tourism accounted for 18% of the region's economy, but this declined to 10% in 2004 (ZKA et al., 2005). The decline was said to be caused by structural problems in the tourism sector, such as increasing competition, the increasing preference of tourists for foreign and more exotic destinations, the small scale of the tourist offer in South Limburg, and the outdated quality of the offer compared with other regions (ZKA et al., 2005; Mommaas & Janssen, 2008). Moreover, experts and public officials argued that tourism was being threatened by a deterioration

in the rural landscape due to the increasing scale of agricultural production and urbanization, which makes the landscape less attractive to tourists. The provincial government argued that it was necessary to do something to improve the tourism economy that would also preserve the quality and identity of the region. This resulted in the New Markets Heuvelland initiative.

The New Markets project was launched in 2004 by Limburg Provincial Council to deal with the interlinked problems of the tourism economy, the changes in agriculture, and the resulting changes in the landscape. The province delegated the task of devising new incentives for tourism to the Limburg Investment and Development Agency (LIOF). Although LIOF was specialized in other economic sectors, like technology development, and did not have much know-how in tourism and the primary sector, the province had no other choice because the Limburg Tourism Bureau had just been closed. LIOF invited a number of experts to give advice on the matter. They came up with the New Markets Heuvelland programme to connect tourism to the landscape values of South Limburg and to businesses with the financial resources to sustain and further develop the sector. LIOF and the panel of experts decided to offer private entrepreneurs as much opportunity as possible to develop their own ideas on the economic regeneration of Heuvelland. They were afraid that the process might become bogged down in discussions between provincial government officers and executive councillors; this is why the provincial government did not participate actively in the planning process (Horlings & Haarmann, 2008; Mommaas & Janssen, 2008).

The experts selected themes that could serve as 'new markets', or new product-market combinations, which were then presented in roundtable meetings with private entrepreneurs and investors who had already proved to be innovative, active in the region, financially strong, and willing to invest. The goal of the meetings was to test how attractive the proposed new markets were to the entrepreneurs and to convince them to develop the ideas into business plans. The meetings resulted in the selection of five new markets (see Box 4.1), each with an entrepreneur who was willing to invest resources to further develop and implement the idea. This led to some projects that were successfully implemented, such as a hotel package for surgical patients and a regional food market in the city of Maastricht.

After the initial energy that flowed from the identification of the new markets, action by the entrepreneurs tailed off. The activities that were undertaken tended to be the entrepreneurs' individual projects that did not generate spin-offs, nor did they scale up to create new economic perspectives for the region involving collaboration between entrepreneurs from different sectors (Van Mansfeld & Van der Stoep, 2008; Horlings & Haarmann, 2008). At this point, the province thought it would be a good idea to find other ways of injecting new life into the New Markets project. The aim this time was to develop a sustainable business community and a system for financing the New Markets Heuvelland projects

(Horlings & Haarmann, 2008). With the assistance of the experts involved in the initial stage of New Markets, the province established a partnership with TransForum, a state-financed organization that provides subsidies and know-how for promising projects that support the transition towards sustainable development in rural regions². The alliance with TransForum brought in not only money, but also the participation of researchers from Alterra research institute at Wageningen UR, who would contribute knowledge about rural transition processes and organize multi-stakeholder cooperation.

Box 4.1 The five New Markets

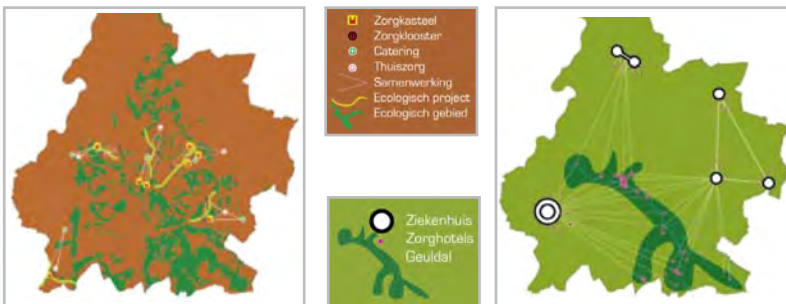
Healing Hills: linking the natural and cultural values of the rural area (hills, meadows, woods, convents) and healthcare, specifically by providing hotel accommodation for recovering surgical patients.

Rich Tastes: linking the production of food on farms in Heuvelland to distribution systems that service the surrounding cities. Regional agricultural products would be distributed in a regional chain of quality restaurants, gastronomy courses, etc.

Wellness in Luxury: investing in preventive care activities by healthcare insurance companies (e.g. health resort stays, therapeutic baths, training courses).

Glorious Life: matching the extra demand for senior housing and related support services resulting from the demographic trend towards an ageing population in the region to the large number of empty farms and convents. This warrants financial support for the preservation of the historical values of those buildings.

Linked Fields: relating multimedia services to geographical information about the location of tourist sites, events, production of regional food, healthcare services, etc.



source: ZKA et al, 2005

A new coalition partner and a new storyline

The coalition with TransForum and Alterra resulted in a shift in emphasis in the goals and methods of the New Markets project. The project had initially been launched to tackle the problem of declining tourism and the related threat to the quality of the landscape. When TransForum and Alterra were brought in, attention shifted to conserving and strengthening the unique selling points of the region – the nature and landscape qualities – as a condition for improving the regional economic structure. The question was how New Markets could generate financial support to maintain the landscape. The process was managed by a project team consisting of a representative from Alterra, an independent

² More information about TransForum: <http://www.transforum.nl/en/> (last accessed, 22 July 2013)

consultancy representing the entrepreneurs, and a representative from the provincial government's economic affairs department. In view of the goal of securing and strengthening landscape qualities, the Alterra project manager wanted to bring other stakeholders into the process: the provincial spatial planning and rural development departments, and representatives from nature and landscape organizations and farmers' organizations. This shift in problem definition, goals, and process are illustrated in Table 4.1.

The shifts in emphasis in the problem definition and the project goals and process were not explicitly discussed by the representatives from Alterra, TransForum, the entrepreneurs, and representatives from the provincial government's economic affairs department. However, during the project, the involvement of stakeholders from the field of landscape management, preferred by TransForum and Alterra, was continuously contested within the project team. The other project team members were afraid that a broadened agenda and inclusion of more stakeholders would make the process too complex and slow for the entrepreneurs, who might then lose interest because their investments of time and money would be unlikely to generate concrete outcomes in the short term.

I wonder whether I understood correctly what the line of thinking of New Markets was. I did write a proposal with the representative from the provincial economic affairs department.... However, the approach taken by this department was: begin with profit, which will bring the others in. The problem definition of our project was not recognized by the entrepreneurs. Most entrepreneurs only think about earning money. (Project team member from Alterra) ⁴⁻¹

Disagreement in the project team about the organization of the process hampered the organization of workshops with entrepreneurs and other stakeholders. During the first phase of New Markets Heuvelland, attempts to involve representatives from the provincial government's spatial planning and rural development departments failed. Civil servants and government officials from the economic affairs department, who were responsible for New Markets, and from the spatial planning and rural development departments showed little interest in cooperation. As the conflicts over the process architecture started to dominate discussion in the workshops, little energy was invested in defining the ambitions of the project for economic and spatial regional development. As a result, the agenda of the New Markets process was not clear to the participants or the other stakeholders. We come back to this topic in section 4.3.

Table 4.1: Problem definition and goals of the New Markets Heuvelland project in 2005 and in 2006

Initial problem definition and goals of New Markets in Heuvelland 2004 ³	Problem definition and goals after the introduction of TransForum 2006 ⁴
<p>Problem definition Tourism is declining because of the changing preferences of tourists, accessibility problems, decreasing capacity, and the small-scale and fragmented tourist offer. The sector is not able to anticipate the market. Tourism businesses are closing, with a change of use to other functions (housing, employment) or are growing in size, leading to a loss of environmental quality.</p>	<p>Problem definition Economic drivers and traditional managers of landscape qualities are disappearing; agriculture and tourism are declining. Urbanization is putting pressure on the conservation of landscape qualities in the open area between the cities. These related and complex problems threaten Heuvelland's unique selling points, which are the starting point for improving the economic structure of the region.</p>
<p>Goals: Improving the structure of Heuvelland's tourism economy in combination with conserving or strengthening environmental quality and cultural identity.</p>	<p>Goals: Safeguarding and strengthening of Heuvelland's environmental qualities by achieving a new investment dynamic through a vital coalition of economic drivers.</p>
<p>Ideas about the intended 'vital' coalition Developing horizontal alliances between tourism and sectors with dynamic economic activity, new initiatives and investment capital, and which are able to provide an economic basis for both the tourism sector and environmental quality.</p>	<p>Ideas about the intended 'vital' coalition Facilitation and realization of new higher-level coalitions within the region, supported by all stakeholders, who will be jointly responsible for the conservation, maintenance and development of the unique selling points of the landscape.</p>

Healthy Living in South Limburg: winning story

By the end of this phase of the New Markets process (November 2006), the process had produced few outcomes, and this frustrated all the stakeholders. The provincial government's executive councillor for economic affairs decided to intervene, as he would soon have to account for the investments made by the province in the process. The urgency to do something was heightened because the term of office of the Provincial Executive was nearing its end. The executive councillor for economic affairs pinned his hopes on one of the participating entrepreneurs, the director of the healthcare concern, Orbis. In the last workshop of the New Markets process, at the request of the economic affairs representative on the project team, the Orbis director presented his concept for Healthy Living in South Limburg. This had not been discussed with the rest of the project team. Not only was the Orbis director given the opportunity to present his idea for a business plan, he was also presented as the new project leader for the next phase of the New Markets process.

³ ZKA et al., 2005

⁴ Van Mansfeld & Van der Stoep, 2008

In his presentation, the Orbis director based his proposal for Healthy Living in South Limburg on the problem of the declining market for healthcare in the region. An increasing number of people were turning to facilities in Belgium and Germany, with consequent adverse effects on the healthcare services in South Limburg. He believed that the market for facilities in South Limburg could be improved by focusing on the growing number of older and chronically sick people in the country. His idea was to combine healthcare services with tourist and housing accommodation. The combination with tourism drew on the existing Healing Hills theme in the New Markets Heuvelland project (rehabilitation and convalescence in hotel accommodation in Heuvelland). Moreover, the Orbis director saw opportunities to combine healthcare with new housing facilities for older people (the new market, Glorious Life), linking the problem of the healthcare market to the economic problem of the shrinking population in Heuvelland. In his view, the migration of young people to the west of the Netherlands could not be prevented. Instead, efforts should be focused on the new market of older people, not only people from Heuvelland, but also from other regions. This could be done by combining new housing facilities with customized health services. Moreover, new housing could be combined with the conservation of cultural heritage (cloisters, farmsteads), and thereby contribute to the conservation of landscape qualities.

The problem definition and goals of the Healthy Living in South Limburg initiative were more narrowly defined than the goals drawn up by Alterra for the New Markets project. The Healthy Living in South Limburg proposal did involve new product–market combinations, but they were all health related and scarcely addressed how these new markets could contribute to the management of landscape qualities in Heuvelland. Nevertheless, this initiative was prioritized by the Provincial Executive, without consulting the project team or the wider circle of stakeholders.

The idea of focusing on the opportunities presented by the ageing population, investing in the older consumer market, reflected the ambitions of the provincial government to establish an economy based on older consumers – the ‘silver economy’. The Healthy Living in South Limburg initiative fitted in well with the goals of the provincial Acceleration Agenda and the Provincial Executive’s policy programme for 2003–2007 (Provincie Limburg, 2003). The Acceleration Agenda, which consists of core themes for future economic development, including Health, Care, & Cure, was considered the dominant steering mechanism for the economic development of the region.

In 2012, South Limburg will have developed much new added value in the so-called Health, Care, & Cure market. By providing innovative products and services, Limburg will help the ageing population of North West Europe to become and stay healthy....The active policy for the older consumer market will deliver benefits, and the business community in Limburg will lead the development of new products and services for this target group. Limburg has more than enough lifetime homes with comfort, wellness, and care arrangements in or close to the

home. Tourism will also play its part. In 2012, older tourists will prefer Limburg for accommodation and consumption because the tourism products and services are also accessible to the less active among them. (Taskforce Versnellingsagenda, 2005, pp.11–15) ⁴⁻²

Even before the Acceleration Agenda of 2005, the Provincial Executive had been focusing on the opportunities presented by the ageing population for the regional economy, as evidenced by the Provincial Executive's policy programme for 2003–2007.

Limburgers are encouraged to be enterprising and self-confident in seizing the opportunities for a technological top region (industry and agribusiness), for a stimulus to the quality of tourism offer and for a 'silver economy', aimed both at retaining elderly people for the labour market and at product innovation for older consumers (ICT, healthcare, leisure, service). (Taskforce Versnellingsagenda, 2005, p. 21) ⁴⁻³

By the end of the Provincial Executive's term of office, the executive councillor for economic affairs had to deliver results for both the New Markets project and the economic policy presented in the Provincial Executive's policy programme and the Acceleration Agenda. Prioritizing the Healthy Living in South Limburg initiative was most profitable for him at that juncture.

A new policy story: the 'dynamic and vibrant' region

Only a couple of months after the prioritization of the Healthy Living in South Limburg initiative, support from the provincial government came to an end. The executive councillor for economic affairs retired after the provincial elections of spring 2007. The new Provincial Executive shifted the focus of economic development policy, considering the ageing population not as an opportunity, but as a threat to the development of the desired knowledge economy (Provincie Limburg, 2007).

The knowledge economy had already been a key issue for the previous Provincial Executive. The ambition was to play a central role in a technological top region, including neighbouring regions in the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium. As part of this larger region, South Limburg would specialize in life science technologies and creative industries. The new Provincial Executive continued this focus on the knowledge economy and the technological top region. However, demographic trends had become an increasing concern in the previous two years, as the flow of talented young people into the labour market had been decreasing. Not only was the population ageing and shrinking more in South Limburg than anywhere else in the Netherlands, but young people were migrating to other parts of the Netherlands to find jobs and good living environments. New businesses and industries in the field of healthcare technologies and creative industries could never develop if there were no talented employees to hire. The Provincial Executive therefore decided to

prioritize attracting young people over the provision of services and products for older people. As the dominant economic policy, the knowledge economy pushed the silver economy from the agenda.

As in the previous period, the new Provincial Executive's policy programme for 2007–2011 (Provincie Limburg, 2007) focused heavily on meeting the challenge presented by the alarming demographic trends: a shrinking and ageing population, and emigration of young people. However, instead of focusing on the ageing population and the older consumer market as a driver of economic development, attention now turned to keeping young people in the region and making them aware of its attractions for employment, housing, and living in South Limburg.

Limburg should become a demographically experimental region, because it will be many years before the rest of the Netherlands will be confronted with the same demographic trends....We want to appeal to people's talents and particularly to offer a challenging environment to young people. (Provincie Limburg, 2007, pp.5–6) ⁴⁻⁴

The Acceleration Agenda was renewed in 2008 (Raad van Advies Versnellingsagenda, 2008). Emphasis was placed on retaining young people in the region as a condition for the development of an innovative and enterprising knowledge economy:

The availability of sufficient knowledge workers is indispensable for realizing the innovation ambitions in the Acceleration Agenda. However, the demographic trend is working against us... If we let that take its course, we face a growing quantitative and qualitative shortage of knowledge workers. The influx of young talent from other regions, countries, and continents...will not resolve this shortage if we cannot retain this talent in the region. Of course we are pleased to observe that our graduates are global citizens and so well qualified that they can get a job anywhere. But it would be even more pleasing if these global citizens could find their dream job here! Unfortunately, the region is failing on this point. Active programmes are necessary to upgrade current employees...to attract knowledge workers from elsewhere...and keep talent in the region. (Raad van Advies Versnellingsagenda, 2008, p. 43) ⁴⁻⁵

The three clusters, High Tech Materials, Health, Care, & Cure, and Agrifood and Nutrition, were continued, but the emphasis now was on specific projects and implementation by a limited number of institutions and companies. For the Health, Care, & Cure cluster, this meant that the previously broad scope, which included housing and leisure services for elderly people, was narrowed down to healthcare technology and related businesses.

The ageing of the population in Limburg is going faster than in other parts of the country. Ageing results in more demand for healthcare, especially chronic care. Moreover, this care increasingly has to meet the wishes of individuals...

Innovative top healthcare will be combined with developments in areas like biomedical materials, molecular medical science, and molecular equipment. (Raad van Advies Versnellingsagenda, 2008, pp. 16–18) ⁴⁻⁶

As the Healthy Living in South Limburg initiative had previously been associated with the silver economy, it was framed by government representatives as an initiative that would create facilities only for the elderly and the sick and not for young healthy people who needed a 'dynamic environment'. The story of Healthy Living was therefore not considered appropriate in the light of the new policy ambitions, a case that was vividly supported by the image of a 'rollator landscape':

A care landscape alone can have negative effects. The image of stumbling over wheelchairs and rollators is not positive. We have to think outside the theme of healthcare, and we should just achieve good living environments. (A former local government official) ⁴⁻⁷

During the development of ideas about the regional brand, a division has arisen between hi-tech, or the knowledge economy, and a care landscape. This is utterly inexplicable, because all studies on the knowledge economy affirm the importance of quality of life. A care landscape is about preventive healthcare oriented at the well-being of young and elderly people. (Chairman of New Markets Heuvelland project phase I) ⁴⁻⁸

The negative impact that a 'care landscape' could have on the new goal of creating a dynamic top technological region was used to justify the removal of the Healthy Living in South Limburg initiative from the economic policy agenda.

Although the province no longer supported the Healthy Living in South Limburg initiative, TransForum still saw potential in further developing it. The withdrawal of the provincial government did not bother TransForum because they felt that in the previous phase the cooperation with the province had caused delay and had not led to any useful discussions. Orbis and Alterra drew up a revised prospectus for the Healthy Living in South Limburg initiative that proposed building Integrated Care Communities (Kranendonk and van Mansfeld, 2009). New partners were introduced: an investment bank with an interest in rural estates, a property developer, and an agricultural estate agency. The provincial government was excluded from this new coalition.

The 'grand design': new opportunities

In the course of 2006, the local authorities, or municipalities, in the Heuvelland region decided to develop their own vision for regional development in response to the provincial agendas for the National Landscape and economic development. They organized themselves into a body called Core Area South Limburg. The New Markets initiative, as a new approach to improving tourism,

was also discussed. Core Area South Limburg was coordinated by an ex-mayor, who was assigned by the provincial government to act as an independent liaison officer between the province and the rural municipalities. The municipalities agreed to develop a 'grand design' for the region in which new economic activities, as proposed in New Markets, would be a way to implement the proposals in the provincial Landscape Vision for conserving and developing landscape qualities. One of the experts who developed the New Markets Heuvelland project was invited to the meetings. The grand design initiative opened up a new window of opportunity to garner support for New Markets as a new approach to area development. With the route via the provincial government now apparently a dead end, a new route via the municipalities seemed to open up.

However, the initiative for a grand design soon faltered when the municipalities started to fight about leadership, competencies, and jurisdictions. Moreover, the province considered the initiative redundant because similar activities were being pursued by three area committees, which had been implementing provincial rural development policies for years. The municipalities also participated in these area committees, so in the eyes of the province it was not useful to start yet another form of municipal cooperation around the issue of landscape development. The municipalities' initiative was taken over by the province, and the municipalities cancelled their financial investments in Core Area South Limburg. Instead, they used those resources to support the Regional Branding initiative, which was another outcome of the New Markets process.

Beyond the scope of TransForum: Regional Branding

The initiative by entrepreneurs to develop a regional brand⁵ emerged more or less spontaneously during the course of 2006 and developed mostly outside the control of the New Markets organization. The ideas for a regional brand were developed by entrepreneurs from the New Markets process, who formed a group called *Zwarte Ruiter Overleg* (Black Rider Consultation Group)⁶. Interestingly, of the initiatives discussed so far, this one has been the most successful in terms of support from both public and private actors.

The initiative developed from a discussion about collective marketing needs among entrepreneurs who participated in the workshops and roundtable meetings of New Markets Heuvelland. The shift in emphasis in the New Markets process to preserving landscape qualities and building network structures

5 Branding: All those promotional activities of an area to increase the attractiveness of the region as a place for working, living and spending free time (Hospers, 2004). Regional branding is the deliberate planning of the image of a region. Whereas marketing focuses on the demands and needs of consumers, branding is more of a self-selected vision, mission, and identity (cf Riezebos, 2006).

6 The name *Zwarte Ruiter Overleg* was chosen because the first meeting was held in the pub *De Zwarte Ruiter* (The Black Rider) owned by one of the participants.

seemed to draw attention away from the marketing problems that the entrepreneurs had identified. The marketing issue was the only issue to which all entrepreneurs could relate, and it was suggested that in addition to the five existing new markets (box 4.1) a sixth new market be built around this topic and this coalition of entrepreneurs.

According to Zwarte Ruiters Overleg, the regional economy was not dynamic enough to be competitive in the European context. Parallel to the provincial government's growing awareness about demographic trends, Zwarte Ruiters Overleg believed that the shrinking population and the emigration of young people to other parts of the Netherlands further diminished the opportunities for new and existing businesses to develop. Zwarte Ruiters Overleg argued that policies should be aimed at keeping young people in the region by focusing on the attractive living and working environment of South Limburg. To do that, the image of the region would have to be upgraded. The excellent work-life balance of the region had to be promoted (Zwarte Ruiters Overleg, 2006).

During 2006, these ideas slowly spread to government officials, who were also increasingly questioning the image of the region. This happened first in a more local context. The city of Maastricht was developing a city marketing strategy to promote the city to tourists, residents, and companies. In the summer of 2006, Zwarte Ruiters Overleg and experts in the New Markets project came up with the idea of linking Maastricht's city marketing (Gehrels et al, 2005) to the regional branding idea developed in the New Markets process. Maastricht could profit from the promotion of the wider environment of the city, and Zwarte Ruiters Overleg was interested in using Maastricht in the brand because in their view Maastricht was the only internationally well known feature in the region. Zwarte Ruiters Overleg coalition was therefore broadened to include representatives from the municipality of Maastricht, but, despite initial enthusiasm, the branding and city marketing initiatives stagnated. This triggered the provincial government to intervene and to take over the initiative.

This development should be related to the background of political discussions within the provincial administration. As discussed earlier, in that period the province shifted its attention to attracting young people to support the knowledge economy. Moreover, the National Spatial Strategy (Ministerie van VROM, 2004) forced the province to emphasize the importance of the network of cities in the region instead of individual marketing and promotion activities by each city. Therefore, the branding of the region, specifically relating to the South Limburg Urban Network (*Stedelijk Netwerk Zuid-Limburg*), became a major provincial concern in 2007, as reflected in the Provincial Executive's policy programme of 2007 (Provincie Limburg, 2007), the Acceleration Agenda of 2008 (Raad van Advies Versnellingsagenda, 2008) and the Development Agenda for the South-Limburg Urban Network (*Stedelijke Netwerk Zuid-Limburg*, 2008):



We want to create an all-round attractive climate for companies, employees, and tourists; this is why we will strengthen our regional branding and use our characteristic Limburgian cultural institutions and media, transboundary cultural economy, and link major events to economic priorities. (Provincie Limburg, 2007, p. 20)⁴⁻⁹

Clear and consistent promotion of this region is of great importance in attracting international knowledge workers. (Raad van Advies Versnellingsagenda, 2008, p. 44)⁴⁻¹⁰

In 2007, the province commissioned LIOF to develop the regional branding idea into a business plan. LIOF hired experts, and by the end of 2007 a business plan (Berenschot, 2007) was presented which included a proposal for a public-private organization that would steer the regional branding and marketing activities of the participating stakeholders. In this business plan, the regional brand was formulated as follows:

South Limburg is a European region in which people from all over the world come together to make high-quality products. It is a region with a clever balance between working and living. Innovation and high quality go together with *joie de vivre*. Maastricht is the pearl of the region and resonates with the culture and tradition of the region. (Berenschot, 2007, p. 3)⁴⁻¹¹

The major goals of the regional brand with regard to economic development are: development of the knowledge economy (new industries in the field of the life sciences, medical technology, and energy systems), gastronomy, and creating a good investment climate by focusing on the good work-life balance provided by the beautiful landscape of Heuvelland. The province assigned three 'pathfinders' to investigate whether the proposed public and private parties were really interested in participation in a foundation for regional branding and whether they were willing to translate this interest into financial investment. These three pathfinders were influential executives in the public and private sectors. In 2008, the efforts resulted in the establishment of the Regional Branding Foundation, in which all the municipalities in South Limburg and large enterprises participated and collectively invested some 8 million euros in the period 2008-2012 (Govers, 2012).

The prioritization of regional branding on the policy agenda marks the shift in the provincial government's attention from both the knowledge and silver economies to exclusively the knowledge economy and the related issue of retaining young people in the region. The promoters of the idea of regional branding were adamant that the regional brand should not be associated with elderly people.

We are not focusing on the silver economy because it is not a new concept in the country. What is the added value compared with the Achterhoek [a region in the east of the Netherlands]? With this topic we cannot distinguish ourselves from other regions...Providing for older people is a core task of the government, but we should not expect the market to take the lead. The market is concerned

with preventing the migration of young people to other regions. Young people are welcome to study abroad, but after that we want them to return to South Limburg. We talk about providing a work–life balance. (A member of Zwarte Ruiter Overleg) ⁴⁻¹²

This is also stated in the business plan:

We are not targeting older people. They are already well provided for, and prefer not to live in a region with an ageing population. The brand should therefore not put too much emphasis on wellness and care, but focus primarily on enjoyment for the active population and for visitors. (Berenschot, 2007, p. 3) ⁴⁻¹³

At the time of writing, the foundation has presented an Implementation Plan for the period 2009–2012 (Stichting Regiobranding Zuid-Limburg, 2009), in which Regional Branding is described as an image campaign to improve the reputation of the region and prevent further population decline:

The main goal of Regional Branding is to broaden the reputation of South Limburg from a region noted for gastronomy and the good life to the ideal work–life balance. It will promote South Limburg as an ideal place not only for a holiday, but also for permanent residence [by companies and employees]. (Stichting Regiobranding Zuid-Limburg, 2009, p. 9) ⁴⁻¹⁴

Concluding remarks

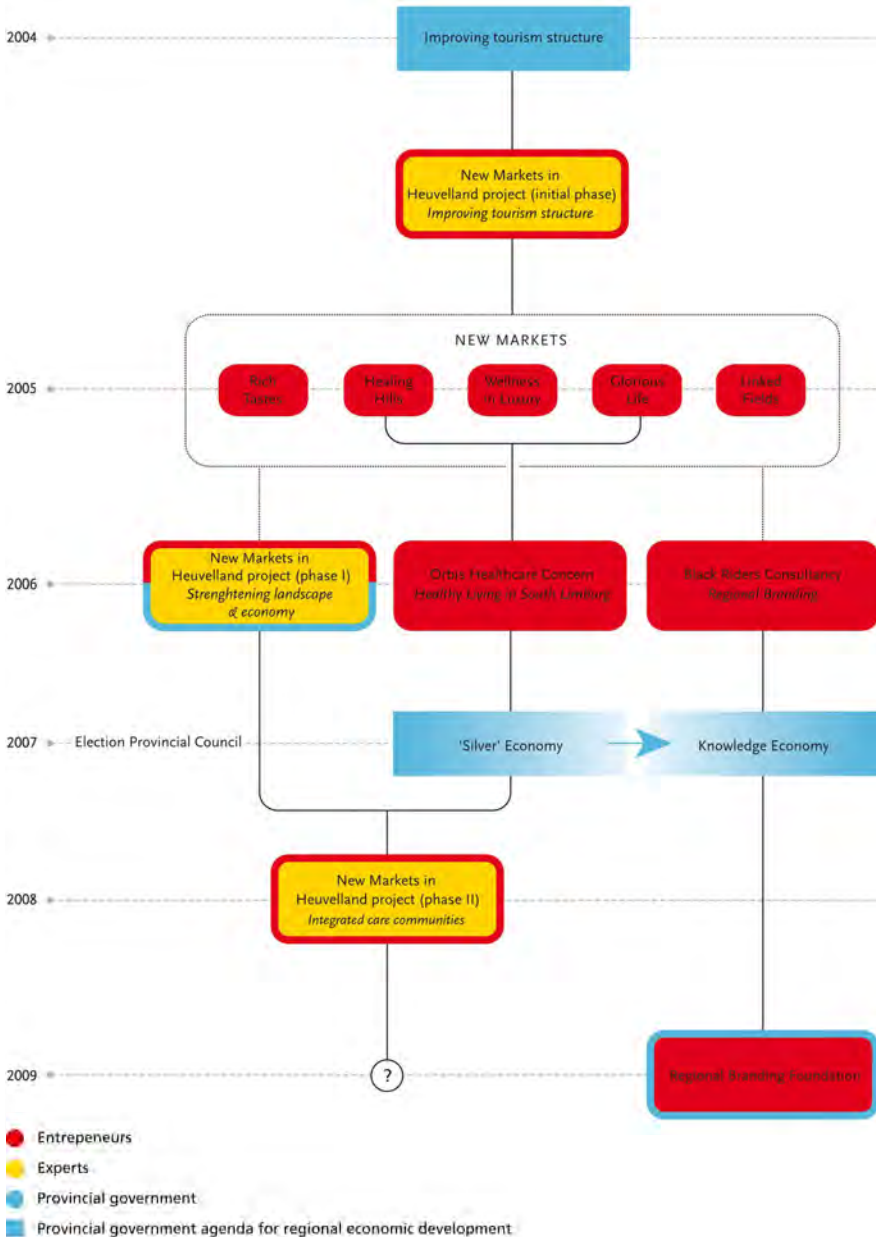
Figure 4.2 illustrates how the New Markets initiatives and coalitions developed and how they were connected to the regional policy agendas. The diagram shows that coalitions within the New Markets process frequently changed and fragmented into several coalitions. Moreover, the agenda of the New Markets process became increasingly narrow, starting from the ambition of contributing to sustainable landscape development and resulting in the establishment of a regional image campaign to attract new businesses and improve employment.

The case narrative tells of two major shifts with regard to storytelling and agenda setting in the context of the New Markets process. First, while the more general and complicated story of the New Markets process was fading, the Healthy Living story was prioritized. The attempts by the New Markets project team to give a fresh impetus to the five new product–market combinations and to combine this effectively with sustainable landscape management proved fruitless. Almost no lines of communication were established with the provincial government’s spatial planning and rural developments departments, and there was no effect on the policy agendas of those departments.⁷ In contrast to the

7 This perspective can be nuanced somewhat: Although the initial ambitions of the New Markets project were not achieved, it did generate a buzz in the region with regard to new product–market combinations: healthcare and tourism (initiative for care hotels for recovery after surgery, for example at Château St. Gerlach), agriculture and tourism (regional products and agri-tourism), housing and preservation of cultural heritage (cloisters and farmsteads), and so on. Similar initiatives and pilots emerged elsewhere in the province.

New Markets philosophy, the Healthy Living initiative did become a story that mobilized support and was pushed successfully onto the economic policy agenda. This shift was marked by the ending of the governing period of the current Provincial Executive and decision making about the organization of a second phase of the New Markets process.

Figure 4.2: Development of the New Markets Heuvelland project, stakeholders, and relation with shifting issues on the provincial government agenda for regional economic development.



The second shift concerned a shift from a policy story about the silver economy to a story about creating an attractive region for young workers. As a consequence, the Healthy Living initiative dropped from the agenda and was replaced by the Regional Branding initiative. The story of Healthy Living was reframed by supporters of Regional Branding as a story that mainly concerned the silver economy, a region for the sick and elderly. Instead, Regional Branding told the story about a bright economic future if a 'dynamic and vibrant' region could be provided for young workers. This shift was marked by the provincial elections and increasing political concern for the problem of depopulation, especially among young people.

Both Healthy Living and Regional Branding fitted well into the Provincial Executive's existing policy programme and the Acceleration Agenda. Neither initiative questioned or challenged existing economic policies, but contributed to current debates and hot issues within provincial government. The stories both of the silver economy and of the knowledge economy fitted into and reproduced the ambition of the province to create an economically competitive region and leave behind the economic traumas of the past. The initiators of the Regional Branding initiative in particular seemed to easily adapt and connect to social trends that would dominate the new policy programme of the Provincial Executive, that is, the shrinking population and migration of young people to other regions. The Regional Branding initiative was not revolutionary, but reinforced the ideas that had already been developed.

The case narrative points to the importance of storytelling and (re)framing processes to explain shifts in agenda setting and why some initiatives were successful whereas others slowly faded. In the next sections, we further analyse the shifts in the agenda-setting processes described in the case narrative. First, we discuss the problems for effective storytelling in the New Markets process. Second, we analyse the barriers that had to be overcome to get attention and response from targeted supporters, in this case the provincial government. Next, we discuss which efforts were taken to align with the provincial government as well as factors that can explain why initiatives were successful or not.

4.2 No clear ambitions, no attractive story

The case narrative told of the failure to construct a strong story about the contribution of the New Markets approach to sustainable area-oriented development. TransForum and Alterra were included in the process to ensure that the New Markets projects would somehow contribute to the management of landscape values as well as the rural economy. However, throughout the process, the subtle adjustment of the initial New Markets story to include the protection of landscape values and so-called KOMBI-stakeholders (knowledge,



governments, interest groups – in this case nature and landscape organizations – and businesses)⁸ was never explicitly discussed, or even put on the agenda of the New Markets meetings.

We found that the difficulty of defining clear and shared ambitions was rooted in the focus on the organizational aspects of the process instead of on the substantive goals of the process. We concentrate on two arguments: (1) efforts were aimed mainly at keeping the entrepreneurs in the coalition, and (2) experts on the project team argued about who had the power to determine the process architecture.

Don't lose the commitment of entrepreneurs!

Right at the beginning of the process, the members of the project team were afraid of losing the commitment of the entrepreneurs. They decided that their first priority was to invest energy in getting the entrepreneurs committed to the process. The commitment of the entrepreneurs was considered crucial because the innovative character of the project was attributed mainly to the role of entrepreneurs as initiators. The project was supposed to show that linking several private initiatives would be more productive to sustainable area development than a slow multi-stakeholder decision-making process coordinated by the provincial government. The entrepreneurs' enthusiasm and capacity to act was thought to provide a better solution to sustainable area development. The project managers could therefore not afford to lose the entrepreneurs' involvement in the coalition.

Consequently, the strategy for the meetings was to find topics that would interest the entrepreneurs: identifying obstacles to the progress of the individual projects, constructing a 'corporate identity' for the region as a business-oriented approach to the qualities of the region, and building a business community and a public-private network organization to offer a framework in which cooperation between entrepreneurs and other stakeholders could be facilitated. To achieve this last objective, several organization models were presented and discussed during and between the meetings, but the common goals of such a network organization and business community were not discussed. The implicit aim of the project manager from Alterra was to construct a network organization around the issue of landscape management, but this was never put on the agenda. Instead, the emphasis was on the interests of the entrepreneurs, as emphasized in the minutes of one of the meetings (August 21, 2006) and concerns the mission statement for the New Market project.

8 The KOMBI concept (short for *Kennisinstellingen, Overheid, Maatschappelijke organisaties, Burgers, Bedrijven, Boeren en Innovatie*) refers to collaboration between knowledge institutions, governments, interest groups, businesses and farmers aimed at achieving innovation (e.g. Van Mansfeld et al., 2003).

Entrepreneurs come first! The economic interest has priority and other interests should tie in with this. ⁴⁻¹⁵

Despite the efforts of the project team, the entrepreneurs did not become more engaged in the process. One of the meetings was even cancelled because the majority of the entrepreneurs pulled out. The project managers noted that the entrepreneurs were frustrated about all the talking without action.

I cannot get a clear picture of the benefits to the entrepreneurs of the higher goal of preserving landscape qualities. The project team member from Alterra has developed models, but these confuse the entrepreneurs. (The entrepreneurs' representative on the project team) ⁴⁻¹⁶

Paradoxically, the effect of this desire to keep the entrepreneurs committed and the resulting discussions on how to build a coalition was the withdrawal of the entrepreneurs from the coalition-building process. Interestingly, the entrepreneurs did attempt to cooperate with one another and with the provincial government in informal settings outside the official New Markets process. Some of these activities did lead to successful policy agenda setting, such as the Regional Branding initiative.

Two captains on the ship

The second reason for prioritizing organizational aspects on the New Markets agenda can be found in the conflicts within the project team about the process architecture. The New Markets project management included experts who represented two different schools of thought about the organization of innovation. The initiator of the New Markets process, who operated as an independent chairman in phase I, believed in selective mobilization of actors, following the principle that only actors that are really committed to the goal of the process and that can invest resources should be involved. New Markets had started out with that idea of involving only wealthy entrepreneurs and keeping the provincial government at a distance. However, the Alterra project members believed in building a network organization with broad representation from society, including researchers, experts, government officials and officers, interest groups, entrepreneurs, and citizens, arguing that this would generate broad support for the proposed ideas and facilitate creative solutions that combined all the different kinds of knowledge of the participants. Their goal was sustainable landscape management, but this was never explicitly discussed with the provincial government representative and the initiator of the New Markets process who chaired the meetings of phase I. The main concern of these latter persons was to develop the new product–market combinations and create spin-offs; so for them it was logical to concentrate attention on the entrepreneurs.



The project team members and the phase I chairman invested considerable time and energy discussing and arguing these different approaches to deciding who should participate and who should not. The provincial representative and the chairman feared that Alterra's approach would result in an agenda that would be too broad in scope and too complicated for the entrepreneurs, who wanted fast decisions and action. Initially, Alterra was given the task of organizing the meetings, but the very first meeting was cancelled by the provincial government representative on the project team because he doubted the effectiveness of the approach.

The process management is tricky and not clear at the moment. We want to steer, but we also want to allow a lot of room for manoeuvre. As long as the organizational aspects have not been decided, we have to take the lead role. We hired TransForum, but had to step in because their methods and instruments do not work here. We thought TransForum would play a supporting role to solving knowledge questions, but they took a leading role. We are not on the same wavelength. The experts focus too much on the instrumental aspects and take too little account of the culture of governing. We were not happy with that, and that is why we took back control. (Provincial government representative) ⁴⁻¹⁷

From this it is clear that the project team members disagreed not only about the process architecture, but also about who had the right to make decisions. In the midst of this power struggle, there was no discussion about commonly shared concerns or goals.

The lack of a clear ambition in the New Markets process was an obstacle for the construction of an appealing and inviting story. In contrast, the Healthy Living and Regional Branding initiatives that developed outside the control of the project managers were characterized by a very clear ambition and story about the future of the region.

4.3 Barriers to aligning with the province

Agenda-setting and coalition-building efforts were aimed mainly at gaining the political and financial support of the provincial government. In the following section, we first discuss why the stakeholders attached so much importance to the participation of the provincial government in the New Markets process. Next, we analyse the difficulties of establishing effective contact with relevant actors in the provincial government and the barriers to generating an effective response from the province.

The constructed power of the province

By focusing on the entrepreneurs' leading role, the organizers of the New Markets process tried hard not to make the province the key actor. However, when we look at their expectations about the provincial government's commitment

and their attempts to involve provincial officers and executive councillors, in fact the provincial government was assigned a central role. Apparently, it was not considered possible or desirable to side-line the provincial government. The interviews suggest that, in general, stakeholders perceived the provincial government as a decisive player in the region.

First, respondents claimed that people in the region relied on the power of individual governors to influence decision-making and negotiation processes. The executive councillors from the province's economic affairs, rural development, and spatial planning departments were considered to be such influential persons. They were frequently called 'kings' of the regions and also viewed themselves as people who could make a difference, as this statement by a former member of the Provincial Executive shows:

In Limburg, regional officials are influential. That cannot be said everywhere else. We do not have a big city in Limburg, which means the province has more influence. Every day there is something about the province in the newspaper or on the television. People know who their councillors are. They elect people who appeal to them. Although this is a national trend, it is more evident in Limburg than in other provinces. People want personal contact, empathy, an experience. People make the difference.⁴⁻¹⁸

This is confirmed by a statement of another participant in the New Markets process:

We Limburgians are sensitive to authority and status; what those people say, goes. (Consultant city marketing Maastricht)⁴⁻¹⁹

The power and authority of individual governors, especially governors who were born and raised in the region, is viewed by respondents as a cultural characteristic of the region.

Second, the authority attributed to the provincial government and individual governors was said to flow from a passive attitude of civil society stakeholders and groups. Respondents with a government background referred to a 'collective lack of willingness to act' among people in the region. This unresponsive attitude was said to originate from a 'collective lack of self esteem' and 'guts and spirit' needed to take the initiative. According to respondents, this can be explained by historical reasons, such as the relatively isolated position of the region in relation to the rest of the Netherlands and the traumatic period of unemployment after the closure of the coal mines. This is illustrated by the following statement by a former executive councillor of the provincial government.

Certain qualities are lacking in the region: self-awareness, pushing back frontiers, identifying opportunities, not complaining, taking matters into one's own hands. The region looks to The Hague too much and does not want to get things done itself. We are the second youngest province in the Netherlands. We never

really belonged to the Netherlands. We were incorporated into the Netherlands in 1839, but we were also a member of the German Confederation for a long time. Actually, during our history we have belonged to everybody at one time or another and have been used as a pawn in international deals. We have therefore never developed a sense of belonging and have never had the guts and spirit to make our own choices for the future of the region. (A former member of the Provincial Executive) ⁴⁻²⁰

According to respondents, the passive attitude of other actors and groups in the region called for an active role on the part of the provincial government.

Authoritarian and unresponsive attitude

In various other ways as well, the Heuvelland case demonstrates that the provincial government had strong views about its role in regional governance. For example, the interviews showed that the provincial government had strong ideas about what constituted 'good' network cooperation, what the conditions should be for useful cooperation with local stakeholders, and which types of networks should be given more power. Moreover, the provincial government considered itself to be the only one with a comprehensive overview of what was happening in the region, as illustrated by the following quotation.

Sometimes, as in the core area of Heuvelland, a separate steering group emerges [the initiative by the municipal councils to form the Core Area South Limburg network and develop a 'grand design']. This group turned out to be doing the same things as the area committees, which is why the 'grand design' was incorporated into those area committees, resulting in only one structure....That is how we try to organize useful cooperation. (A provincial government officer)

With regard to the New Markets process, the province pursued its own course and did not invest much energy in responding to new ideas and methods that came from outside. This is illustrated with the following examples.

First, the project manager from Alterra noted, with hindsight, that the provincial representatives never commented on the proposal for the New Markets project, even though the provincial government was formally one of the proposal applicants. The provincial representatives said in the interviews that they 'hired' TransForum for the job. The writing of the proposal was seen as a job for TransForum and Alterra, not as something that would matter to the province. Moreover, this attitude suggests that the provincial government never considered Alterra to be a party with authority to redefine the goal and approach of the New Markets project.

Second, the meeting in November 2006 was supposed to be organized by Alterra but was taken over by the provincial representatives. Discussions were for the most part limited to the Healthy Living in South Limburg initiative. The executive councillor for economic affairs appointed the Orbis director as the

new project manager for New Markets without consulting the project team. The Alterra project team member refers to this event as a 'coup'. Alterra was excluded from decisions about the process architecture and desired outcomes.

Third, although there were some attempts to involve the provincial government's rural development and spatial planning departments, these never seriously considered New Markets to be a promising initiative for landscape management. The departments pursued their own agenda and were not inclined to consider initiatives that were not immediately relevant to existing policy goals. For example, the initiator of the New Markets process tried to link the New Markets vision to the spatial planning department's objective of drawing up a Landscape Vision – the timing was right to couple these two processes as both were at an initial stage – but the spatial planning department claimed they first needed to design their own vision for the landscape before they could adopt a position on the New Markets process. The initiator called this a 'not invented here' attitude. Later on in the New Markets process, when TransForum introduced the broader goal of investing in landscape qualities, the project team wanted to involve representatives from the spatial planning and rural development departments again. However, according to project team members, the officers from these departments and the economic affairs department were unwilling to find ways to cooperate.

Finally, the interviews with provincial representatives demonstrated that the spatial planning and rural development departments hardly knew what New Markets was: 'something with healing hills' or 'something to do with health, care, and cure'. Provincial government officers felt that the initiatives were 'too vague'; this made it difficult to see the added value for the province. 'All beautiful terms, but I don't feel it, it doesn't click'. The New Markets initiatives were considered insufficiently detailed to fit in with the specific goals of the policy programmes, and consequently they were unattractive for serious consideration by the spatial planning and rural development departments. The policy frame for the spatial planning and rural development departments dictated that policy implementation should take place through bottom-up initiatives from the region, but only those initiatives were supported that fitted to pre-defined goals specified in policy programmes. The New Markets unfolding story therefore did not find any response in the spatial planning and rural planning departments.

Doubts about including the province in the coalition

The strategy of the New Markets project managers towards involving the provincial government was unstable and characterized by a great deal of uncertainty and distrust. They held ambiguous views about the possibilities of partnering with the provincial government. On the one hand, stakeholders

claimed that they wanted to remain independent of the provincial government, but on the other hand their statements point to a wish for the province to play a more active role.

The most frequently raised complaint was that the provincial government was too passive and did not take the initiative. The province, reasoning from the perspective of a less controlling and decentralized governance model, assumed that local stakeholders, such as local authorities, farmers, water boards, and so forth, would take the initiative and enable implementation of broad provincial policies. However, the New Markets project managers and entrepreneurs saw the provincial government as an institution that was too controlling and that did not stimulate new developments, assessing initiatives against their applicability to existing policy programmes, but not helping to develop ideas or come up with new ideas itself. The province was accused of adopting initiatives to incorporate and fix them into current institutions, thereby destroying the innovative potential of those initiatives. Another obstacle to effective cooperation in the respondents' eyes was the compartmentalization within the organizational structure of the authority. It was described as a 'splitting zone' because of the lack of willingness of the economic affairs, the rural development, and the spatial planning departments to share ideas and cooperate in joint projects. This was not restricted to communication only between provincial government officers, but also between the executive councillors, who were said to act too much on their own and to avoid consultation with other stakeholders.

The complaints about the provincial government suggest that it was not considered to be a trustworthy partner. Nevertheless, the involvement of the province in the New Markets process was considered necessary to achieve results. Stakeholders argued that the province should 'just facilitate' the initiatives of entrepreneurs and 'nothing more'. The members of the project team were afraid that too much government involvement would suffocate the process by strangling creativity and productivity. They suspected that, if the initiative became dominated by the provincial government, it would become institutionalized, thereby diminishing its innovative potential. However, 'facilitation and nothing more' turned out to mean more than the words suggest. Stakeholders expected the province to be more helpful with setting up facilities for the proposed new businesses, especially by providing information about the relevant regulations and financing possibilities. Moreover, some argued that the province should be responsible for the coordination between entrepreneurs, both in terms of organization and by 'providing a common theme' for ideas and initiatives.

We would like to do something together, but then according to one plan, so no fragmentation please. Province, coordinate that! Make sure it is arranged. But the provincial government lacks the necessary continuity or capacity and organization. Entrepreneurs are usually not interested in institutions, but in people who are entrepreneurial like themselves, so that they can get going. (The entrepreneurs' representative on the project team) ⁴⁻²²

In other words, the province was expected to provide a plan, vision, or framework within which initiatives could be embedded. However, such a perspective was quite contradictory and ambivalent to the view that the province should not meddle with entrepreneurs' innovative activities.

The ambivalence concerning the required relation with the province led to alternately investing energy in involving provincial representatives in the New Markets process and pushing them out again. The New Markets project managers never whole-heartedly aimed to engage the provincial government out of constant fear of a take-over by the provincial government. This unstable strategy resulted in unconvincing attempts to involve provincial officers and executives in conversations and meetings. There was no real attempt to understand the frames of reference of relevant provincial government actors, and this decreased the chance of presenting the New Markets story in a way that connected to those policy frames.

In sum, although there were many doubts about the trustworthiness of the province as a partner in the coalition, the general view was that provincial support was indispensable because of the province's decision-making power in the region. Getting attention was an enormous challenge because of the province's highly self-referential way of working. The experience of the experts was that novel ideas and methods from outside, that did not fit into accepted frameworks, were overlooked. In terms of agenda setting, it could be expected that the province, performing its dominant role in the region, would only prioritize initiatives that would fit into the province's ideas, visions, and plans. Earlier we concluded that overcoming such a barrier would at least require a clear and attractive story that represented clear ambitions. On the basis of this section, we can add that a clear ambition and strategy to connect to the different layers of the provincial government was also required, especially since the highly self-referential behaviour of the province was difficult to penetrate. As these conditions were not met, the New Markets initiative for a business community to protect and develop landscape qualities did not find much response. The initiatives for Healthy Living and Regional Branding, however, did manage to connect effectively with the provincial government. This is the topic of the next section.

4.4 Alignment of stories, people, and events

During the New Markets process, two initiatives that developed more or less autonomously and outside the grasp of the New Markets organization proved to be the most successful in setting political agendas: Healthy Living in South Limburg and Regional Branding. Both initiatives were taken by entrepreneurs to create favourable business conditions for themselves. While doing so, they served the objectives of the provincial government. We discuss two factors

which explain their success: the ability to connect to formal and informal networks, to signal events that could trigger attention from targeted supporters, and to incorporate these events into their storytelling.

Connecting informal and formal networks

A paradoxical situation emerged regarding the attempts of the project team to construct a stable coalition around New Markets. While discussions in formal meetings focused on how to build such a coalition, participating entrepreneurs met in different informal settings and in different groups to discuss substantive matters that really interested them. This resulted in the *Zwarte Ruiter Overleg* initiative for regional branding. Although the project team never had a complete picture of the negotiations that took place behind the scenes in these smaller informal groups, these informal discussions were decisive for later decisions about the New Markets process, according to the project manager from Alterra:

With regard to the process I am not happy with all these individual discussions. There is no context, no sense of cohesion. Here in South-Limburg, one-to-one relations are considered more important than collective discussion. You belong here, or you do not. If you do not belong, you are excluded unless you have a formal position. You will get an assignment if you speak Limburgish. It is very much an in-crowd. Everything happens in backrooms, like the *Zwarte Ruiter Overleg*.⁴⁻²³

The important role of informal decision contexts is confirmed by statements from respondents with a government background. The following quotation reflects how stakeholders engage in informal networking to deal with continuously changing coalitions and networks and related political ambitions and preferences.

It is not possible to organize cooperation in a rational way. I think this is especially the case in Limburg. Here you depend a lot on political and administrative relations: 'who knows who'. The political ambitions of some determine whether others will be accepted or removed from a particular position. That always happens at eight o'clock in the evening. All the telephones in the province are ringing then. That is when business is done in Limburg. It's all rather intangible. (A provincial government officer)⁴⁻²⁴

The emphasis on informal communication can possibly be related to the previously described cultural preference for relying on influential individuals instead of policy programmes and faceless committees. Informal one-to-one discussion between individuals was considered more decisive than negotiation in formal settings. In the view of respondents, stakeholders preferred to work in smaller coalitions. In such a situation, it was difficult to coordinate a multi-stakeholder negotiation and to collectively construct a storyline or issue that could count on the backing and commitment of so many parties.

The initial success of the Healthy Living initiative can partly be explained by considering the opportunities to share the story in informal and formal contexts and networks. The prioritization of Healthy Living had little to do with efforts in the New Markets process and more with the initiator's membership of the existing policy network around the economic development of the region. This is illustrated by the events around the November meeting (November 9, 2006) of New Markets when a central role was attributed to the initiator of Healthy Living. It came as a surprise to the Alterra project manager that the November meeting was primarily devoted to the Healthy Living initiative and that the initiator of Healthy Living was suddenly appointed as project manager for the second phase of New Markets by the executive councillor for economic affairs. This 'coup' by the executive councillor was seen as something that occurred outside the reality of the New Markets process.

The executive councillor for economic affairs did not know about the involvement of TransForum in the New Markets process. His interest was that the project would be in good shape at the end of his term. That is why he approached the Orbis director. (Alterra project manager) ⁴⁻²⁵

The project managers furthermore stated that the executive councillor for economic affairs was not interested in attending the New Markets meetings. This suggests that he was more interested in concrete business outcomes than in the efforts of the New Markets process to create a broader network organization with representation from several provincial departments, interest groups, and entrepreneurs. Moreover, the executive councillor was apparently convinced that the leader of the Healthy Living initiative, a healthcare concern director, had the leadership qualities required for the New Markets process. The healthcare concern had previously contributed to the Health, Care, & Cure theme of the provincial Acceleration Agenda and had already participated in the coalition of entrepreneurs and government authorities assembled to establish the Acceleration Agenda. The activities and ideas of the healthcare concern director therefore already had the attention of the executive councillor before the ideas for Healthy Living were proposed. In other words, the success of the Healthy Living initiative can at least in part be explained by the earlier (informal) engagements of the healthcare concern director in activities of the province's economic affairs department. The healthcare concern director was already considered an important and relevant partner in the network.

The importance of connecting informal and formal networks is also illustrated by the development of the Regional Branding initiative. The initiating group, Zwarte Ruiter Overleg, arose from informal contacts between entrepreneurs who met in the New Markets process and were interested in collective marketing needs. As previously described, the New Markets process did not result in clear issue framing and was limited mainly to a discussion about building a network organization. Although the organizers intended to discuss matters that would attract the entrepreneurs, the result of their efforts was in

fact a drop in commitment from those entrepreneurs, who then pulled out of the formal process and found a way to self-organize in an informal setting. One of the Zwarte Ruiter Overleg entrepreneurs explained how he brought together other entrepreneurs from the New Markets process in informal meetings.

Zwarte Ruiter Overleg are people from the roundtable meetings in the New Markets process. I regularly met them there, and it turned out that we shared many of the same views about the lack of action and cooperation. The difference was that they were born and raised here and know the ins and outs of this area. So I brought these people together to find out if there could be an initiative for business interests. We considered who should be involved and who not... We were invited by the former director of the Gulpener brewery to hold the first meeting in his pub 'De Zwarte Ruiter' [*The Black Rider*]. At the end we needed a name: Zwarte Ruiter Overleg [*Black Rider Consultation Group*].⁴⁻²⁶

The group consisted of successful entrepreneurs, including some who were active in governmental contexts. Together, they spanned a network of about 50 successful entrepreneurs. Their connections with the network of government officials and the way their ideas connected with the current economic policy agenda can explain why in 2007 the province decided to help develop the Regional Branding initiative. As already mentioned, three pathfinders were assigned to coordinate the development of a business plan and find support among entrepreneurs and municipal councils. One of them was a member of Zwarte Ruiter Overleg who had earlier proved his ability to combine business interests with meeting the objectives of the provincial government. Another was a former successful businessman and politician, and the third was a government official with firm roots in the political and policy context. Their efforts led to the establishment of the Regional Branding Foundation. This shows that, right from the start, the informal group of entrepreneurs had firm roots in the informal network of government and business executives and were able to build on those ties in pursuit of the Regional Branding initiative.

In sum, the Healthy Living in South Limburg and Regional Branding initiatives were self-organized initiatives of entrepreneurs who operated in informal and formal policy networks which were highly connected. These networks provided the opportunity to share stories and discuss alternatives both informally and formally.

Adapting stories to meaningful events

Agenda-setting research emphasizes the importance of political or social trigger events or focusing events which provide an opportunity to focus the attention of policymakers on a specific issue (windows of opportunity). This suggests that agenda setting depends partly on coincidence. However, on the basis of the Heuvelland case, we argue that whether or not events perform as triggers depends on the meaning given to them by issue proponents and their

targeted supporters. Issue proponents interpret certain events as meaningful and useful within the context of what is considered relevant by their targets and what has happened before. Therefore, we would rather speak of a concurrence or synchronicity of such events with past events. This can be illustrated with the following example from the Heuvelland case.

Initially, the Healthy Living in South Limburg initiative seemed to fit in very well with the goals of the Provincial Executive in office at that time, as previously described, and it was successfully put on the economic policy agenda. However, only three months later, it dropped from the agenda to be replaced with the Regional Branding initiative. We can explain this by two concurrent events: (1) the emerging awareness among stakeholders in the region about the consequences of demographic trends for the economy, initially focusing on the ageing population but over the years shifting to the problem of the loss of young people from the regional labour market, and (2) the Provincial Council elections in 2007, which provided the opportunity for policy changes. Successful issue framing in combination with the ability to adapt stories to meaningful events was decisive for agenda setting. Apparently, it was crucial to frame ideas into issues that would be important to the provincial government for the longer term. To do that, initiators had to be able to respond to concurrent events: the political debates about problems flowing from demographic trends, and the fact that the provincial elections were near.

4.5 Conclusion: how stories became strong attractors or not

In this chapter, we have asked how the New Markets initiatives developed and what they did to get support from relevant stakeholders. We discussed outcomes in terms of their ambitions and in terms of the provincial government's planning agendas for economic and spatial development in the Heuvelland region. The experts' initiative to propose an alternative approach to spatial development with the New Markets philosophy slowly faded. Two initiatives emerged from the New Markets process which further developed in informal settings outside the control of the New Markets project organization. These two initiatives managed to gain political attention and support by constructing strong stories, told by the right people and shared with the right people at the right time. Two major shifts in the agenda-setting process were identified. First, the Healthy Living initiative was prioritized and assigned a central role in the next phase of the New Market project. Only a short time later however, this story was suddenly replaced by a story about Regional Branding which emphasized stimulating the knowledge economy by creating and marketing an attractive region for young talented workers. The analysis of shifts in the agenda-setting process pointed to the importance of storytelling and strategic framing processes. In relation to framing processes and the question of why some stories were successful whereas others faded, we have drawn the following conclusions.



First, we can conclude that a clear direction, in the form of an appealing story, was of the utmost importance. In the New Markets process, it was not possible to formulate an appealing and directional ambition for area development. There was too much focus on building coalitions and managing relations, and too little on identifying issues. Identifying issues in a collective multi-stakeholder setting proved to be difficult because stakeholders preferred to realize their own ambitions in smaller and informal settings. As a result, the New Markets initiative, presented as an alternative approach to regional spatial development, was not able to develop an appealing storyline that would generate attention and broad support for the proposed ideas. The lack of direction was compounded by a coming and going of stakeholders in the New Markets coalition. Coalitions seemed to be unmanageable and directionless. In contrast, in smaller and informal settings, two initiatives framed their ambitions into strong stories that connected well to existing policy stories about the future economic development of the region. From this we derive that, to become a strong attractor, that is, a mobilizer of people and resources (see Chapter 2), stories required 'articulators' or storytellers who could frame stable ambitions into stories that were recognizable and considered relevant and important to targeted supporters.

Second, a clear connecting strategy with relevant governmental actors was essential, in this case with the provincial government. Stakeholders perceived the provincial government to be crucial and decisive in regional development. Therefore, agenda-setting strategies were aimed mainly at the provincial policy agendas and at getting the attention of provincial representatives. The province was characterized as authoritative and highly self-referential, thus challenging initiatives with a major barrier to becoming noticed and prioritized. However, ambiguity about the extent and way of involving various province departments resulted in an unstable alignment strategy and prevented the establishment of a meaningful connection. On the one hand government involvement was considered necessary for resources (money, land, knowledge, regulations) as well as coordination, and on the other hand too much government involvement was believed to dampen the innovative energy of grassroots initiatives. Similar experiences with ambiguous views about (provincial) government engagement in regional innovation networks in the Netherlands are found by Aarts et al. (2007). In contrast to the New Markets project, the coalition-building strategy of Healthy Living and Regional Branding was more straightforward and entailed building good relations with the policy network around economic development. Overcoming the barrier of a limited government perspective on social reality required a stable alignment strategy that fitted to ways of working and ways of viewing the world of targeted supporters.

Third, the Healthy Living and Regional Branding initiatives established meaningful alignments through informal networks of business and government executives that provided the opportunity to share stories and explore alternatives with the right people at the right time. Informal communication in

personal one-to-one meetings seemed to prevail and was accepted generally as the way things were negotiated in the region. This in part explains why the stories of Healthy Living and Regional Branding could spread through relevant networks and managed to include decision makers in storytelling. In addition, the Regional Branding initiative in particular managed to strengthen its story by connecting it to political and social events that were considered highly important by the provincial government. Interweaving these events and the provincial government's problem frames into the story about a future dynamic and vibrant region triggered wide support from local governments and the provincial government as well as businesses.





**Positioning
landscape values
of the Gouda-
Krimpenerwaard
fringe on the policy
agenda**

Verscholen onder de zeespiegel achter hoge dijken in het groene hart
Leven we ons leven met ieder zijn eigen binding met de stad
Hier in het Goudse met haar mooie stadhuis en grachten
En soms chaos, drukte en stress waar je graag aan wilt ontsnappen
Op zoek naar een moment van rust, even weg van de stad ja
Een gebied voor het verwerken van je verdriet of het genieten van het uitzicht
De sluizen hebben in het verleden een belangrijke rol gespeeld
Hierdoor moeten we vechten voor het behoud van de voortuin van Gouda

Sluizen en dijken houden het water buiten
Tegen overstromingen en beschermen onze huizen
Sluizen en dijken zijn de bewakers van het Groene hart
En geven toeristen toegang tot de Goudse binnenstad

(fragment of rap song by Straatlogica, March 2006, Gouda)

The previous chapter about civic initiatives of business leaders and experts in Heuvelland demonstrated that discursive processes matter a great deal in agenda setting. Alignment with existing policy stories was a crucial factor. In this chapter, we build on the results of the Heuvelland case, this time focusing on civic initiatives for the protection and development of landscape values in the southern urban–rural fringe of the city of Gouda. We direct attention to how alignment of stories through social interactions happened, and we ask why some stories attracted attention and support, whereas others faded. The Heuvelland case pointed to the role of political and social events that triggered agenda shifts. In this chapter also, we identify trigger events, and we ask how decisive these were as tipping points in agenda setting in relation to other agenda-setting factors. The Heuvelland case covered a period of only five years, and so we selected a longer timeframe for this case study to achieve more understanding about how frames and coalitions change over time.

The case study in a nutshell

The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard urban–rural fringe is situated to the south of the city of Gouda in the Netherlands (figure 5.1). The area is separated from the city by the Hollandse IJssel river and is part of the Krimpenerwaard polder (figure 5.2). The Krimpenerwaard has the status of Valuable Cultural Landscape and is part of the National Landscape Het Groene Hart (The Green Heart). The landscape in the fringe fits in with the rest of the Krimpenerwaard polder, which is generally characterized as a wet meadow landscape. The riverside, however, has an urban character with industrial activity, a wastewater plant, and the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood, which stretches along the dike.

As a reaction to government plans for new infrastructure and urbanization, a small group of citizens from the city of Gouda started an initiative to attract attention to the landscape values in the fringe. They tried to convince local and regional authorities that an integrated plan for the fringe should be designed to prevent further congestion. Although the various authorities all had some sectoral interest in the fringe (bypass, development of riversides, rural redevelopment), none had taken the initiative to start an integrated planning project.



Figure 5.1: The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard urban-rural fringe

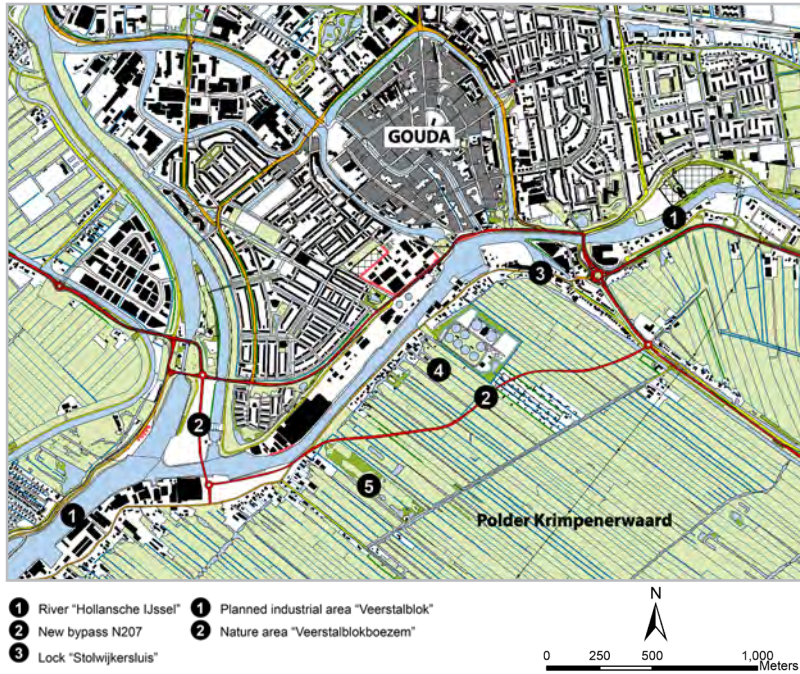
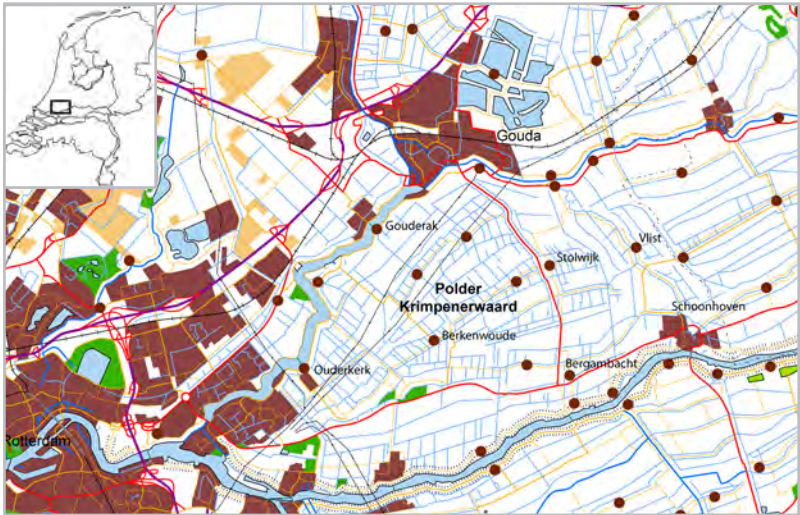


Figure 5.2: The polder Krimpenerwaard situated between the cities of Gouda and Rotterdam



The challenge for citizens to convince local and regional governments to develop such an integrated vision on the future of the fringe seemed impossible. They were confronted with many institutional barriers. The province considered the area a local matter and was only interested in sectoral issues embedded in separate policy programmes, such as the construction of a new road around the

city of Gouda and the Rural Redevelopment Project for the Krimpenerwaard. The water board was only interested in the problem of a historic canal lock in the dike within the framework of water safety measures. To them, this lock was 'a hole in the dike' that had to be removed. For the city of Gouda, interest was limited to the construction of the new road and the floodplain area within the framework of the Hollandsche IJssel Project (see box 5.1). The integral development of the fringe area was also not on anyone's agenda because it was a boundary area. To the city of Gouda, it was a peripheral area on the other side of the river with no apparent function for the city other than the space it provided for the bypass. To the Krimpenerwaard municipalities, it was also a peripheral area that had little relation to the concerns of the Krimpenerwaard other than the room it provided for industrialization. Moreover, cooperation or discussion between the urban municipality of Gouda and the rural municipalities of the Krimpenerwaard about opportunities to redevelop the fringe area was very unlikely, because they did not want to meddle in one another's affairs. Until a few years ago, the municipality of Gouda and the municipalities in the Krimpenerwaard region showed no interest in one another, except for the bypass project. The Krimpenerwaard municipalities distrusted the motives of the city of Gouda for intervening in the Krimpenerwaard and always feared urban influences (urban expansion, mass tourism, disturbance of peace and quiet by urban dwellers). The city of Gouda on the other hand found the Krimpenerwaard municipalities non-cooperative and conservative.

In sum, civic initiatives met much resistance from the government system when they made any attempt to push their proposals for the fringe onto local and regional planning agendas. However, despite various institutional barriers, over a long period of time of about 25 years the initiatives managed to achieve most of their ambitions for the fringe. In recent years, the fringe has become highly valued by local and regional governments as an area with great recreational potential for both the city of Gouda and stakeholders in the Krimpenerwaard polder. It came to be perceived as a recreational node between the city and the countryside which would strengthen the economic position of both city and countryside. The province no longer considered the fringe a local matter, but embraced the restoration of the historic lock and the development of a nature park as projects of regional importance and translated this into major financial investments which were complemented with contributions from local authorities. In total, a collective of local and regional authorities invested millions of euros in the fringe area. The water board no longer considered the lock just a hole in the dike and understood that other stakeholders attributed great value to the monument as a cultural link between city and countryside, as well as an important symbol of the cultural identity of the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood¹. Among stakeholders in the Krimpenerwaard, the taboo on discussing boating in the polder was lifted. Local authorities in the Krimpenerwaard and agricultural

¹ The perceived cultural identity of the neighbourhood is well illustrated by the article "Buurtschap als spil van de wereld" (Volkskrant, 20 April 2012, J. Tromp). Translated title: "Neighbourhood as pivot of the world."

entrepreneurs were increasingly positive about the economic opportunities of such boating and began working out more detailed plans. Moreover, the efforts of interest and citizen groups resulted in a shift in the attitude of the city and the rural municipalities towards one another. The discussion about restoring the Stolwijkersluis lock as a gateway between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard seems to have broken the reserved attitude of the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard towards each other. Suspicion was slowly being replaced with a dialogue that focused on the positive effects of cooperation in leisure and tourism.

Questions and structure of the chapter

This chapter presents the case study of how civic initiatives successfully introduced integrated development of the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard urban-rural fringe onto the agendas of local and regional governments. The central question for this case study is which efforts civic initiatives made to introduce landscape values and integrated development of the fringe onto the agendas of relevant governments, and how we can understand the processes that resulted in tipping points in the agenda-setting process.

To answer these questions, we analysed the agenda-setting strategies of initiatives, that is, their actions to build a supporting coalition and become connected to relevant government stakeholders. We focused on the way issues were constructed and framed into a story about the future of the fringe area, and we assessed how coalitions were built and the role that trigger events played in the process. We examined a long time period (1985–2010) to get an evolutionary perspective of shifts over time.

The first part of the chapter is a narrative about tipping points in the agenda-setting process as well as the shifts in storytelling and coalitions that occurred over time. This forms an overture to further analysis. Section 2 deals with the question of the role of trigger events and puts these into perspective. In the following section, we discuss how stories and groups of people were aligned in coalitions and how certain stories over time successfully attracted attention and support. This leads on to the contributions of certain individual people to the agenda-setting process. The significance of individual agents in relation to agenda-setting processes is discussed in section 4. The interview quotes and text segments in this chapter are translated from Dutch interview data and text segments. The original quotes in Dutch are listed in Appendix 8 and are referred to by numbering the quotes.

5.1 Shifting stories and coalitions

In the following, we narrate the relevant events in the period between 1985 and 2010, but first, in Table 5.1, we summarize the identified tipping points and shifts in coalitions and stories to give the reader an overview of the process over time.

Table 5.1: Tipping points: shifting coalitions and issues

Tipping point	Event	Coalitions	Issues
1985–1994 Emerging initiatives for conservation of landscape values in the fringe	Competition Gouda Havenstad, and launch of governmental Hollandsche IJssel Project	Initiatiefgroep Gouda Havenstad from which later the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard emerged	Preventing urban expansion of Gouda into the fringe and conserving the 'window to the Krimpenerwaard'
1995–2004 Broadening of coalition with other actors and positioning as constructive interest group	Government plans for the bypass around Gouda	Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard cooperates with nature organization and residents in the fringe and establishes itself as negotiation partner of Gouda City	Protecting nature area from the bypass
2003–2006 Integrated development of the fringe on the agenda of Gouda	Project Masterplan Stolwijkersluis initiated by the history association die Goude	Organization of a broad coalition of local and regional governments, interest groups, and citizen organizations	Restoration of historic lock, conservation of 'window to the Krimpenerwaard' by constructing a city park Stolwijkersluis as the gateway between city and countryside
2007–2009 Mobilization of support from the Krimpenerwaard	Series of major financial setbacks threaten implementation, resulting in call from water board to start demolishing the historic lock	Government coalition disintegrates Citizen initiatives link up with Krimpenerwaard initiative Veenveren and local governors and politicians	Reintroducing boating in the polder as a new source of income for farmers who had to make way for nature development
2009–2010 Coalition of local and regional governments that invest millions of euros in the fringe	Economic crisis and granting of governmental crisis fund to projects that are ready to be implemented	Authorities of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard convince water board and province to join a coalition and to bring together co-financing for restoration of the lock Province and Gouda work together in construction of a nature park in the fringe	The fringe as area of regional importance for nature development and economic tourism development of both Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard

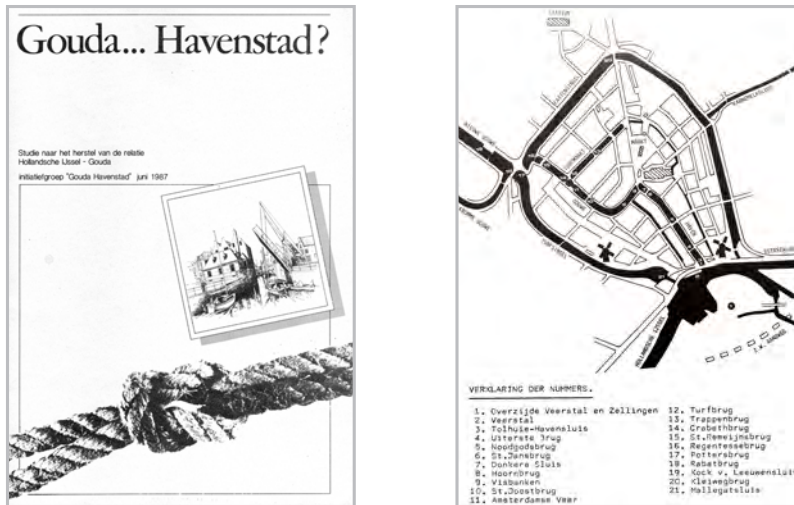
Once upon a time: emergence of civic initiatives for landscape values in the southern fringe

In 1985, a small group of citizens from Gouda city centre decided to start an initiative group. In their opinion, the city had focused urban expansion too much on the highway and railway situated north of the city centre and neglected the areas bordering on the rivers Gouwe and Hollandsche IJssel, although the city was once founded on the junction of those rivers. That strategic position along the main transport routes had brought prosperity to the city of Gouda. The city had a magnificent port right in its centre. However, in the 20th century the port lost its economic significance, and for water safety reasons the access from the Hollandsche IJssel to the port was blocked up. After that, the Gouda riverfront was on a downward track. The initiative group, however, saw new opportunities for the old port of Gouda and the riverfront because they could again be beneficial, this time for pleasure cruising. In that period, pleasure cruising was rapidly gaining economic significance in the Netherlands. The group of citizens founded an initiative group, called *Initiatiefgroep Gouda Havenstad* (translated: Initiative Group Gouda Port), with the aim of restoring the historical connection between the port and the river Hollandsche IJssel for recreational purposes and to develop a vision on the urban development of the riverfront. They called this vision “Gouda Havenstad?” (Gouda Port), referring to the central importance of the port for the future development of the city centre and the Gouda riverfront (*Initiatiefgroep Gouda Havenstad*, 1987, 1988).

Figure 5.3: Gouda and its port between the river and the inner city in Blaeu’s city plan of 1649 (source: OD205, 2005)



Figure 5.4: Front cover of the "Gouda Havenstad" vision and a map indicating the fairways (source: Initiatiefgroep Gouda Havenstad, 1987)

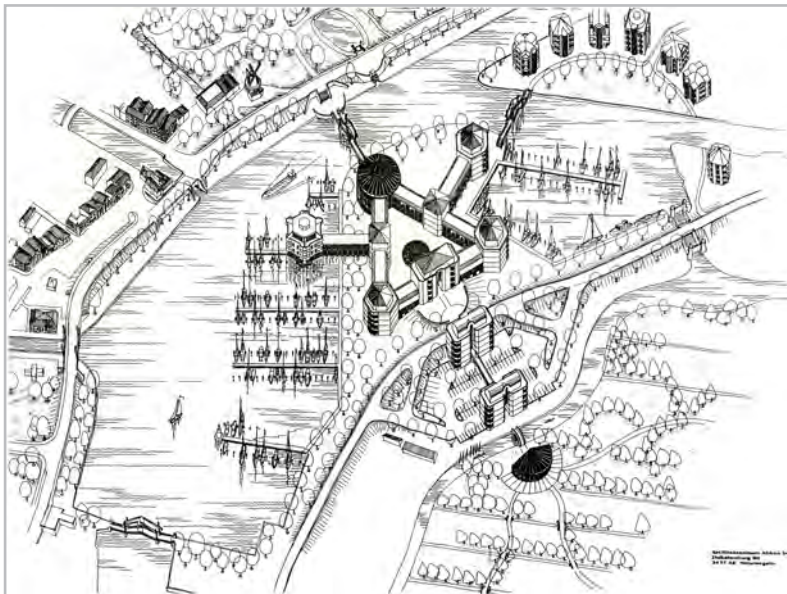
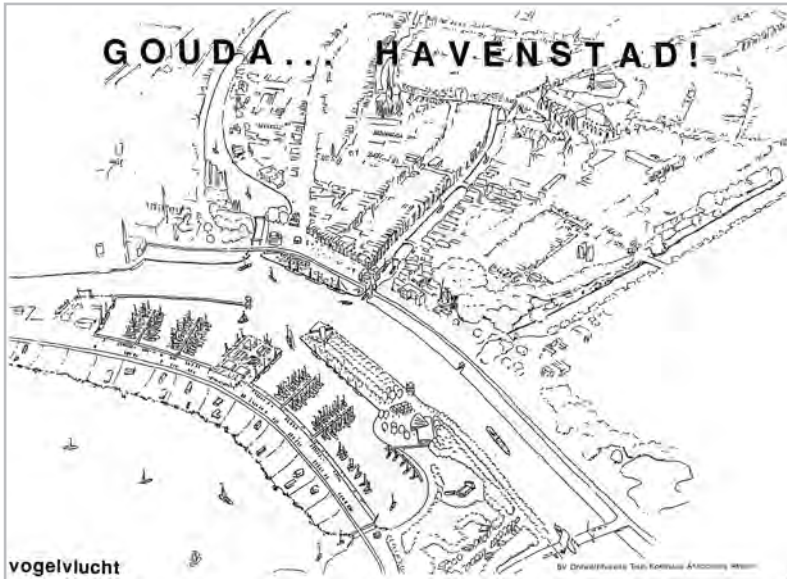


The riverfront included not only the city-centre side, but also the other bank that marked a sharp change from city to countryside. Although still part of the municipal territory of the city, the other side of the river had mostly been neglected by the municipality. It became part of the territory of the city in 1964 when it was obtained for potential urban expansion and utilities (wastewater plant, power plant, and so forth). Crossing the bridge to this side, we arrive at the historical Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood, which was increasingly characterized by messy urban development, for example premises along the dike, the asphalt plant, the wastewater purification plant, and the heavy traffic on the dike. It is a good example of a cluttered urban-rural fringe. The city of Gouda did not make much effort to coordinate urban development on this other side of the river. Initiatiefgroep Gouda Havenstad, however, thought that both sides of the river should be included in any visioning about the riverfront.

Initiatiefgroep Gouda Havenstad started developing ideas to improve the relation of the city centre with both sides of the river. However, as city residents, they felt they had too little knowledge about the polder on the other side and how that could be developed in relation to the city. Consequently, they organized a competition to invite people to come up with a design for the area (Initiatiefgroep Gouda Havenstad, 1988). This idea was supported by the city government and other interest groups in the city. Various people responded, among which a number of professional landscape architects. Some designs emphasized the sharp border between city and countryside, which included conservation of the green and open character of the polder. In such plans, the 'window to the Krimpenerwaard', the open view to the Krimpenerwaard polder

from the dike, would be conserved. Others wanted to improve the relation between the city centre and the river by planning new urban development on both sides. This included a marina, tower blocks, and 'urban villas'.

Figure 5.5: Two of the entries for the design competition "Gouda Havenstad"(source: Initiatiefgroep Gouda Havenstad, 1988)



Note: the upper design is from Teun Koolhaas, the lower design is from buro Abken

The publication of the designs in the local newspaper drew the attention of the city government to the development of the riverbanks on the city side as well as on the Krimpenerwaard polder side. However, the competition resulted in other outcomes as well, such as the foundation of a new citizen initiative. This consisted of a couple of citizens who organized themselves in what they called a working group for the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe. It was named *Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard*. A leading member of both *Initiatiefgroep Gouda Havenstad* and *Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard* explains:

We have nominated the most talked-about designs for the Gouda Havenstad competition, among which a green [nature-oriented] and a red design [urban development]. There were also designs that would not be my choice. But it is a way of attracting attention for that place. And then one discovers later on that, after letting it go for five years, a number of people from the municipal department of town planning had been very inspired by that red model. That 'Manhattan at the IJssel' [the river Hollandsche IJssel]. That translated into a plan that was presented at the start of the Hollandsche IJssel Project, those six 'urban villas'. Then I thought 'Hey! That is not our choice! We should start yet another group'.⁵⁻¹

Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard consisted of a small group of citizens from the city of Gouda who were concerned about the urban developments in the southern fringe. In reaction to the plan of the Project Hollandsche IJssel project team (see box 5.1) to design a marina and tower blocks on the polder side of the river (Stuurgroep Hollandsche IJssel, 1994; Projectteam Hollandsche IJssel, 1999), *Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard* designed an alternative plan for the southern fringe. This plan focused on the conservation of the 'window to the Krimpenerwaard' and the conservation of landscape values in the fringe (*Werkgroep Gouda-Krimpenerwaard*, n.d.). *Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard* worried about the lack of care for landscape values in the fringe and decided to 'adopt' the area as is demonstrated in the following quotation, which explains the motivations and goals of *Werkgroep <—> Krimpenerwaard*:

In 1994, the working group was brought into being to preserve and strengthen the unique and special relation between the historical inner city of Gouda with the bordering open green space of the Krimpenerwaard. ...This unique place, which we have adopted as it were, makes our Green Heart [Het Groene Hart of which the Krimpenerwaard is part] beat faster, in the future hopefully also your heart.⁵⁻²

Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard had deliberately incorporated members with relevant expertise. One of the members was a landscape architect who translated the ideas of *Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard* into expressive visualizations. Furthermore, members were chosen based on their



affiliation with other social organizations, such as the local history association in the city of Gouda, Historische Vereniging die Goude, and the provincial nature and landscape conservation organization, Zuid-Hollands Landschap.

Box 5.1: Hollandsche IJssel Project²

In 1996, the Hollandsche IJssel Project started with the signing of a Starting Contract by municipalities along the river Hollandsche IJssel (city of Gouda and west of Gouda), the water boards and the provincial government. The cooperation also included cooperation with residents and businesses. The project entailed 20 kilometer of the river Hollandsche IJssel and was aimed at the decontamination and redevelopment of the river and its banks. The banks were cleaned up and redeveloped for leisure and tourism objectives. Another goal was improvement of the accessibility of the river and its banks for residents and tourists, for example for pleasure cruising. On April 11, 2013, the project was officially finalized.

In 1999, yet another design competition for the development of the fringe was organized, this time by a collective of seven nature- and environmental organizations in the province of Zuid-Holland, called Consept. This competition was called Stadsrand Natuurlijk, which translates as Fringe Naturally. Consept had set up a project about the development of urban-rural fringes. Consept's interest in fringes resulted from their concern about the on-going urbanization of the rural The Green Heart region, the rural and open area enclosed by the Randstad conurbation). They considered urbanization a threat to the openness and nature of Het Groene Hart. Besides that, they wanted to create more social support for the conservation of The Green Heart by improving its accessibility to visitors from the surrounding cities (Consept, 1998). The southern fringe of Gouda was selected as a pilot because various sectoral government plans for the area needed coordination into an integrated vision. These plans were the Hollandsche IJssel Project, the construction of a road through the southern fringe, the construction of an industrial area in the southern fringe, a leisure and tourism plan for the southern fringe, and the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project. The goal of the project was to 'design a fringe area which forms an attractive and recreational link between city and countryside, and which serves as a buffer for the advancing urbanization' (Consept, 1998, p. 9).

This competition provided the opportunity for Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard to articulate its story about the future of the fringe. It provided a stage to tell the story to a large audience, and provided the opportunity to publicize it in a well-designed brochure. Their proposal focused on the area as a recreational link between Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard and on the conservation and further development of the 'window to the Krimpenerwaard'. In the brochure, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard constructed a story about the desired future of the fringe which counter-framed the municipality's vision in which urban development was planned on the southern side of the river. The writers sketch a 'scary dream' in which the municipality of Gouda completely

² (www.schoner mooier.nl (last accessed July 19, 2013) and Projectteam Hollandsche IJssel (1999)

builds over the polder and creates a 'South Gouda' for rich people. 'The rest of the Krimpenerwaard polder countryside becomes one large nature area. Of course prohibited for visitors. It is exclusively intended for the entertainment of the residents of South Gouda' (Werkgroep <—> Krimpenerwaard, 1999). Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard counter-framed that development by talking about conserving the 'window to the Krimpenerwaard' (see figure 5.6).

Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard aimed to conserve the aesthetical strengths of the fringe, which in their eyes was the contrast between the inner city of Gouda and its silhouette on the riverside and the open green landscape of the Krimpenerwaard on the other side of the river (see figure 5.7). Another goal was to strengthen the recreational connection between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard, in which the fringe played an important role (see figure 5.8). For Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, the case area was especially meaningful as a green area in which inhabitants of Gouda could take a stroll or as a starting point for longer trips into the Krimpenerwaard.

The southern fringe intrigues us. The often abrupt transition from city to countryside makes the landscape surprising and varied. ...The peace and quiet and space of the polder landscape of the Krimpenerwaard strengthens this contrast. (Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, 1999, p.2)⁵⁻³

The ideal picture that Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard sketches for the urban-rural fringe also entails 'bridging the city of Gouda and her rural environment', meaning that the fringe should be used to enhance the liveability of the area for urban dwellers, country people, and visitors (ibid, p. 7).

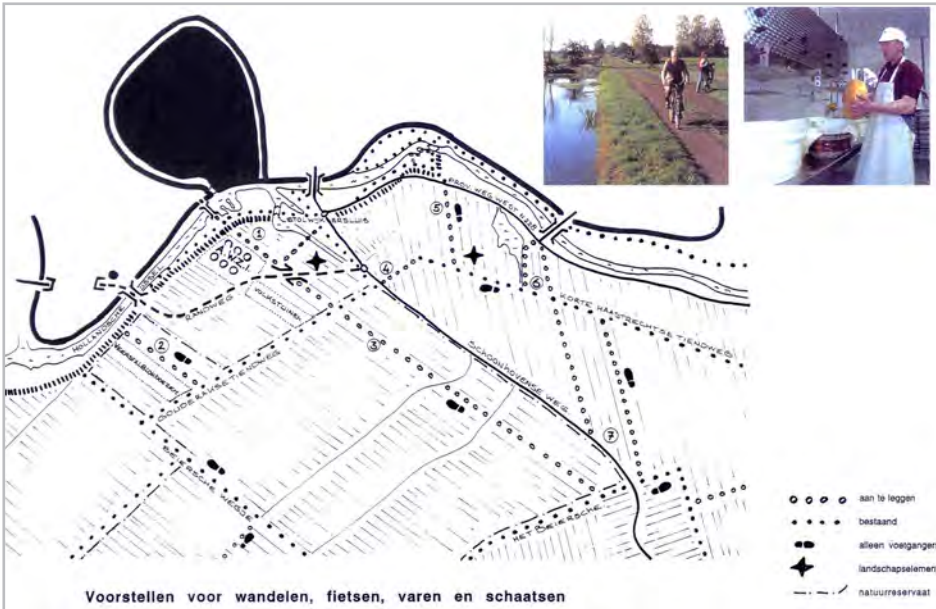
Figure 5.6: Window to the Krimpenerwaard (Werkgroep Gouda<—> Krimpenerwaard, 1999)



Figure 5.7: Visualization of the contrast between Gouda's inner city and the open polder landscape of the Krimpenerwaard (Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard, 1999)



Figure 5.8: Proposal for recreational routes in the urban-rural fringe Gouda-Krimpenerwaard (Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard, 1999)



Together with another designer, Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard won the competition. Although the competition did not succeed in getting the integrated development of the fringe onto local and provincial policy agendas, it was still considered by Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard as an important step in the agenda-setting process. Once printed, the brochure was continuously used to direct governments and other groups to issues in the case area. It was considered by Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard an important tool to guide their future actions as well as to continuously focus other

parties' attention on the southern fringe. Another outcome of the competition was the mobilization of multiple interest organizations from Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard into a consultation group that coordinated actions around the conservation and strengthening of landscape values in the fringe between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard. This group was called Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard (Consultation Group Gouda-Krimpenerwaard Fringe). In comparison to Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard was a more formalized body with many more representatives from social organizations from the city of Gouda as well as the Krimpenerwaard. Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard was usually used in political lobbying when it was necessary to demonstrate wide social support.

Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard's plans and proposals for the fringe also included the restoration of the historic lock³ that had fallen into disrepair in the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood. This lock, which bears the same name as the neighbourhood, was blocked off in 1986 because it was no longer used to transport agricultural products between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard. The lock now risked demolition by its owner, the water board Hoogheemraadschap Krimpenerwaard. The water board perceived the lock, deprived of its function, merely as an unwanted rupture in the dike. A Gouda city council member, who was interested in historic water works, wanted to prevent demolition of the historic lock. He took the initiative to nominate the lock for the list of national monuments and started a foundation called Stichting Restauratie Stolwijkersluis (Stolwijkersluis Restoration Foundation). In 1990, with the help of the history association, Historische Vereniging die Goude, the status of National Monument (NM) was legally assigned to the lock. This made demolition virtually impossible. Nevertheless, the NM status did not warrant conservation of the lock because the arrangement did not oblige the water board to invest in repair and maintenance. Even though the lock was now a national monument, it decayed more and more.

Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard and Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard meanwhile had not forgotten about the Stolwijkersluis. It formed a vital link in their ideas about pleasure cruising between Gouda city centre and the Krimpenerwaard polder. In the period between 1998 and 2001, there was an opportunity to get the restoration of the lock onto government agendas. A former Gouda city alderman and member of Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard was devising a tourist plan for the southern fringe commissioned by a collaboration of municipalities in the region (Productontwikkelingsteam ISMH, 2000). He tried to bring the lock issue to the attention of the provincial government, the water board, and the committee coordinating the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project, Landinrichtingscommissie Krimpenerwaard. In these efforts, he got support from the Gouda city administration. The lobbying, however, did not lead to

3 More information about the history of the Stolwijkersluis lock can be found in the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis (Van der Stoep & Van den Brink, 2006), which is available on-line: <http://library.wur.nl/way/bestanden/clc/stolwijkersluis/start.htm>

successful agenda setting because the restoration of the lock for pleasure cruising touched the nerves of farmers and nature organizations in the Krimpenerwaard. Only a few years before, stakeholders in the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project (Landinrichtingscommissie Krimpenerwaard) had agreed to limit boating in the Krimpenerwaard to canoes which could only travel on fixed routes (Landinrichtingscommissie Krimpenerwaard, 1999). Farmers and nature organizations had experienced much inconvenience from tourists who disturbed nature and damaged farmers' fields. Even without the spectre of pleasure cruising, the inhabitants and entrepreneurs in the Krimpenerwaard generally opposed recreational development because they feared disturbance to days of rest in the area, especially on Sundays. So improving the conditions for pleasure cruising was considered a taboo in the Krimpenerwaard.

Figure 5.9: Location and images of the historic lock Stolwijersluis



Note: Location of the historic lock in the dike (indicated with the white circle) between the river Hollandsche IJssel and the polder landscape (Google Maps)



Note: In 1800, for the purpose of a peat cultivation project in the Krimpenerwaard, the lock Stolwijersluis was constructed in the dike along the river Hollandsche IJssel together with a ring canal and drawbridges in the polder south of the lock. Left picture: the lock underneath its drawbridge at the beginning of the 20th century. On the right: a map of the peat cultivation project 1837 (Source: Weggeman Guldemont. Het hoogheemraadschap, kaartbijlage). For more information about the history of the lock and the peat cultivation project see Van den Brink (2003).

Figure 5.10: The lock and its environment



Note: The faded glory of the lock in 2004.



Note: The left picture shows the wide view on the polder landscape of the Krimpenerwaard standing on top of the historic lock. The right picture is the view from the polder on the inner city of Gouda. The lock is situated right of the windmill in the city's silhouette.

Government plan for a new road triggers collective action

At the turn of the millennium, another planning process engaged all the attention of policymakers and civic initiatives. It concerned a new road through the southern fringe of the city of Gouda. This process marks shifts both in storytelling about the fringe area and in coalition building.

An attention analysis (see Appendix 4) shows that in the period 1994–2004 Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard invested most of its energy in proposing alternatives to the new road. In their eyes, nature values in the fringe were threatened by this plan. Nobody questioned the necessity of such a bypass because it would solve traffic congestion in the centre of Gouda, and it would considerably reduce the travel time from the Krimpenerwaard region to the city of Gouda and other parts of the region. Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard and Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard's issue concerned the planned trajectory of the bypass, which would run through a nature area (Dercksen & Van Ginkel, 2004). Besides that, the bypass was linked with plans for the development of an industrial area. Werkgroep Gouda ↔

Krimpenerwaard and Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard protested strongly against the industrial area as well because it would destroy the 'window to the Krimpenerwaard' and the openness of the historical polder landscape.

In reaction to the plans that governments (the city of Gouda, the Ouderkerk municipality, and the provincial government) had developed for the new road, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, together with the regional nature and landscape organization Zuid Hollands Landschap and an organized group of residents (Bewonersgroep Ouderkerk), developed an alternative trajectory for the road that would spare nature (figure 5.11). Besides cooperating with Zuid-Hollands Landschap and Bewonersgroep Ouderkerk, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard also involved residents from the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood who were increasingly concerned about all the government plans that affected their living environment. The Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman explains:

We first got to work with the plan for the Hollandsche IJssel Project in 1994, but then this bypass crossed our path. ...With that we had our hands full! But it also brought us many contacts with people in that fringe. One needs that.⁵⁻⁴

Figure 5.11: Alternative trajectory for bypass "Weidebloemtracé" (Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, 1999)



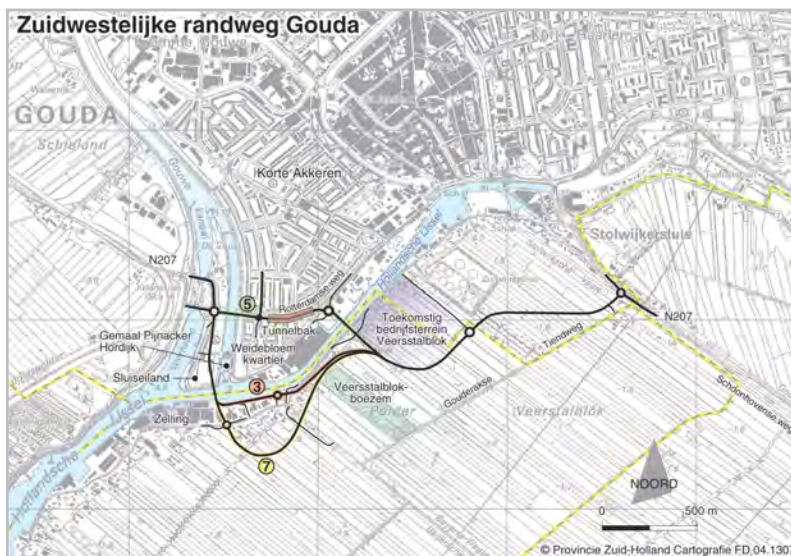
Besides building social support, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard invested much energy in good relations with the city of Gouda and the Ouderkerk municipality. The group tried to convince the involved governments – the city of Gouda, Ouderkerk, and the province – in all kinds of ways about the feasibility of their alternative trajectory. They presented themselves not as an action group, but as a group of experts and as constructive conversation partners. Besides using formal public participation opportunities, they used more informal ways to negotiate their plan. An opportunity for informal conversation was created through the organization of a yearly 'dawn walk'⁴ in the fringe to which local

4 Dawwtraptocht. The Dawwtraptocht is an old Dutch folk ritual on Ascension Day. People get up at sunrise and take a walk in the country before going to church.

governors and councillor were invited as well as media reporters and residents of Gouda city and the Krimpenerwaard. Apart from designing its own plans and alternative solutions, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard aimed to demonstrate professionalism by involving expert knowledge from outside. For example, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard designed an alternative trajectory and asked the University of Delft to check that trajectory via a student project. Moreover, they found inspiration in a similar project in a town nearby (Leidschendam-Voorburg, Sijtwende Project) and arranged an excursion to that project for local councillors and local and regional executives.

Although the alternative trajectory of the growing coalition around Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard was included in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA, see figure 5.12), it was never seriously considered by the city of Gouda and the provincial government. The EIA commission agreed with Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard and its partners that the feasibility of their alternative trajectory ought to be investigated. However, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard decided to stop their fight because they became aware that they would never achieve a majority of votes in the local councils. Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard decided that it would be better to invest energy in other topics, such as preventing the construction of the industrial area and continuing the campaigns for the restoration of the Stolwijkersluis lock and the 'window to the Krimpenerwaard'. To achieve these goals, they had to remain friendly with the city administration. They publicly gave up the fight for the alternative trajectory⁵. They aimed in this way to create a basis of trust that would enable future cooperation with the city administration.

Figure 5.12: Options for the trajectory of the Bypass in the Intermunicipal Strategic Plan (Dercksen & Van Ginkel, 2004)



5 See for example: "Wethouder blij met concessie werkgroep", Rijn en Gouwe, September 30, 2004, p.3

Masterplan Stolwijkersluis brings new coalitions and new storylines

During one of Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard's meetings in 2003, a representative of Historische Vereniging die Goude was informed about the Stolwijkersluis lock situation. He was not only interested in the historical elements in the fringe; as professor of Spatial Planning at Wageningen University, he was also interested in the spatial development in the fringes of Gouda city. He investigated the history of the lock in an article in the history association's magazine (Van den Brink, 2003). He asked a former student to sketch some scenarios for the future development of the lock. The public presentation of these design scenarios (Van Dam & Van den Brink, 2004) resulted in substantial attention from both governmental and non-governmental participants on the future of the lock. After this, he saw an opportunity to push restoration onto the policy agendas of Gouda municipality and the lock owner, the Hoogheemraadschap Krimpenerwaard water board.

He managed to build a partnership of local and regional governments to finance a project that resulted in a spatial plan for the lock and its environment. A more or less coincidental meeting with the alderman for monuments at the time provided the opportunity to discuss the lock informally. The alderman, who in the past had sailed through the lock himself, strongly supported the idea of restoring the lock. He agreed to financially support further plan making on the condition that the lock would be used again to lock through boats from the de Stolwijkervaart waterway to the Hollandsche IJssel river. The next hurdle was the president of the water board who, as the owner of the lock, had to agree to its restoration. The president of the water board was open to discussion because water safety tests had repeatedly demonstrated that the lock was a weak point in the dike. Until then, the water board could not take action because the lock's NM status prevented it from demolishing the lock and repairing the hole in the dike. If nothing happened, the impasse around the lock would continue, and therefore the president of the water board agreed to join the steering group and co-finance plan making for the lock and its environment. The president agreed to participate on the condition that, if no feasible plan for restoration was developed, he could start a demolition procedure which would be supported by the municipality of Gouda. Another reason for the alderman and the president of the water board to participate was the considerable Belvedere-funding that the professor and his research team had obtained to finance collaborative plan making for the lock and its environment. The national Belvedere-programme⁶ funded planning and design processes that integrated heritage management and spatial development and thus contributed to implementation of the national Belvedere policy (Ministerie OC&W et al., 1999).

After that, the Zuid-Holland Province and Landinrichtingscommissie Krimpenerwaard were also invited to participate. In particular the province was expected to be interested because the culture department had a few years

⁶ Information about the Belvedere strategy: <http://www.belvedere.nu/index.php?section=01&p=english> (last accessed: July 16, 2013)

before been involved in the tourism plan for the southern fringe. And indeed, the contact between the former city of Gouda alderman and a provincial civil servant in those years had resulted in the civil servant having a memory about, and an interest in, the southern fringe and especially the lock. Consequently, via this civil servant, Zuid-Holland Province agreed to participate and to give financial support for the project. Finally, the Rural Redevelopment Committee Krimpenerwaard was included to synchronize plan development and, eventually, to arrange financial support for plan implementation. The Rural Redevelopment Committee Krimpenerwaard was represented by a governmental service, Dienst Landelijk Gebied (Government Service for Land and Water Management).

By arranging financial contributions from these government bodies and their participation in a steering group, two essential results in terms of coalition building had been achieved. Whereas before the city of Gouda had hardly been aware of the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project, now city and countryside were brought together in the project that resulted in a Masterplan Stolwijkersluis (Van der Stoep & van Den Brink, 2006). Moreover, four different government organizations had committed themselves to a process aimed at integrated development of the southern fringe, an area in which they formerly had not showed much interest. The planning and design process was coordinated by the Land Use Planning Group of Wageningen University.

The process had a participatory approach involving inhabitants, interest groups, and landscape architects. In the initial phase, the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard secretary and spokesman was a key informant with regard to physical, social, and policy aspects in the southern fringe and the stakeholders that should be invited into the participatory design process. A large number of interest groups and inhabitants participated enthusiastically, among which Werkgroep Gouda <--> Krimpenerwaard, Historische Vereniging die Goude, Stichting Restauratie Stolwijkersluis, Zuid-Hollands Landschap, and residents of the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood. The project, together with the plans for the bypass, had triggered the residents of the neighbourhood to organize themselves into a neighbourhood council, called Stichting Buurtschap Stolwijkersluis.

The project area comprised the whole territory of the city of Gouda on the Krimpenerwaard side of the river, except for the wastewater plant and the area west of the wastewater plant. To prevent complicated discussions and opposition from the governments involved in the bypass (the city of Gouda, Ouderkerk municipality, Zuid-Holland Province), the trajectory of the bypass and the planned industrial area west of the wastewater plant were not included in the project area. This 'boundary work' was supposed to facilitate easy decision making, because that way the plan would not depend on other decision-making processes. The precondition for development of the polder behind the lock was 'green-recreational' development as a result of the earlier initiatives of Werkgroep Gouda <--> Krimpenerwaard. This fitted well into



the goals of the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project for what they called a 'landscape park' at that location. The city of Gouda agreed that urban development was not an option for the polder.

The design process resulted in a plan called Masterplan Stolwijkersluis (Van der Stoep & Van den Brink, 2006). See figure 5.13. The two major elements of the plan are the functional restoration of the lock and a city garden in the polder behind the lock (see Box 5.2).

Box 5.2: Main points of Masterplan Stolwijkersluis: restoration of the lock and a city garden

Restoration of the lock and a connection over water between Gouda city centre and the Krimpenerwaard:

The lock will be restored to facilitate boating between the river and the Krimpenerwaard. The Masterplan expressly connects to the plans of the city of Gouda for the Cultural and Port Quarter and to its Urban Development Vision. This should enable boating between the historic port in the city and the Krimpenerwaard, via the Stolwijkersluis lock. This way, residents and visitors can enjoy the rich cultural heritage and the contrast between the compactness of the city and the openness of the polder landscape.

Green development in the southern fringe of Gouda: a city garden in the Veerstablok polder

The polder behind the lock, which is bordered by the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood, the wastewater plant and the future bypass, will be developed as a city garden. In the middle of the garden, a water labyrinth is constructed which is accessible on foot or by boat. The water labyrinth will also facilitate the exhibition of land art which inspires reflection on the surrounding landscape.

Figure 5.13: Masterplan Stolwijkersluis (Van der Stoep & Van den Brink, 2006)



Figure 5.14: Images of one of the design workshops for the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis (December 2004)



In 2006, just before the municipal elections, the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis was festively presented at the city hall in Gouda. This timing was supposed to facilitate prioritization on the political agenda of the new Municipal Executive. Indeed, many councillors were present because of the municipal election. And indeed the Masterplan was recorded in the policy programme of the new Municipal Executive. Moreover, a few months later, the government organizations that had participated in the steering group signed a Declaration of Intent to jointly investigate the feasibility of implementing the Masterplan.

Figure 5.15: The signing of the Declaration of Intent for the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis, July 2006⁷



⁷ (source: Pim Mul, gemeente Gouda)

Financial setbacks and mobilization of the Krimpenerwaard

By signing the declaration, the city of Gouda, the provincial government, the water board, Landinrichtingscommissie Krimpenerwaard, and Dienst Landelijk Gebied agreed to make every effort to achieve the goals of the plan. However, the political agenda setting of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis did not automatically mean that the plan was embedded into policymaking. Therefore, implementation was not guaranteed. In fact, the declaration contained a clause that would enable the water board to start a demolition procedure if, after a year, finances for restoration of the lock failed to appear.

Implementation of the ideas in the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis was now in the hands of the four government organizations, with a leading role for the city of Gouda. They started a (financial) feasibility study (Dienst Landelijk Gebied, 2006) and submitted a restoration proposal for the lock to Rijksdienst voor Archeologie, Cultuurlandschap en Monumenten (RACM: National Monuments Conservancy). However, they soon faced a number of serious financial setbacks. In December 2006, the restoration proposal was declined. This was a serious setback because the national funding for the lock was supposed to cover 60% of the total costs of restoration, which were estimated at a little more than two million euros. The participating governments did not want to provide that financing themselves, because other investments were higher up on their agendas. Moreover, a substantial part of the funding for landscape development was cancelled because the national system for rural planning was drastically changed⁸ and no longer accepted the goals in the Masterplan as relevant for the rural redevelopment project. By January 2007, almost no financial prospect was left for the various plan elements. As a consequence, the coalition partner that represented the Rural Redevelopment Project, Dienst Landelijk Gebied, had to cancel its participation in the steering group for the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis. Moreover, the participation of the water board was uncertain because the restoration proposal was declined. The water board had continuously urged fast decision making in light of dike's water safety and now had an argument to start the demolition procedure. Nevertheless, the city of Gouda alderman was able to convince the water board that a new proposal to RACM would have more chance of success.

On top of the financial problems, the steering group had to deal with the conflicting interests of efficient implementation of the new road through the southern fringe and the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis goal of improving recreational mobility between city and countryside. The new road would form an impassable barrier for slow transport modes (by boat, bike, horse, and on foot). The plan suggested removing the barrier by providing a slow-traffic tunnel and a higher bridge over the Stolwijkervaart waterway. The provincial department in charge of implementing the bypass, however, was not open to these ideas because of the extra costs. Although the provincial government

⁸ Introduction of the Investeringsbudget Landelijk Gebied (ILG) in January 2007.

participated in the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis steering group, it was difficult to achieve any sort of coordination between the provincial departments in charge of cultural heritage, nature development, and the bypass. Contact with the bypass project team was scarce and only concerned negotiations about compensating nature values in the city garden mentioned in the Masterplan. Moreover, the steering group did not formally attempt to negotiate the removal of the bypass barrier and only discussed this behind the scenes. In fact, the city of Gouda considered it more convenient to leave the negotiations to citizen and interest groups in the fringe. The alderman feared that if he officially pleaded for alternative arrangements, the province would argue that the city of Gouda should pay the extra costs.

As a result of the financial setbacks and coordination problems, the coalition of governments was at risk of disintegration. At this point, the municipality of Gouda stood alone in its attempts to achieve elements of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis. However, the municipality had no budget to implement the plans and therefore invested much energy in convincing the provincial government and the water board to stay on and to find other ways to implement elements of the Masterplan. The provincial government in particular was considered the key agent for providing solutions: as a funder and coordinator of the various policy streams relevant for implementation of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis.

Meanwhile citizen groups and interest organizations had become impatient because of all the delay and the 'black box' of the negotiation process between the involved government organizations. They publicly questioned the activeness and intentions of the city of Gouda during a debate in a meeting of the city council (19 April 2007). The city council adopted a resolution urging the Municipal Executive to take immediate action with regard to the provincial government's participation. Another initiative directed at the provincial government's participation came from Werkgroep Gouda <--> Krimpenerwaard. Werkgroep Gouda <--> Krimpenerwaard believed that the provincial government could only be convinced to actively participate in the implementation of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis if they considered the Masterplan a regional rather than a local matter. To achieve such a turn in the provincial government's thinking, Werkgroep Gouda <--> Krimpenerwaard reasoned that support of parties in the Krimpenerwaard region was required. If the Krimpenerwaard somehow demonstrated interest in the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis, then the plan would be relevant for regional development and therefore provincial support.

Werkgroep Gouda <--> Krimpenerwaard believed that the regional relevance of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis was exemplified in their ideas for recreational connections between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard countryside, especially in relation to water. In their eyes, boating in the polder would provide a new market for the Krimpenerwaard that would partly compensate the economic decline of the agricultural sector. Werkgroep Gouda <-->



Krimpenerwaard connected its ideas for boating in the polder to the goals of the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project (see Box 5.3) which was high on the agenda of the provincial government. They could count on support from partners in the Krimpenerwaard with whom they had allied in the fight for an alternative road trajectory.

Box 5.3: Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project and the Veenweidepact

The Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project started halfway through the 1990s. In 1999, the agreements were recorded in a general plan (Landinrichtingscommissie Krimpenerwaard, 1999). In 2005, these agreements were partly revised as a result of changes in national water policy. Policymakers in wet meadow areas, such as the Krimpenerwaard, had to reconsider their water management. The Krimpenerwaard faced the task of drastically decreasing the number of water levels. A lower number of water levels meant that nature areas and agricultural areas had to be separated much more robustly than in the original plan. The Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project stakeholders negotiated a new plan and recorded the outcome in a pact ("Veenweidepact Krimpenerwaard", 22 December 2005, Bergambacht). The name of the pact reflects the wet meadow landscape.

The Veenweidepact records the new agreements between the municipalities in the Krimpenerwaard, the water board, the provincial government and various interest groups about rural redevelopment in the Krimpenerwaard. The main goals are conservation and development of the valuable agricultural landscape with its nature values. The most important precondition for these developments is preventing additional subsidence. A major task in the pact is the realization of 2,450 ha nature in combination with providing new economic opportunities for farmers. The agreements about the total size of the new nature areas remains the same as in the previous redevelopment plan of 1999, however the pact entails new agreements about the boundaries and locations of the nature areas. The provincial government is taking the lead in the implementation of the Veenweidepact and in the negotiation with other involved parties.

One of the trajectories of the Veenweidepact was aimed at finding new economic 'carriers' for the valuable landscape and the liveability for residents of the region. The trajectory, called Renewing Entrepreneurship (Vernieuwend Ondernemerschap: van der Wal and Joldersma, 2007), aimed to achieve a stronger rural economy, alternatives for contemporary agricultural business that are disappearing as a result of water level changes and nature development, and sustainable management of the characteristic wet meadow landscape.

However, getting the authorities in the Krimpenerwaard to join the coalition around the lock was not an easy endeavour as relations between the rural municipalities in the Krimpenerwaard and the city of Gouda had always been tense. Stakeholders in the Krimpenerwaard looked suspiciously at any meddling that came from the city of Gouda. Years previously, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard had experienced the distrust and restraint on the part of stakeholders in the Krimpenerwaard with respect to ideas about leisure and tourism in the Krimpenerwaard prompted by stakeholders from the city (personal communication H. du Pré, 24-09-2009). Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard expected support only if ideas could be connected to initiatives

developed by stakeholders from the Krimpenerwaard. That is why the group linked up with a civic initiative in the Krimpenerwaard, called *Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren* (Veenvaren Initiative Group). The name of the initiative, Veenvaren (peat boating), refers to the possibility of exploring the typical wet (or peat) meadow polder by boat as well as using the historic waterways of a two-hundred-year old peat cultivation plan that had never been implemented. See figure 5.16.

Figure 5.16: Possible routes for 'peat boating', extracted from the *Veenvaren Plan* (*Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren Krimpenerwaard, 2007*)



The *Werkgroep Gouda* ↔ *Krimpenerwaard* spokesman tells about why and how he connected to *Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren*:

Although all the time there were people from the city of Gouda who were willing to write letters, I did not think that this made sense anymore. It is nice to write yet another letter, but the people from the Krimpenerwaard have to say it! There were people there who supported the ideas, but that had to become public somehow. These people had to be provoked. One had to make sure that they would write or sign letters. That got a start then. It began with helping the idea of Veenvaren. ...[The leader of Veenvaren] and I had talked before. He was completely crazy about wooden scows and he had a boating route in mind of

about 25 km provided the Stolwijkersluis lock could be restored. I loved those ideas! And then we helped him because this was what we needed to get the lock restored. The voice of the Krimpenerwaard!⁵⁻⁵

The leader of Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren lived in the village of Stolwijk in the Krimpenerwaard, and as a former sailor and lockkeeper working for the provincial government of Zuid-Holland he had a lot of experience with, and passion for, sailing historical boats through the polder. He wanted to restore the historical sailing routes in the Krimpenerwaard to enable small-scale recreational boating. Like the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman, the leader of Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren wanted only environment-friendly and small-scale forms of boating, and he also liked the idea of sailing from the polder to Gouda city centre.

The leader of Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren worked out his ideas in a plan which he named Plan Veenvaren (Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren Krimpenerwaard, 2007), again referring to boating through the wet meadows in the Krimpenerwaard (see Box 5.4). He founded Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren Krimpenerwaard with a few other sympathizers. Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard offered to help the group with lobbying and distributing the plan. They financed the production of a brochure summarizing the ideas of the Veenvaren Plan in an attractive form (figure 5.17). They advised him to invite a particular provincial councillor, who originated from the Krimpenerwaard, to write the foreword for the brochure. Because of her position and name in the region, she could attach extra weight to the plan.

Box 5.4: The plan VeenVaren in a nutshell (Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren Krimpenerwaard, 2007

“Veenvaren in the Krimpenerwaard” (translated: peat boating in the Krimpenerwaard): A leisure option, flowing from the Krimpenerwaard Veenweidepact 2006 and using the element in the polder that is most characteristic for this peat meadow landscape, is: THE WATER. With the motto: ‘small-scale and nature-friendly water cruising is invaluable to this polder!’ the goal is to offer boating relaxation in the Stolwijk and Berkenwoude polders, for both country people and urban dwellers as tourists.⁹

In cooperation with Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren, the story about the fringe was extended with a story about the economic value of a boating connection between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard. In this extended story, the urban dweller was no longer the centre of interest, but rather the entrepreneurs in the Krimpenerwaard who could increase their income with pleasure cruisers. Part of the story concerned the economic benefits that could come from visitors to the city of Gouda who would make excursions ‘from the cheese market to

⁹ Dutch translation: Een recreatie-optie, voortvloeiend uit het ‘Veenweidepact Krimpenerwaard 2006’; en gebruikmakend van het element in de polder, dat het meest karakteristiek voor dit veenweidegebied is: HET WATER. Onder het motto: ‘kleinschalige natuurvriendelijke recreatievaart is voor deze polder goud waard!’, aanbieden van vaarontspanning in vaarpolders Stolwijk en Berkenwoude, voor zowel streekbewoner, randstedeling als in ons land verblijvende vakantieganger.

the land of the cheese'. This economic prospect would appeal not only to entrepreneurs in the Krimpenerwaard but also to stakeholders in the city of Gouda.

Figure 5.17: Cover of the brochure with the Veenvaren Plan (Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren Krimpenerwaard, 2007)



VeenVaren

VEENVAREN IN DE POLDERS VAN DE KRIMPENERWAARD
een uitgave van de initiatiefgroep Veenvaren Krimpenerwaard
oktober 2007

VOORWOORD VAN A.M. VAN GINKEL-DE GRAAF

Veenvaren in de Krimpenerwaard

Voor u ligt een plan om kleinschalige recreatieve en toeristische projecten in een natuurlijk agrarisch gebied via het water van de polders in Stolwijk en Berkenwoude aan te bieden.

Een goed doordacht plan wat het waard is om tot uitvoering te worden gebracht. Het varen door de polders zal slechts worden voorbehouden aan vaartuigen met hand-, wind- en elektrische voortstuwing, wat tegemoet komt aan de eisen van deze tijd voor recreatie in kwetsbare gebieden.

Dit plan geeft een extra stimulans voor de Krimpenerwaard als toeristische trekpleister voor zowel de eigen inwoners als daarbuiten en vakantiegangers.

In samenwerking met regionale historische-, natuur- en agrarische verenigingen wordt een blik geworpen op de karakteristieke geschiedenis van dit waterrijke veenpolderland. Het is mijns inziens een plan met toekomstwaarde.

Ik raad u aan het te lezen, zodat u zichzelf kunt overtuigen van de waarde van het plan. Het zal een nieuwe impuls geven aan de toekomst voor de Krimpenerwaard op agrarische-, natuur- en landschappelijk gebied. A.M. van Ginkel-de Graaf.

Ank van Ginkel is vvd Statenlid voor de Provincie Zuid-Holland en inwonster van de Krimpenerwaard

Wat biedt Veenvaren?

Het op gebiedseigen wijze ontdekken van deze Middeleeuwsontgonnen vaarpolders, van oudsher agrarisch gebied, bestaande uit tweederde land en eenderde water!

Veenweide zover het oog reikt, verspreide griendbosjes als groene bloemkolen dragend, kilometerslange brede hoofdwatergangen, avontuurlijk te bevaren.

Stuif onder aantrekkelijke wind met gebold zeil over Stolwijksche Vaart, Landscheiding of Stolwijksche Vliet, boven de hoofden jagende Hollandse luchten.

Roel, peddel of kloeit je uren warm, om daarna af te koelen in een diepe, mooi opgeknapte, rietomkraagde en van hakhout voorziene veenput.

Reliek van de groots opgezette, doch uiteindelijk jammerlijk mislukte, vroeg 19-eeuwse vervening.

Stil overnachten op een boerenkampveldje, een volgende dag verdere varen met buitende en luid roepende weidevogels, geritsel en gegolf van onbekommerd kuitschietende vis, tussen vers opgeschoten water- en moerasbegroeiing.

Onderbreek natuurvriendelijk elektrisch varen, op een aantrekkelijk geplante picknickplaats, goal een hengeltijd uit, verdiep je in de poldergeheimen.

Aansluitend bezoek aan natuurterrein, veenlandschatten tonend tijdens een lange wandeltocht.

Oude boerderijen, soms scheefgezonden in turfgrond, duizenden sloten, smal, breed, hier en daar weer een veenput, er wordt niet afgeweken; de aangegeven route blijft vervolgd, leidraad in dit onmetelijk wateroord.

» lees verder op pagina 2

Veenvaren in de Krimpenerwaard

Een recreatie-optie, voortvloeiend uit het 'Veenweidepact Krimpenerwaard 2006'; en gebruikmakend van het element in de polder, dat het meest karakteristiek voor dit veenweidegebied is: HET WATER.

Onder het motto: 'kleinschalige natuurvriendelijke recreatievaart is voor deze polder goud waard!', aanbieden van vaarontspanning in vaarpolders Stolwijk en Berkenwoude, voor zowel streekbewoner, randstedeling als in ons land verblijvende vakantieganger.

VeenVaren OKTOBER 2007

The leader of Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren and the spokesman for Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard managed to get an appointment with the alderman from one of the Krimpenerwaard municipalities (Vlist) in spring 2007. They already knew that this alderman was interested in improving the opportunities for recreational boating and that he supported the idea of restoring the Stolwijkersluis lock. The alderman was impressed by the story

about Veenwaren and agreed to introduce the plan in the discussions with the other municipalities about regional tourism and leisure policy. Nevertheless, these discussions again demonstrated how touchy the subject of boating in the polder was. The other municipalities exercised restraint. The outcome of the discussions about the Krimpenerwaard Recreation Vision was a document that mainly addressed restoration of the lock as a threat to the peace and quiet in the polder because it would lead to mass tourism (Natuur en Recreatieschap Krimpenerwaard, 2007). Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman kept in contact with the Vlist alderman. He asked the alderman to use his contacts with the president of the water board and the Provincial Executive to stress that parties in the Krimpenerwaard were becoming interested in the lock restoration.

Apart from the contact with the Vlist alderman, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard and Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren found other ways to attract the attention of parties in the Krimpenerwaard. They used various formal and informal communication strategies: for example, they talked formally and informally to other local governors in the region (municipalities of Bergambacht and Ouderkerk), spoke at conferences, and researched opportunities for European funding (LEADER). Slowly, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard and Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren achieved some results. The story about Veenwaren scored highly at a conference about innovative entrepreneurship in the Krimpenerwaard (Van der Wal & Joldersma, 2007). Moreover, they got the chance to speak to water board officials. As a result, the water board attached the Veenwaren Plan to the new proposal for restoration of the historic lock (December 2007) in order to strengthen the story about the cultural and economic value of the lock for the region.

However, in June 2008, yet again RACM declined the proposal, despite all the energy that had been put into it. That was the limit for the water board. The safety of the dike was still threatened by the weak spot of the lock. As at that point there seemed to be no chance left for restoration, the water board wanted to proceed to demolish the lock. The water board asked the city of Gouda to cooperate in light of the agreements they had signed two years earlier. These agreements between the city of Gouda and the water board also meant the end of the steering group for the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis. The coalition of governments now really had disintegrated.

The news about the declined proposal and the subsequent actions of the water board and the city of Gouda caused a whirlwind of reactions from citizen and interest groups, individual councillors from the city of Gouda, and municipalities in the Krimpenerwaard. The water board agreed not to start the demolition procedure immediately in order to allow some time to develop alternative plans.

Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard came up with a plan for a portage¹⁰ that would safeguard the dike while stakeholders were trying to find enough finance to restore the lock. Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, the history

10 een overtoom.

association die Goude, Stichting Restauratie Stolwijkersluis, and the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood discussed possibilities for financing and lobbying. Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard again emphasized the importance of support from the Krimpenerwaard as a way to get support from the water board and the provincial government as well.

Meanwhile, in 2008, Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren became a foundation called Stichting Veenwaren and worked hard on publicity for the story about Veenwaren. In summer 2008, they contributed to a documentary on national TV about Dutch cultural landscapes¹¹. In the documentary, the presenter can be seen talking to the leader of Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren while they are boating across a waterway in the Krimpenerwaard. Filming from the boat demonstrated the advantages and joys of exploring the polder by boat. Furthermore, a number of articles appeared in the local and regional newspapers, and the foundation members lobbied through their contacts in the Krimpenerwaard. The Veenwaren Plan had also drawn the attention of the provincial government. The Veenwaren Plan brochure was officially presented to the Provincial Executive at the end of 2008.

The history association die Goude sent a letter of protest to the Minister of Culture. The letter was co-signed by a dozen of other organizations from both the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard, such as Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard, the neighbourhood Stolwijkersluis and Stichting Veenwaren. They were highly indignant about the way RACM had assessed the subsidy proposals. Despite the well worked out restoration plan, RACM had based its ranking of projects only on the total costs and not on the quality of the plans. The letter to the minister emphasized a sense of urgency, arguing that delaying the restoration would effectively mean demolition, unlike in 'normal' restoration projects which could survive delay (e.g. churches, fortresses). A copy was sent to the executives of the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard municipalities with the request to send a letter of support to the minister. The municipal executive of the city of Gouda refused because of their agreements with the water board. However, the Krimpenerwaard authorities did sign the letter of support; this was an important moment in the agenda-setting process as the Krimpenerwaard authorities through this act officially confirmed their support.

In particular, the Vlist alderman and his colleagues on the municipal council were outraged with the compliant attitude of the city of Gouda. The alderman wanted to do more than sign the letter of support to the minister and appealed to the president of the water board and the Provincial Executive to prevent demolition and instead support the restoration plans in connection with the Veenwaren Plan. He had easy access to the formal and informal consultations with these executives because he represented the municipality of Vlist in the steering group for the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project, called Strategiegroep Veenweidepact. The president of the water board agreed to defer demolition for another year. Moreover, the Provincial Executive gave in to the argument that restoration of the lock would benefit the recreational sector

11 NCRV documentary *Op reis met Van Rossem*, episode 'Het Westen', broadcast 2009, April 9.

in the polder. They agreed to find out whether it would be possible to use a few hundred thousand euros from the funding for the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project.

At the same time, some entrepreneurs were demonstrating in everyday practice that boating really was a promising new market. They were already attracting large numbers of tourists who wanted to sail over the waters in the Krimpenerwaard. The Vlist alderman invested much energy in convincing his fellow executives from other local authorities by inviting them on boat trips and by showing them the opportunities of the waterway network on maps that Stichting Veenwaren had provided. All these factors together contributed to a positive atmosphere among local authorities and agricultural entrepreneurs in the Krimpenerwaard.

The provincial government slowly warms up to issues in the fringe

Although restoration of the lock was still uncertain, other elements from the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis – the city garden and the slow-traffic tunnel for cycling, hiking, and horseback riding – were successfully pushed onto the provincial agenda in 2008 and 2009. Both these issues point to a significant turn in the attitude of the provincial government. Previously, the provincial government stood firm in its view that the fringe was a local matter for which the city of Gouda was responsible; but now the provincial government acknowledged the regional importance of the fringe by investing millions of euros in the slow-traffic tunnel and nature restoration.

In autumn 2008, the city of Gouda informed the stakeholders that negotiations with the provincial government about the city garden were at an advanced stage. The area would again become part of the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project so that the land could be added to the planned nature reserve in the north of the Krimpenerwaard. In 2009, Gouda transferred its land behind the dike to the provincial government for the construction of the bypass and the city garden. The alderman named the city garden Veenweidepark¹², referring to the wet meadow landscape of the Krimpenerwaard as well as the Veenweidepact, the accord between the local and regional authorities in the Krimpenerwaard. The name Veenweidepark symbolized that the area was meant not only as a city garden for urban dwellers but also as an area that was important for the nature and leisure goals in the Veenweidepact. In 2011, the Veenweidepark was included in the Zoning Plan Stolwijkersluis with reference to the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis (Gemeente Gouda, 2011).

The construction of a cycling tunnel, enabling a slow-traffic connection between city and countryside, was achieved through lobbying in provincial politics. For years on end, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard and the

12 Like the Veenweidepark in a village nearby (Oudewater), constructed in 2010.

Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood had pleaded with the bypass project team for a slow-traffic connection. However, the project team would not consider these proposals because they would increase the costs of the project. In summer 2008, the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman talked about this problem with a provincial councillor he knew. The provincial councillor raised the idea of a cycling tunnel in a meeting of the Provincial Mobility Committee. The Provincial Executive of Leisure who represented the Provincial Board of Executives at this meeting¹³ was enthusiastic about the plan. He liked the plan because it connected well to his task of improving city–countryside connections as well as the recreational accessibility of The Green Heart. He decided that the tunnel should be included in the design of the bypass and was unanimously supported by the Provincial Council. Through the provincial government, financial resources were found in a budget to improve the network of cycling routes. Political lobbying proved much more successful than lobbying the civil service.

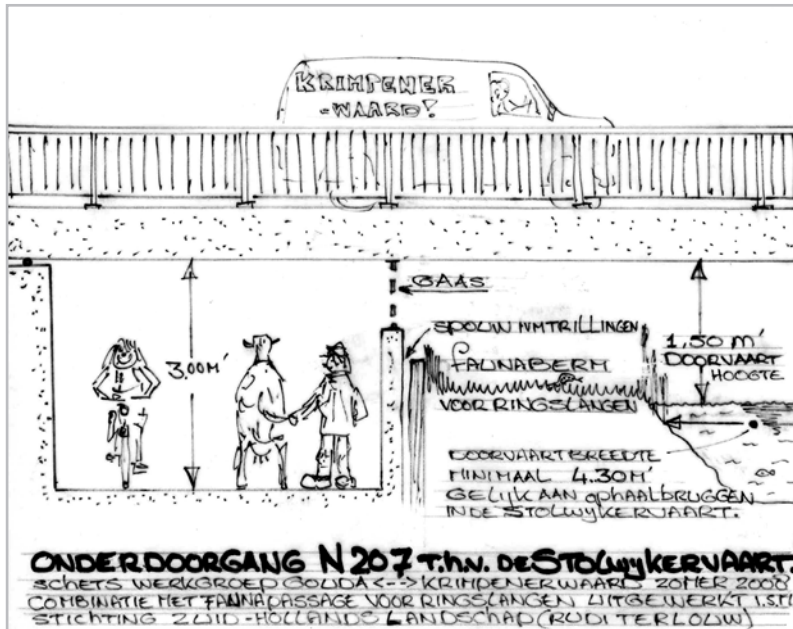
Figure 5.18: Sketch plan for the Veenweidepark(Dienst Landelijk Gebied, 2012)



By connecting the city garden to the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project and the cycling tunnel to the provincial ambition to improve the accessibility of The Green Heart, the provincial government acknowledged the regional significance of the fringe.

¹³ Report of the meeting of the Provincial Council Committee for Mobility, Knowledge and Economy, 17 September 2008, provincial government building Den Haag.

Figure 5.19: The Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard's proposal for a slow traffic tunnel



Happily ever after: the Stolwijersluis is saved

In April 2009, the Minister of Culture replied to the letter and supporting letters from the history association die Goude and partner organizations about the rejected subsidy proposal for the historic lock. In his response, the minister showed understanding for the concerns about the lock. He offered the owner, the water board, an opportunity to renegotiate the subsidy proposal with RACM. However, the economic crisis presented a new opportunity which made a renegotiation with RACM unnecessary. In the course of 2009, it became clear that the state would grant every provincial government a crisis fund for restoration projects that could be implemented right away and that would generate immediate employment (Crisis- en Herstelwet: Crisis and Recovery Law). The provincial government had to decide which restoration projects would get this subsidy. The opportunity presented by the crisis fund spurred the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard municipalities into action as the lock restoration plans fitted precisely into the conditions imposed by the provincial government.

Because of the earlier period in which civic initiatives had managed to interest the Krimpenerwaard municipalities, the route to cooperation between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard was now logical. The city of Gouda alderman took the initiative to contact the Vlist alderman. By lobbying together,

they emphasized that the restoration was supported by both the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard, making clear to the provincial government that the project was widely supported in the region.

A few months later, in autumn 2009, the Provincial Board of Executives decided to nominate the Stolwijkersluis lock for investment from the crisis fund. The Provincial Executive of Leisure and Tourism championed the choice of the lock project by explaining that the plan for the Stolwijkersluis was already prepared and could be implemented right away. It was a practical choice because the crisis fund allocation was conditional on implementation of the renovation projects in 2010 and 2011¹⁴. This is where the long process in the earlier period finally paid off, because all efforts had slowly resulted in wide support and a well-worked-out plan for the historic lock. When the right opportunity presented itself, in the form of the crisis fund, it only took a relatively small effort to seize it.

Although the Provincial Board was persuaded, the council still had to be convinced of the value of the project for provincial interests. In this political process, proponents still feared opposition from the Zuid-Hollands Landschap nature organization and conservative farmers. Two persons from Stichting Veenwaren and the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood were delegated to explain the economic and cultural value of the lock for the Krimpenerwaard and the community of Stolwijkersluis. Their passionate pleadings were considered essential to obtain a positive decision from the Provincial Council¹⁵. The positive decisions of the Provincial Executive and the Provincial Council¹⁶ confirmed again a changing attitude on the part of the provincial government with regard to investments in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe. The provincial government co-financed the project by investing a substantial part of the budget in the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project. That was remarkable, because only a few years earlier the provincial government had excluded all investments into the fringe from that particular budget.

Co-financing was also required from the Krimpenerwaard municipalities, the city of Gouda, and the water board. To the Krimpenerwaard municipalities, such a financial commitment had been a bridge too far, because of feared protest among farmers and other stakeholders. However, the contributions of the other parties convinced the Krimpenerwaard municipalities to invest also. More crucial, however, was the slowly developing awareness that boating was not a threat to the Krimpenerwaard, but an opportunity for its economic

14 As recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Provincial Council Committee "Society" (Verslag van de vergadering van de Statencommissie Samenleving, gehouden op 6 januari 2010 in het provinciehuis te Den Haag)

15 As recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Provincial Council Committee "Society" (Verslag van de vergadering van de Statencommissie Samenleving, gehouden op 6 januari 2010 in het provinciehuis te Den Haag).

16 On 27 January 2010 the Provincial Council approved the proposal (minutes Provincial Council Zuid-Holland, 27 January 2010, provinciehuis Den Haag).



development. Stichting Veenveren's lobbying and discussions with agricultural entrepreneurs in the context of the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project had broken the taboo around boating in the polder.

The last obstacle was decision making by the water board about cooperation and co-financing in the restoration project. On 31 March 2010, a majority of the water board council accepted the proposal for co-financing¹⁷. Stakeholders considered this an important turning point because the water board, owner of the lock, had never invested much energy in pursuing restoration. They did what they formally had agreed to do as owner of the lock: submitted a subsidy proposal to RACM and participated in the steering group; but the water board had not been actively pursuing restoration by investing money or lobbying together with other organizations. On the contrary, the water board saw the lock as an unwanted hole in the dike. However, the warming up of agricultural entrepreneurs and local authorities in the Krimpenerwaard to the idea of boating in the polder helped build political support in the water board. Moreover, the crisis-fund condition of immediate implementation fitted precisely into the wish of the water board to do something about the urgent water safety problem of the dike. The timing could not have been better for cooperation in the restoration project.

The restoration project started officially on June 17, 2010, in the presence of representatives of the participating governments, as well as initiators and supporters from the interest and citizen groups who had been involved in the process. The aldermen for the city of Gouda and the municipality of Vlist refer to this presence of various stakeholders as evidence of the many stakeholders that contributed to the final success of the restoration: 'success knows many fathers'. On 8 September 2012 (National Monuments Day), the restored lock was festively reopened.

Figure 5.20: Opening of the restored lock Stolwijkersluis, 8 September 2013



¹⁷ Recorded in the meeting minutes of the Verenigde Vergadering Hoogheemraadschap van Schieland en de Krimpenerwaard, 31 March 2010, Rotterdam.

Summing up: shifting stories and coalitions

Storytelling about the future of the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe appears to really take off when initiatives emerged to address the neglect and congestion of the fringe. This movement was triggered by the design process for the Hollandsche IJssel Project. Coalitions shifted from a group of Gouda city residents who were mainly oriented towards redevelopment of the city to a small group that wanted to prevent further urbanization in the open and green polder that bordered the inner city. This shift was a crucial point in getting fringe-area issues onto the policy agenda, because it was the first time that citizens collectively expressed their concern about spatial development in the area. Moreover, it formed the beginning of the story construction about future developments and the beginning of coalition building in the fringe area. The story about Gouda Havenstad was extended to a story about an alternative future for the fringe, framed as Fringe Naturally, in reaction to authorities' plans that would lead to further congestion and urbanization. An alternative story was proposed about integrated development of the area in which landscape values would be maintained and strengthened. Important factors that enabled the promotion of this story were windows of opportunity presented by competitions and the efforts of a few passionate individuals who prevented demolition of the historic lock, designed alternative plans, and seized windows of opportunity.

Protests against the government plans for a new road marked a new tipping point in the agenda-setting process. The story that was being told about the fringe focused on the protection of nature and included a new element or event about constructing an alternative trajectory that would be environment friendly and as financially feasible as proposals that the government had suggested. New partners were brought into the coalition, namely Zuid-Hollands Landschap and Bewonersgroep Ouderkerk, as well as residents from the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood. Important in the light of agenda setting were the efforts of Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard to build a friendly relationship with the municipality by positioning itself as a stable and constructive negotiation partner for the municipality.

Next, the initiative for the development of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis brought about a shift in the positioning of landscape values in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe on the policy agenda. The plan catalysed the efforts of citizens' local initiatives into a project that was supported by local and regional governments and a whole range of other actors, such as experts from outside and the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood residents. The lock project presented a new arena for social groups and residents of the area to discuss again a green and recreational development of the area with the involved governments. Moreover, the project triggered a shift in the story told. Although the restoration of the lock had always been part of the goals of Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard and other organizations in the city of Gouda, it had not been the main issue; but now suddenly the story revolved around the lock and its social, economic, and



cultural meaning for people in the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard. The lock was now the 'leading character' in the story about the fringe, whereas the issue of landscape conservation had a subsidiary role.

Financial setbacks and the threat of the water board to demolish the lock formed the following tipping point in the agenda-setting process. First, financial setbacks threatened the implementation of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis. This triggered the disintegration of the governmental coalition as well as a shift to a story that emphasized the regional value, for the Krimpenerwaard region, of landscape elements in the fringe. All eyes were directed at the provincial government as the government actor who could solve financial and coordination problems. Whereas the city of Gouda tried hard to make the provincial government problem owner of the plan, the original initiators tried to convince the provincial government of the regional importance of their proposals by building a coalition with interest groups, entrepreneurs, and local governments in the Krimpenerwaard. In this process, the story of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis was linked with issues of importance to groups in the Krimpenerwaard (the Veenvaren Plan, new economic activities for farmers).

The call of the water board to demolish the lock triggered new collective action from citizen and interest groups as well as local authorities in the Krimpenerwaard. The indignation about the intention to demolish the lock triggered a wider movement in which the taboo on discussing pleasure cruising was slowly breached. Although the support from the Krimpenerwaard was mainly symbolic and was not yet translated into a prioritization of the lock in budget plans, it proved to be crucial in the process of warming up the provincial government and the water board for decision making later on. The mobilization of the Krimpenerwaard as a result of financial setbacks and the demolition threat are therefore considered important tipping points in the agenda-setting process. The original story about the encounter between city and countryside now included new storylines that emphasized the meaning of the fringe area for economic and nature goals in the Krimpenerwaard.

The final tipping point that we narrated was marked by the opportunity presented by the crisis fund. The signalling of this fund resulted in cooperation between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard municipalities as well as a revived coalition with the provincial government and the water board to enable restoration of the Stolwijkersluis lock. This tipping point marks a turn in the attitude of the Krimpenerwaard, the water board, and most importantly the provincial government with regard to the importance of the lock. The lock and its environment moved from a local and minor concern to a project of regional importance worth an investment of several millions of euros.

To conclude, in this part of the chapter we have identified tipping points as well as the events leading up to these tipping points. The case narrative points to changes in coalitions and demonstrates how the story about the fringe developed and

was adjusted to become connected to policy stories that gave access to (financial) support. Moreover, the narrative shows how certain events and circumstances triggered new action and change. Finally, the narrative contains many examples of certain individuals who invested much energy in the process and seemed to play key roles. This raises the questions of which of those aspects – focusing events, storytelling and framing processes, perseverance, and creative campaigning by individuals – was most decisive as a tipping point in the agenda-setting process and how they relate to one another. Why did some stories attract attention and support, whereas others faded?

In the following sections, we analyse how framing processes, focusing events, and individual agents related to one another and the extent to which they explain tipping points. In section 2, we analyse the strategies by which frames, stories, and people were aligned. In section 3, we analyse the role of trigger events in tipping points, and in section 4 we analyse the role of individual agents in relation to other agenda-setting factors.

5.2 Focusing events

In the case narrative, we identified tipping points with regard to the process of putting issues in the urban–rural fringe of Gouda-Krimpenerwaard on the agenda of governments. At first glance, these tipping points seem to be directly triggered by certain events. An example of a trigger event from the case narrative is the water board's decision to start the lock demolition process, which resulted in strong protests and mobilization of not only civic groups but also local governments from the Krimpenerwaard. This is illustrated by the following statement of the Werkgroep Gouda ↔ Krimpenerwaard spokesman:

And then there was the shock that the subsidy was not granted. And then the Krimpenerwaard woke up. Then even councillors in Schoonhoven [a small town some 15 kilometers from Gouda] started to interfere.⁵⁻⁶

The mobilizing effect of the water board's announcement is confirmed by the Vlist alderman:

There was a newspaper that said 'end of story' and I saw a letter in which the Gouda alderman wrote that he would not object to demolition. And I thought 'what are you doing man!' And then we decided to work on it.⁵⁻⁷

Another example of a trigger event was the economic crisis and the state's decision to provide a crisis fund for restoration projects that generated employment. This triggered a new collective lobby of the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard to garner the provincial government's support for restoration of the lock. The



result was successful agenda setting about the restoration and the actual start of the restoration project financed by the city of Gouda, the Krimpenerwaard, the provincial government, and the water board.

The water board's action and the crisis fund seem to be crucial events that directly triggered tipping points in the agenda-setting process. Yet, as the case narrative demonstrates, in neither case would tipping points have occurred without all the events and interactions between actors that happened in the period before. During the 25 years of lobbying to protect the landscape values of the fringe area, the provincial government and local authorities slowly began to take notice of the proposals of civic initiatives and became aware of the growing social support for their ideas. Constant talk in the media, feedback groups, personal contact, and campaigns, like the yearly dawn walk, resulted in a slow filtering through of ideas of civic initiatives in local and provincial government offices. It was a process of softening up or warming up the policy system to new ideas (cf. Kingdon, 2003).

Many of the ideas that are now being implemented had already been envisioned in the 1980s. Ever since the 1980s, civic initiatives have tried to attract attention for those ideas and discussed them in numerous formal and informal conversations. In a period of approximately 15 years, conversations between citizen initiatives and their supporters and opponents resulted in the construction of a story about the case area that appealed to government officials. Werkgroep Gouda <-> Krimpenerwaard, which had already articulated its ideas in the second half of 1990s, was able to implement most of the ideas in the 10 years after that. Frames like 'the window to the Krimpenerwaard' and concrete measures have been adopted by the city of Gouda and are recorded in spatial plans and visions¹⁸ (H+N+S, 2001; OD205, 2004; OD205, 2005; Gemeente Gouda, 2005; Brons + partners, 2008). See also figures 5.21 and 5.22.

The idea of slow filtering through or warming up through various events and interactions is demonstrated as well by interviewees' statements. Interviewees talk about 'filtering through of ideas', 'ideas that slowly get into heads', and 'filing into memories'. For example, a member of Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard says:

It is a matter of persevering and holding out. Sometimes there is progress, if there is an alderman that feels something for the ideas. But next you are faced with an alderman that does not want to do anything or that does not know anything about it.⁵⁻⁸

And the former city of Gouda alderman:

What also played a role is a visit to the Krimpenerwaard by the Queen's commissioner and the whole Provincial Executive. During this visit, a local councillor from Vlist

18 Like the Stedenbouwkundige visie voor de binnenstad en haar randen (Urban design for the inner city and its edges: OD205, 2004; OD205, 2005) and the Ruimtelijke Structuurvisie Gouda 2005-2030 (Spatial Strategic Agenda Gouda 2005-2030: Gemeente Gouda, 2005).

municipality urged for support from the provincial government for restoration of the Stolwijersluis lock. I remember that I read this in the newspaper and that I thought: 'The lobbying work of Werkgroep Gouda <-> Krimpenerwaard and Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren and the indignation about the rejection of the subsidy for the lock has had effect!' ⁵⁻⁹

Figure 5.21: Sightlines that should not be obstructed by urban developments (Urban design for the inner city and its edges, OD205, 2005)



Note: below the sightlines to the polder Krimpenerwaard.

Figure 5.22: The Spatial Strategic Agenda Gouda 2005-2030 (Gemeente Gouda, 2005).



Note: The arrow below from the river front to the Krimpenerwaard refers to goal to restore the window to the Krimpenerwaard and to improve the spatial relation between the city and the polder.

The Vlist alderman argued that, although parties in the Krimpenerwaard were outraged by the intended demolition of the lock, initially this did not lead to immediate action by the authorities in the Krimpenerwaard. A number of related things happened that changed the reserved attitude of the Krimpenerwaard authorities and enabled their collective action when the opportunity of the crisis fund came along. For example, a number of people, including the alderman, had successfully created more support for the Veenvaren Plan among farmers. At the same time, a few pioneering entrepreneurs demonstrated that tourist boating as a new economic activity could actually work, and this was also used in the political lobbying. Many events and negotiations together resulted in agreement by the Krimpenerwaard authorities to contribute financially to restoration of the lock and to further discuss opportunities for pleasure cruising with the city of Gouda.

Civic initiatives accepted the slowness of the warming up process. They needed to be very patient, to hold out for a long time, in this case 15 years. In some periods, it was a matter of being patient and waiting until the right time came; and in some periods, it meant hard work and campaigning to seize windows of opportunity that were difficult to predict beforehand. The right time could also take the form of trigger events that provided new opportunities to link old ideas to new government priorities or 'hot' items, like in the example of the crisis fund. The introduction of new planning and policy processes triggered new action by civic initiatives to attract attention for their existing ideas. For example, the project Masterplan Stolwijkersluis could be organized because it connected well with the national Belvedere policy programme about combining spatial development and cultural heritage (Ministerie OC&W, 1999). Another reason was the prominence of water safety on the water board's agenda which ensured its commitment to the project. The cooperation of local and regional governments in the project provided an excellent new opportunity for civic initiatives to present ideas about the case area.

The case narrative demonstrates the significance of trigger events, but on the basis of the previous arguments (and the remainder of this chapter) we challenge the inclination to think of trigger events in terms of linear cause-and-effect relations. Tipping points were rather the result of a concurrence of events, past negotiations, and framing processes manifested in a slow softening up of the policy system, and people who recognized and exploited opportunities. This required civic initiatives to have a lot of patience and perseverance and a long-term commitment to the initiative. Patience, holding out, and attentiveness to meaningful windows of opportunity, were important qualities that enhanced agenda setting. Not everybody can maintain such patience and perceptivity for opportunities. It seems to take special people. Here, we touch upon the role of individual agents in agenda-setting processes. In section 4 we come back to the role of individuals. First, however, in the next section, we address the crucial process of framing and storytelling as a precursor to tipping points and how framing and storytelling resulted in decision makers being effectively warmed up to civic initiatives' proposals.

5.3 Alignment processes

The narrative shows that, from the beginning, initiatives have attempted to involve authorities such as the city of Gouda. This was a difficult task, as the various government actors interacted according to their own rules flowing from the institutional structure and policy frames that guided their actions. Moreover, government actors cooperated and interacted in 'spaces of engagement' (cf. Van Dijk et al., 2011) which were not directly accessible to non-governmental groups. Such exclusive spaces of engagement included, for example, steering groups for projects like the Hollandsche IJssel Project, the Veenweidepact, and the project for a bypass through the area.

Civic initiatives faced two problems while trying to engage government actors in their planning activities. First, citizens were involved via feedback groups but did not take part in decision making and interactions between the participating governments. Therefore, they could get only limited understanding of the political reasoning and policy frames that influenced actions. Second, where citizen initiatives were more concerned about the issues at stake, the talk in governmental steering groups and other venues concerned negotiations about organizational and institutional matters like the distribution of tasks and responsibilities, the distribution of financial investments and budgets, and embedding in existing policy programmes. Those existing policy programmes formed the structure according to which governments allocated resources as well as the rationale for prioritizing actions. From the perspective of citizens, much of the time and energy of government actors seemed to flow towards shifting responsibilities, steering away attention from issues that they were supposed to address. For example, negotiations in the governmental steering group for the implementation of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis stagnated because cooperation between the city of Gouda and the provincial government was very problematic, as illustrated by a civil servant from Gouda municipality:

The contact with the provincial government was troublesome. One didn't know who to talk to. There were conversations with various people who were not authorized to pass judgment or who didn't know how to create support within their own organization. Internally, communication within the provincial government was very difficult. Sometimes, the communication between civil servants in the provincial government ran through the municipality. Provincial civil servants used the municipality to get colleagues at the provincial government started. Everybody was dealing with his own professional field. The civil servant in the culture department was only interested in the lock and not in the city garden. Next, there was somebody from the green department, who did nothing with the lock and had no contact with the civil servant in the culture department. Next to that, there was the debate about the headroom of the bypass's bridge over the Stolwijkervaart canal and about the slow-traffic connection between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard. That was all about the bypass project which had its own project team. ⁵⁻¹⁰



The challenge for civic initiatives was to find a way to overcome such institutional obstacles. In the presented example, initiatives aimed to bypass the seemingly fruitless discussions by seeking other venues to bring their proposals for the development of landscape values in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe to the attention of local and regional policymakers.

In this section, we analyse how initiatives tried to push their issues onto planning and policy agendas by involving government and non-government actors in their coalitions and storytelling efforts. We do so by analysing how stories and frames were aligned in the interactions between civic initiatives and their targeted supporters.

Formal and informal communication

Coalition building strategies as part of agenda-setting processes can be categorized into formal and informal communication strategies. This can concern coalition building between civic initiatives and coalition building with targeted governmental supporters. First, we discuss how civic groups connected to one another, and then we move to the way they tried to connect to governments.

In this case, civic initiatives worked together in both formal and informal structures. Some groups, like Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, wanted to operate on a loose and informal basis to be able to act fast. This is reflected among other things in the wish to be a working group, and not a foundation, association, consultation group, or other more institutionalized organization. Often actions were discussed informally through one-to-one contact. In contrast, Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard, with a similar mission for the fringe area, did operate as a formal consultation venue for various organizations and groups. Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard was often used in communication with governments to show wide social support for proposals. The various civic initiatives had much contact with one another to attune actions and to share relevant information. Such contact was often incidental and informal. Generally, interviewees describe the relations between different civic initiatives as a 'small circuit': everyone knows everyone else, as illustrated by one of the chairmen of the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood:

In a roundabout way there is much contact. For example, with Milieudefensie when we mobilized into action concerning the industrial area. That is again something one does with people from the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard and others. E-mails are sent on behalf of everybody, for everybody, to everybody. ...I am now treasurer of Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard. I know the former treasurer from volleyball. We know each other's ways. He asked whether I would like to take over. I already helped organizing the dawn walks. This is how it is all connected and everywhere on the street we run into each other. In feedback

groups and in the neighbourhood team meetings I also meet [Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman, Stichting Restauratie Stolwijkersluis chairman, history association die Goude member].⁵⁻¹¹

Civic initiatives, apart and in coalitions, used various formal and informal communications to become noticed by governments and push issues onto governmental decision agendas. By formal strategies, we mean interactions that take place according to certain rules and procedures and that are recorded (e.g. formal meetings, correspondence, formal participation procedures). By informal strategies, we mean interactions that are spontaneous, often face to face, and not recorded.

We made a list of formal and informal strategies based on information in newspaper articles and e-mails. Categorization into formal and informal strategies was difficult as some activities were both formal and informal. For example, joining feedback groups organized by governments seems a formal strategy at first glance, but actually these meetings also provided the opportunity to discuss matters informally with other participants before and after the meeting and during breaks.

With regard to formal strategies, the following items were found. Public inquiries, concerning both objections and views, were used as a reaction to government plans at the local and regional level. Incidentally, this had led to formal objection at the national level. Formal correspondence concerns letters from citizen initiatives to government executives to which answers are required. Citizen initiatives also used the formal possibility of participating in meetings of the municipal and provincial councils. Citizens get speaking time to explain their matters of concern. This is a formal meeting limited by rules of the council, but on the local level in particular it also offers time to discuss matters informally before, during, and after the meeting with politicians and other participants. Next, citizen initiatives in the case area participated frequently in feedback groups organized by local and regional governments to create support for projects, like the Hollandsche IJssel Project and the construction of the bypass through the southern fringe of the city Gouda. The meetings of feedback groups were also formal in character, but like council meetings gave the opportunity to meet and talk to participants informally.

With regard to informal strategies, we identified the following items. Campaigning is an activity which sometimes leads to interaction with government officials, but not always. We consider it an informal activity because there are no written records of interactions and there are no formal rules of interaction. Campaigning entailed for example the use of local and regional mass media to attract public and political attention. Besides these informal activities, there was also personal informal contact initiated by citizen initiatives (direct contact) or by government officials (invited contact). Invited contact refers to contact initiated by government officials who seek advice in the start-



up phase of projects. Direct contact refers to initiatives of citizens to contact civil servants and executives via e-mail or telephone. Coincidental contact refers to spontaneous encounters on the street in which issues can be raised.

What is striking is the great range of activities deployed, both formally and informally. Every opportunity for formal and informal communication and interactions was used. The importance of formal interaction can be explained by the fact that interactions are recorded and used as evidence in later discussions and negotiations. Moreover, reactions to plans and policies were only seriously considered when, in addition to informal discussions, formal objections and views were submitted according to the rules of formal participation procedures.

Informal interaction, however, provided the opportunity to discuss matters in more detail and to really empathize with one another. Informal interaction at the local level was considered an important tool by both citizen initiatives and governments. In particular, the yearly dawn walks in the case area were considered a major opportunity for informal interaction with government representatives. Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard, and in the last few years also the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood, organize this popular walk and invite councillors and government executives to join. This way, the organizers are able to address issues and problems in the field and interchange ideas in a non-committal informal way. The neighbourhood chairman explains this as follows:

The municipality of Vlist now also wants to join. It now sees the interest for the municipality. That is not sudden. Under the skin there are many, many contacts. We also organize the dawn walk here in the polder. ...That dawn walk is a good way to talk to people informally. The last time one of the aldermen from Vlist municipality joined and we talked to her for a very long time. That is how other people are contacted as well, like Zuid-Hollands Landschap. They are also involved in the organization of the dawn walk, and it is a good way to talk to them informally as well. ⁵⁻¹²

The Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman also considers the dawn walks to be crucial to informal coalition building, as illustrated by this quotation:

In our informal circuit, that dawn walk has been very important. It once started as a joke, and in the meantime it has been organized for 15 years. It is now so popular that we have set a limit of 300 participants. It should not be a mass event. We always invite councillors and that is THE moment for conversation. You can walk together with someone. Last year the Vlist alderman walked along. She had never walked there before and she thought it was an eye-opener. ⁵⁻¹³

The yearly dawn walk is a well-known event in the municipal hall of Gouda and is considered a successful way to direct the attention of a large number of people to issues in the case area, such as the problems of the bypass and the restoration of the lock. The former Gouda city alderman referred to it as a 'column' of social movement that causes ideas to filter through among many people.

There was hardly any informal contact between citizen initiatives in the case area and government officials at regional level. Governments at these levels were approached formally or indirectly through local executives and councillors. At local level, alignments with government actors could be established more easily. As already mentioned, interviewees talk about a small circuit of people who negotiate actions and decisions in an informal way. People meet one another regularly in the city, for example at events. Moreover, there is a greater chance of citizens and executives being part of the same social networks at local level. The e-mails show that local executives answer e-mails personally; this also confirms the small informal circuit between citizen groups and local officials. The neighbourhood chairman illustrates the important role of informal communication in access to the municipality of Gouda as follows:

Sometimes you have to be on top of things and be very active to achieve something. And then it works. ...On Friday afternoon, I sent a short e-mail to the alderman and the municipal council, and the next Monday I heard that they had informally negotiated, with the result that a draft resolution was sent to the provincial government. This is how you see that you can have influence. ... Once you are in that circuit, they don't forget you soon. The municipality invites me to all kinds of events. ...You are automatically on the distribution list. That is what you receive when you frequently respond and are willing to participate enthusiastically.⁵⁻¹⁴

We conclude that citizen initiatives aimed for both formal and informal interaction with government actors. Both forms of interaction were valuable for coalition building and agenda setting and strengthened each other. The formal circuit enabled alignment with formal decision making. The informal small circuit provided the opportunity to discuss matters in more detail in an earlier stage of planning or decision making. Informal interaction gave more room for dialogue in which conversation partners together looked for common ground and common understanding.

The informal and formal communication strategies used tells us something about the settings in which actors and groups found one another, but it does not explain how they became connected and how support for ideas and stories was created through interactions. That is the topic of the next section.



Frame alignment processes

The case narrative points to various frame alignment processes that influenced agenda setting and that preceded tipping points in the agenda setting of landscape values in the fringe area. We identify the following processes that were relevant to agenda setting. First, using the concept of frame resonance, we discuss the way receptivity of targeted supporters grew. Next, we analyse the role of identity framing and empathy and listening by civic initiatives in the alignment with targeted supporters. We then discuss the role of conversational settings or venues that enabled frame alignment and frame resonance.

Building responsiveness of targeted supporters (frame resonance)

From the case narrative, we identify four aspects that enabled frame resonance, interpreted as responsiveness of targeted supporters to the stories that were promoted.

- Easy to pass on story which is simple, clear, and attractive, supported by attractive visualizations
- Continuous telling, repeating, and sharing story over time in an expanding 'storytelling community' which makes the story (or elements in the story) more salient
- Resemiotization (cf. Van Herzele and Aarts, 2013): incorporation of self-referential frames of targeted supporters into on-going story telling
- Credible storytellers

The following examples from the case narrative support these findings.

First, the frame 'window to the Krimpenerwaard', invented by Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, is an example of a frame or story element that got positive responses, that resonated well, among various stakeholders. The material shows that, over time, the frame was adopted by other parties, like the municipality, to refer to the conservation of the green and open character of the polder. It was also frequently addressed in interviews with stakeholders, like the former Gouda city alderman:

Many ideas emerged in civil society and are adopted by the municipality. This was also the case with Werkgroep Gouda <-> Krimpenerwaard and their 'window to the Krimpenerwaard'.⁵⁻¹⁵

The Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman explains how the frame 'window to the Krimpenerwaard' got a response and was adopted by other actors, including government actors:

Whatever you do, you should not connect your name to a plan. It is the idea that counts. As a person, you should stay in the background. ...You should present it as an idea of Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard, or of organizations in the Krimpenerwaard, or of the municipality of Gouda. You have to create an opening for others to adopt it. At a certain juncture, you will see that civil

servants are using it. And then, whatever you do, you should not say that you have invented it. Then you are on the right track. If it lands into the documents of the civil service, you should stay very quiet. Then you have to let go, because then it is connected. ⁵⁻¹⁶

Apparently, the 'window to the Krimpenerwaard' was a frame or a story that was easily passed on to others. It started with a very clear and transparent story in which Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard visualized the 'window' in a map and drawings (see figures 5.6 and 5.7). Moreover, they emphasized the urgency of conserving the 'window', as there were only a few locations left on the riverside where the 'window to the Krimpenerwaard' could be experienced. They made the matter very concrete, easy to take in, and easy to check (making it credible). That is how it became a story that was easily passed on and that attracted attention and support. Moreover, the story became more and more credible and salient, because over time it was continuously repeated and retold in everyday conversations and formal texts.

Second, the process of coalition building and collective designing for the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis demonstrates how the story was reconstructed and resemiotized to incorporate frames of required supporters. As a result, the story presented by the Masterplan combined ideas of Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard about the fringe as a recreational link between city and countryside and protection of nature and landscape values in the fringe, the campaign of neighbourhood residents to develop 'Gouda's front garden', as well as the proposals of various groups to restore the canal lock for pleasure cruising. By forming a broad coalition of social groups in the case area, the story shifted somewhat, but frames were bridged rather than transformed. The various issues promoted did not conflict with one another in the eyes of the stakeholders. For the neighbourhood residents, for example, the focus on the lock and other landscape values was gratefully connected to the motto 'Stolwijkersluis, Gouda's front garden', which they tried to position on the municipality's agenda.

Moreover, the perspectives of the sponsoring authorities influenced the construction of the story. The initiators of the Masterplan tried to get (financial) support by constructing the story in such a way that it fitted into the concerns and perspectives of potential sponsors. For example, the initiators emphasized the urgency of water safety measures, thus making the story much more inviting to the water board. The Gouda city alderman was persuaded by emphasizing the possibility of restoring the navigability of the lock, thus connecting well to his personal experiences and preferences. Moreover, to further develop the (financial) commitment of the city of Gouda, aspects of the Masterplan were articulated and amplified to fit into Gouda's ambitions to attract more tourists. The Masterplan was framed by its designers as part of the ideas of the municipality for branding the city of Gouda as Dutch Water City (Gouda Hollandse Waterstad: Consortium Hollandse Waterstad, 2009). This involved not only emphasizing the issue of pleasure cruising, but also showing that the city of Gouda had more to offer to tourists than just the city and the rivers. It was suggested



that Gouda's city-marketing strategy could also involve the attractiveness of the Krimpenerwaard, the possibility of visiting 'Holland in a nutshell', with its waterworks and landscape that narrate the typically Dutch fight against the water. In this story, the historic lock was a crucial element as the gateway to that authentic polder. In these ways, by *incorporating the concerns and ambitions* of sponsors into the story, storytelling increased the responsiveness of these sponsors.

A third example concerns the connection of civic initiatives for landscape values in the fringe area to governmental and civic initiatives that were concerned with the redevelopment of the Krimpenerwaard. The case narrative shows how the story about the fringe was carefully *adjusted and extended* to include storylines that would invite participation by the Krimpenerwaard. The *story was linked with the story* about the benefits of the Veenvaren Plan for the economy of the Krimpenerwaard. It became a story about the economic value of a boating connection between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard. In this adjusted story, the urban dweller was no longer the centre of interest, but rather the entrepreneurs in the Krimpenerwaard who could increase their income through pleasure cruisers.

It was not a story to which farmers, authorities, and nature organizations in the Krimpenerwaard responded and contributed easily. Boating had been heavily debated 10 years previously in the Krimpenerwaard Redevelopment Project and was framed as a destructive activity for nature and farmland, as illustrated by the following statement by the Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren leader:

Farmers are against boating because they associate it with noise pollution and damage to the banks of the canals as a result of the beating of the waves. ... It is difficult to enforce boating restrictions. In the past, a lack of enforcement caused a lot of nuisance. People will sit in the ground and leave their rubbish behind. ... The farmers have been taken by surprise by the plan to restore the lock. They are afraid that this will bring back the yachts of past days. ... When the canal shipping trade ended, the farmers pressed for the lock to be blocked off. They absolutely did not want any more pleasure cruising. ... Back then, the farmers fought hard for the demolition of the lock. ⁵⁻¹⁷

The outcome was a ban on boating in the polder. Farmers and nature and landscape organizations did not want to re-open that discussion and, therefore, local governments were also not inclined to talk about boating. In reaction to this taboo on the subject of boating, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard and Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren constructed a *counter-frame* in which it was emphasized that the boating would be on a very small scale. Besides that, they argued that the target group for boating would be nature lovers and seekers of peace and quiet, people who would surely not be disrespectful to the farmers'

land and the Sunday rest day so highly valued by Krimpenerwaard residents. The draft Veenwaren Plan frames it like this (bold type was used by the author of the plan to emphasize the small scale of the boating infrastructure and routes):

If the Stolwijkersluis lock is used after restoration, then the polder provides beautiful **small-scale** waters through which **small** boats can sail very well. ... The recreational pressure on the waterways can be controlled by using the Stolwijkersluis as the only and natural gateway to the area. This form of sailing will only appeal to people who now explore the polder by foot and bike. These people are 'peace-and-quiet' and nature seekers. So no yachts with excited people, and no swarms of boats with noisy and disturbing outboard motors. After all, such boats can go to other more suitable waters. We want no disturbance of the peace and quiet, or of Sunday's rest. ⁵⁻¹⁸

Besides careful *framing into the latitude of acceptance* (Sherif and Hovland, 1961; Sherif et al., 1965) of targeted supporters, the initiatives managed to connect to a few politicians and executives who had *access to a wider network of decision makers* and who were considered to be *credible frame articulators*. In other words, they involved people who could pass on the story in their executive networks and who would be able to align the story to perspectives of targeted groups in the region. As recounted in the case-study narrative, on the suggestion of Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren invited a provincial councillor, who was well-known in the region, to write the foreword of the Veenwaren Plan (Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren Krimpenerwaard, 2007) to enhance the responsiveness of targeted readers (citizens, entrepreneurs, and local and regional politicians). The Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman explains:

We said to the Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren chairman that he had to find somebody from the region. Then there was a provincial councillor who was an enthusiastic representative for the region. She lives in Stolwijk. She was flattered to be asked, and this is how a 'driving wheel' emerged because she started promoting the plan as well. Then it was no longer only the Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren. The other members of her political party were also supporting the plan because they saw opportunities to stimulate the Krimpenerwaard economy. ⁵⁻¹⁹

Moreover, they managed to involve the Vlist alderman, who had already publicly demonstrated his enthusiasm for using the opportunities of waterways in the polder for water recreation. He became a passionate champion of Veenwaren in the Krimpenerwaard. According to the alderman, convincing farmers of the value of Veenwaren was essential because farmers had much influence in local politics. To align the ideas of Veenwaren to the concerns of farmers, the alderman *amplified the idea of financial benefits in the story of Veenwaren*. Moreover, he understood that previous experiences with water tourism had made farmers hesitant and that in any case farmers would want to control activities and protect



their property. Therefore, he emphasized the possibility of farmers managing boating activities themselves and thereby keeping control and autonomy, as demonstrated in the next quotation.

But I was able to turn it around and said: 'Water tourism can also be your business. You can offer it. Those sailing routes are your waterways, so I can imagine a form in which you manage the permits. You can set up a foundation or cooperation with other farmers and control it yourself. ...The farmers will grant the permits and receive the earnings and construct the landing stages to provide access to the farms. So you will not be the party that tolerates and that has to deal with the burden, you will be the party that offers and performs.' And then, he came round. He thought it was an appealing alternative.⁵⁻²⁰

This way, the alderman subtly *fitted* the idea of Veenvaren to the *values and everyday concerns* of the farmers in the Krimpenerwaard, thus enhancing the resonance of the story and increasing the chance that farmers would respond positively.

The reframing of the fringe area from 'city garden' into a 'regional Veenweidepark' is a final example of framing processes and resemiotization to position the natural and recreational development of the fringe on the right decision agenda, that is, the decision agenda which generated the necessary resources. The city of Gouda tried to interest the provincial government in taking a leading role for the construction of the city park and *framed the park in terms that would fit the agenda and procedures of the provincial government*. To this end, the regional importance of the city park was amplified. The Gouda city alderman directed discussions in the steering group of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis towards linking the city park to the nature development goals of the Krimpenerwaard Rural Development Project (the Veenweidepact). That would generate resources for land acquisition and legitimize change of the current agricultural land allocation. Moreover, the Veenweidepact was a way to shift responsibility for the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis from the city of Gouda to the provincial government, as illustrated by the following statement by the former Gouda city alderman:

We realized that the plan fitted well into the Veenweidepact. It was possible to acquire the land for wet nature. ...It was actually more practical to cancel the agricultural land use. And also in that context it was more practical to include the area in the Veenweidepact. I have indicated that in the steering group, that they had better extend the project's area demarcation. One tries to make ever more people problem owner of that Masterplan [Masterplan Stolwijkersluis].⁵⁻²¹

The story about the meaning of the fringe for nature in the region was successful because the provincial government needed the area to meet the agreements with the national government about the total acreage of wet nature development in the Krimpenerwaard. This was emphasized by naming

the city park Veenweidepark. *Veenweide* referred to both the plan for the rural redevelopment of the region (Veenweidepact, 2005) as well as the sort of nature that would be developed, fitting into the wet peat meadows concept. Thus, the development of a city park was *framed and legitimized as a project that belonged to the Veenweidepact and contributed to the development of wet nature*. By naming it, it would not be regarded as a local project for citizens of Gouda, but as a project that benefitted the Krimpenerwaard and the provincial government. This is illustrated by a civil servant from the Gouda municipality:

The city garden is now called Veenweidepark because it was not desired to associate it with the city of Gouda. The word city garden evokes the image of a garden for the city of Gouda, but the place is intended for the whole environment. The alderman [city of Gouda] invented the name Veenweidepark himself.

Identity framing

Civic initiatives tried to connect to governments by framing their proposals and stories such that they would be considered credible and relevant by targeted government actors within the framework of their policies and procedures. To increase the credibility and salience of their proposals, they aimed to build up good relations with government actors to be perceived as credible storytellers. This is confirmed by interview statements of both initiators and government actors about the attitude of the initiatives towards government stakeholders. The following illustrates how civic initiatives framed themselves as a group of constructive and cooperative, knowledgeable, and representative partners of governments in the region.

First, knowledgeability was an important element in identity framing. For example, Werkgroep Gouda <-> Krimpenerwaard did not want to be labelled as an action group or just a citizen group. They presented themselves as a group of professionals with the relevant expertise to develop alternative plans and proposals. Moreover, they did their best to show that they were open to debate alternative views, i.e. that they were practical and reasonable. The goal of the working group was not only to talk, but to actually take action and propose realistic alternatives. The quotations below illustrate that initiative and knowledge were basic values for Werkgroep Gouda <-> Krimpenerwaard:

'On whose behalf do you deal with the Veerstablok and the Krimpenerwaard?' [The Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman]: 'Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard, a professional working group of six people. All interest groups are represented in Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard'. (Newspaper article *AD Groene Hart*, 23 April 2008, 'Randje groen of grijze blokkendozen')⁵⁻²²

And in a quotation from our interview with the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman:



Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard is called a working group for good reason. It consists of about five people who want to take action. I don't like those structures with an association of a large number of people who all have opinions but do nothing. I'd rather have people who want to put their views into actions. Furthermore, the working group was built around knowledge. Every member had a certain skill and expertise in the field of landscape and civil engineering. We had a cartographer, planner, architect, and civil engineers.⁵⁻²³

Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard not only presented itself as a knowledgeable group, but also lived up to that claim in its performance. Alternatives were developed and designed in great detail and backed up by calculations and sketches. Letters, e-mails, and official reactions to governments' plans were accompanied with detailed explanations and considerations. These were supported as well by visualizations and landscape designs to make proposals more imaginative and inviting to government representatives. Apart from designing its own plans and alternative solutions, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard tried to display professionalism by involving expertise from outside the group.

As a result of their efforts around the Hollandsche IJssel Project and the proposed bypass, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard gained much knowledge about planning and policy processes in the region as well as the socio-spatial processes in both the fringe area and the wider region. This included 'knowing' about the initiatives and attitude of other stakeholders in the wider region. Their place-related contextual knowledge was an important resource as they became viewed as valuable informants for other actors. For example, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard was regularly consulted in the start-up phase of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis Project about various matters, such as other stakeholders who should be involved and the policy context of the spatial development of the case area.

Second, apart from framing and manifesting knowledgeability, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, as well as their partners, presented themselves as constructive negotiation partners who were willing to participate in discussions instead of just protesting against government proposals. A good example is how Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard positioned itself in the debate about the trajectory of the South Western Bypass. In 2004 they decided to give up the fight for their alternative trajectory in order to maintain good relations with the municipality, as illustrated by the following statement by the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman:

We realized then that we could have held on this model for another 10 years, but that would not imply that we could get it implemented. Because then they would have reacted by starting urban renewal activities at that trajectory which would make [the alternative presented by Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard] impossible. Those were the tactics. The government was also digging its heels in. That is when we threw in the towel. In the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard we emphasized that this had to be done publicly.

Together with Zuid-Hollands Landschap and Bewonersgroep Ouderkerk, we wrote a letter stating officially that we were reconciled with the government's preferred trajectory, and that from that moment on we were willing to cooperate constructively. That was appreciated greatly by many people. ... We considered it important that we could sit down around the table again. ⁵⁻²⁴

Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard gained much credit from the involved local governments for their constructive involvement in the bypass. Even though they had not succeeded in realizing the alternative trajectory, they had achieved good relations with governments as well as with other civic groups; this appeared to be an important resource in future lobbying. Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard could use friendly relations with the municipality to be included in decision or negotiation processes and to get access to information known to government representatives. This is illustrated by the following statement by the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman:

Mind you, we don't make objections that often! That does not create friends. ... You have to be careful with that sympathy. If we had continued our lobby concerning the bypass, we would have thrown away the sympathy. That is a delicate assessment every time. ... If you formally object too often, you can throw away the stream of information and cooperation with civil servants. In the very first stage, you have to convince and inspire people to go in another direction. And if you are early, it often succeeds. ⁵⁻²⁵

Because of this attitude, Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard in the course of time became viewed by the municipality of Gouda as a trustworthy conversation partner with a clear sense of political and managerial realities. This applies not only to Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, but also to other stakeholders in the area. In general, interviewees point to the importance of the professionalism of lobbying groups and appreciation of the political games and dilemmas. This is illustrated with the following statement by a civil servant from Gouda municipality:

For example, ... is very professional and you can build on him. He knew the unwritten rules of the game. Others say 'and now I am going to the press', and that is not right at all because it creates noise and interrupts the conversations. Parties benefit from doing the dirty on someone, but they have to continue talking. It can be very useful, but if people do not clearly know their role and if they approach politics in a weird way, than noise emerges. Consequently, as a civil servant you have a difficult position because you have to follow the Municipal Executive. Although ... is a troublemaker, he does know when to stay quiet. And he has many contacts. He has become quite good at the game because of his experience for years on end. ⁵⁻²⁶

Third, civic initiatives continuously pointed out how their collective efforts represented wide social support in the city and the region. Sometimes, in informal negotiations and ad-hoc encounters, it was perceived as more favourable to



act alone. However, especially in formal negotiations, civic initiatives attached much value to voicing interests on behalf of a multiplicity of groups to convince government of the representativeness and social basis of their proposal. Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard was frequently used for this purpose as well as the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood once they acquired 'neighbourhood team' status within the municipality. The various groups ensured that they would be visible as different groups in their collective actions. Sometimes, letters to governments were signed by a long list of different organizations and groups. Sometimes groups sent their own letter containing the same message as letters from other groups.

By continuously messaging on behalf of a large number of organizations, the collective aimed to demonstrate a large backing group of people, and over time that strategy worked for several initiatives, like the saving of the historic lock. This is illustrated by the next statement by the former Gouda city alderman:

And they often speak in the name of a whole raft of organizations, in which often the same organizations are represented. But that provides an image for other parties that there is great social support. And then nobody wants to be a spoilsport. ...That is how you create sympathy for those people in Gouda with that nice idea. Not only the alderman, but it is a whole group of people who support it. And that makes it special. Here they want to achieve something instead of just opposing something.⁵⁻²⁷

In sum, by framing a favourable identity, that is, framing themselves as cooperative, knowledgeable conversation partners who articulate proposals supported by many people, initiatives enhanced the responsiveness of government actors. This process of identity framing helped to enhance the credibility and salience of proposed 'storied' alternatives.

Empathy and listening

We saw earlier how frame alignment as well as identity framing contributed to successful agenda setting. Some agents were very good at constructing and aligning frames. Telling a story and incorporating it is one side of the story, but another important requisite is knowing and understanding the perspective/frame of 'the other' to be able to incorporate these into storytelling and invite 'the other' to join in storytelling. The data reveal that the ability to listen and empathize was essential to this process, as demonstrated by this statement by the former city of Gouda alderman:

[The Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman] is someone who can think very empathically. He is very empathic to the problems you encounter as an alderman. For how your day looks, your agenda, and what is going on. He has much more sense about that than others. So he succeeds in having a nice conversation with [the Vlist alderman]. And he shows that he has a lot of knowledge about the polder.⁵⁻²⁸

The quotation suggests that the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman through his empathic abilities was able to learn about relevant frames of prospective supporters, and that this enabled him to fit his own ideas into what they considered relevant and important. Other data also demonstrate that he put great effort into understanding political and policy processes. The previous discussion about how citizen initiatives framed themselves as cooperative and knowledgeable partners for governments confirms this view. In general, they tried to maintain good relations with governments, constantly linking up ideas to governments' priorities, trying to understand executives' dilemmas and find solutions.

Another example of the importance of empathic abilities: the leader of Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren was described by the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman as someone who had the empathic abilities needed to involve the Krimpenerwaard:

[The chairman of Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren] is a real native in the polder, and he used to sail the polder waters with his father. In my opinion, he therefore was able to integrate the sensitivities about boating in the polder in his plan in a good way.⁵⁻²⁹

The Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren leader's involvement in the coalition was essential because as a person who was born and raised in the Krimpenerwaard he could relate more easily to the concerns of agricultural entrepreneurs in the polder. His efforts to empathize with farmers are illustrated by his following statement:

During a meeting of an association for farmers in the Krimpenerwaard [*Vereniging Duurzame Waterbeheersing en Landbouw in de Krimpenerwaard*], participants carried on terribly against the plan to restore the lock. 'That lock has to be closed! There will be no boating here!' Then I put on the hair shirt and told them that I had caused it. 'I have written the plan out of your indignation. You have never done anything about it. You have always had the opportunity to bend it to your will, but that never happened'. ...There are many forms and ways to cruise that are not at all limited to motor boats. So I explained again that electric boating does not cause trouble for farmers. ...I said to them: 'Your history is connected to that lock. Because of that lock agriculture could flourish here!' They agreed with that.⁵⁻³⁰

The Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren leader made the effort and had the opportunity to learn about the concerns of people in the region by engaging in conversation with them during his boating trips, as he explains himself:

The problem in the Krimpenerwaard is especially that many are averse to anything that has to do with tourism or leisure. That's because of the Calvinist nature of the people. Therefore I always try to get into conversation with the farmers when I run into them. And then I ask them how in bygone days they experienced cruising with the scow. Well, they thought that was quite nice!



And then I suggest that maybe other people could also enjoy that. They do acknowledge that the perception of the polder is quite different from the water. Sunday's Rest is anyhow a thorny issue. But I like talking to those people when I meet them, and then I try to start a conversation about it. ⁵⁻³¹

Empathy is an important competence to incorporate concerns and beliefs of targeted supporters in storytelling. This can concern content, but also process. For example, the Vlist alderman was able from his own experience to empathize with his fellow governors in the region in relation to budget constraints, prioritizing, and accountability, as demonstrated by the following statement by the Vlist alderman:

I have demonstrated to [the alderman of the Bergambacht municipality] that it only took 20,000 euros of his to get those 2.7 billion. So he could not say no to that. That is a very small sprat to catch such a big mackerel! ⁵⁻³²

Only a person like the alderman was able to really understand the reality and frame of reference of other local governors and alter the story such that it would fit that frame of reference. Only coming from a colleague, a like-minded person, would such a story be accepted. Such wheeling and dealing would probably not have been accepted from civic lobbying groups.

In sum, alignment with relevant other stories and people was achieved by first listening and empathizing with the concerns and beliefs of conversation partners. Targeted supporters were more inclined to participate in the storytelling about the future of the fringe because civic initiatives showed understanding of their way of working and the political processes in public administration.

Favourable conversational settings

The case narrative shows that frame alignment and connecting and fitting stories were supported by certain favourable circumstances. We have discussed the more or less coincidental events that provided windows of opportunity to connect stories to emerging policy stories. Apart from this, the case narrative points to particular conversational settings that enabled participants to openly explore, share, connect, and reframe stories. The following examples demonstrate the type of settings that enhanced connections between coalitions and their stories.

First, the participative design process for the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis provided an opportunity for various groups to articulate and link up their interests with the unfolding story about the historic lock and its environment. Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard and the neighbourhood residents used the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis design process to incorporate their own proposals in the hope that these would then be noticed by governmental participants. The lock project presented a new venue for interest groups and residents to discuss a green and recreational development of the area with the involved governmental actors.

Second, in the process of aligning the proposals for the restoration of the lock and pleasure cruising in the Krimpenerwaard (the Veenvaren Plan), the Vlist alderman deliberately looked for the right formal and informal settings to enable an open discussion of proposals with targeted supporters (farmers and local politicians) and to prevent immediate resistance resulting from the taboo on the topic. The alderman considered Strategiegroep Veenweidepact – the steering group of local and regional executives responsible for the implementation of the new agreements for the rural redevelopment of the Krimpenerwaard – an outstanding setting in which financial and political support could be created. His position as member of this steering group enabled him to informally raise the ideas about Veenvaren in the conversations with fellow executives in the steering group.

The right people and the money are present in the steering group. So that is where the game is played. The group consists of the five municipalities, the province, and a large bag of money. ...In November 2008, I took aside [the Provincial Executive] together with [the president of the water board] and said 'Come on, it should be possible to restore that lock!'. This is how mainly [the Provincial Executive] became convinced to use his power to bring in the money. ...And another time at a farewell dinner party again [the Provincial Executive], [the president of the water board], and I got together a moment to discuss 'gee, wouldn't it work like this, two tons there, three tons there...' ⁵⁻³³

The interaction between local executives was crucial for getting the support of the municipalities in the Krimpenerwaard, the water board, and the provincial government. Informal interaction especially was important, as illustrated above, but also by other examples in the case study, such as the attempts of the city of Gouda to involve the provincial government. The former Gouda city alderman had difficulties getting the commitment of provincial executives in the Stolwijkersluis steering group. A more or less coincidental opportunity arose when he met two provincial executives informally at a meeting about a different topic. After that, the provincial government was more serious about their representation in the discussions around implementation of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis. This demonstrates the importance of informal contact between local executives, and the effort individual executives have to put in themselves to organize such informal contact.

Furthermore, to organize an open discussion with farmers about boating, the alderman had to creatively find his way in the process. Initially, other executives in the Krimpenerwaard feared opposition from farmers and would not translate their sympathy for the Vlist alderman's ideas into actions within the formal negotiation structure of the rural redevelopment project. Therefore, the alderman looked for other ways to position the boating issue on the agenda of the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project. A pilot project initiated



by the provincial government provided the right context to launch an open discussion about boating among stakeholders in the Krimpenerwaard, as illustrated by the alderman himself:

Hiking and biking routes are already embedded in the plan, but not water tourism. So that is what we tried to achieve within the Vitaal Platteland programme. That was the way to deal with that so-called taboo outside the other committees, because the taboo had hardened to such an extent on the official table that no local governor dared to burn his finger on it.⁵⁻³⁴

Through the pilot project, the boating topic could be discussed at a conference for entrepreneurs about new economic activities necessary to enhance the livability of the Krimpenerwaard. Thus, the alderman contributed substantially to making the provincial government responsive to the restoration of the lock and boating in the polder. The Vlist alderman connected the story about Veenvaren to the dominant story of the redevelopment of the Krimpenerwaard and thus provided access to the necessary resources.

Two things can be noticed in these examples about conversational settings. First, to enable attention catching and alignment, participants and supporters of initiatives avoided the existing official channels. They looked for settings in which there was room to explore various options with targeted supporters and to be creative. The case narrative provides many other examples of how such settings enabled connections, like the competitions about future plans for the fringe area (Gouda Havenstad and Fringe Naturally). At the same time, the examples show that informal conversations among decision makers (local and regional executives) were also essential to generate enough political and financial support. The settings involved are those in which local and regional governmental executives meet one another and both formally and informally discuss alternatives, or settings that enable informal networking and establishing connections and alignments. For the coalition around the Veenvaren Plan, it was very valuable to have a member who was also a member of a regional executive network and had access to conversations in which he could align the story about Veenvaren with policy stories about the future of the region.

5.4 People who make a difference

The case narrative contains many persons that seem to have played an important or even decisive role in agenda setting. To name a few: the spokesman of Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard, the successive city of Gouda aldermen, the professor who initiated the design process for the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis, the alderman of Vlist municipality in the period in which essential connections with initiatives from the Krimpenerwaard were established, the initiator of the Veenvaren Plan, the chairmen of the neighbourhood association,

the successive chairmen of the history association die Goude, and many more. It is impossible to point to leading characters as many different persons were involved in storytelling and coalition building, and they all depended on one another for cooperation. However, without certain people who made great efforts to bring issues to the fore and connect with relevant other people, it would have been business as usual. This raises the question of how we can assess the role of individual agents in relation to previously described processes like coincidental trigger events and alignment processes.

Connective capacities

Individual agents who manage to influence policy change have both organizational and discursive capacities. In the literature (cf. Kingdon, 2003; Zahariadis, 2007), it is emphasized that successful policy entrepreneurs are people or groups who have the availability of access to decision-making venues and politicians, and to resources, such as time, knowledge, money, passion, and motivation. These are certainly recognizable in this case study, as is illustrated for example by this statement by the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood chairman:

Under the skin there are many contacts. In that respect, I have to compliment [the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman]. He knows many people and has time for this. That makes a difference. It is lobby work, and he is very active in it.⁵⁻³⁵

The Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman and the Stolwijkersluis neighbourhood chairman put a lot of energy into knowing all that was going on in policy circles and sharing this information with other parties in the network around issues in the southern fringe. They invested a lot of time and energy in attending meetings, writing letters, and gathering and publishing information in different media. Passion and enthusiasm for certain issues was an important resource as well. For example, it would have been much more difficult to align with a governor who did not harbour old memories about the historic lock. He frequently referred to his personal passion for the lock, like in his speech at the presentation of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis (March 2006) where he recalled his grandfather's boathouse which was situated next to the lock, and where he noticed the presence of the former lockkeeper's son.

Sometimes, civic initiatives were joined by civil servants who were enthusiastic about proposals and wanted to contribute. An example comes from the period in which proposals were designed for Gouda Havenstad, illustrated by the Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman:

Back then, there was a civil servant in the municipality of Gouda responsible for the conservation of monuments. He said that he wanted to join us. We said, 'But you are a civil servant at the municipality'. He said: 'Yes, but I think it is a great



idea. I would like to help develop it further. You can keep me on the side-lines if necessary'. He contributed to that report. I thought it was special that he dared to do that as a civil servant.⁵⁻³⁶

People who had a relevant network and obtained influential positions were important for agenda setting as well. In this case study, successful agenda setting could not have occurred without the presence of a few governors who performed as 'connectors', the term used by Shirky (2008) and Gladwell (2000) to indicate highly connected people that hold social networks together and enable robust connectedness in a wider network. These governors were able to span boundaries between departmental sectors and vertical governance layers because of their position in the formal and informal network of local and regional executives. For example, the Vlist alderman was a member of the steering group for the Krimpenerwaard Rural Redevelopment Project; this provided the opportunity for him to position the Veenvaren Plan and the lock restoration on the agenda of other executives in the steering group.

However, investing resources like time, money, and networks does not necessarily mean that the right connections are established and that the presented story is accepted and considered relevant. Before, we concluded that an important agenda-setting activity was establishing connections in the wider network by carefully framing and reframing stories and incorporating the perspectives of others. We found that discursive processes are crucial in agenda setting. In the following, we show how individual agents performed as crucial links in the spreading of a story. They performed as the 'connectors' (Shirky, 2008; Gladwell, 2000) of stories, people, events, and resources, and facilitated the occurrence of tipping points.

The discursive performance of connectors is apparent in the case narrative in various ways. In the previous section, we identified a number of alignment processes that can be attributed to the discursive performance of connectors: telling an imaginative, simple, and credible story; aligning the story to self-referential frames of others in which empathizing and listening were important acts; increasing credibility by connecting to credible frame articulators and storytellers; and finally, incorporating focusing events into the story; this required patience, perseverance, and constant scanning of opportunities. In sum, connectors were imaginative and credible storytellers, empathic listeners, and patient scouts of opportunities. That is supported by the following examples from the case study.

The Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren leader was considered as someone who could tell and sell his story very well. The Vlist alderman, for example, states that he viewed him as the most important and convincing lobbyist because he had a lot of knowledge about the polder and its history, and he showed that the plan was feasible and connected well with public goals in the polder:

The Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren chairman has played a very important role. For years, he has been very consistently asking for attention to be paid to Veenvaren. ...He has provided us consistently with information and has demonstrated that it is feasible. ...I think he is more influential than [lobbyists from the fringe], because he shows very nicely that it is possible, by what kind of routes, and how the idea is connected to the history of the polder. He shows convincingly that the reintroduction of sailing fits in the region. ⁵⁻³⁷

The Vlist alderman himself invested a lot of time and energy in convincing his fellow governors at other municipalities to support the lock restoration and the related ideas for pleasure cruising in the polder. He appealed to their imagination by showing how boating would work in practice, as he explains himself:

I took the mayor of Bergambacht on a boating trip, and she was wildly enthusiastic about that. She was immediately convinced. She was even so enthusiastic that, despite the forbidding attitude of the alderman on her board, she publicly said 'we are simply going to do this'. ...The new alderman of the municipality of Schoonhoven had an eye for other interests than just those of the municipality. And he cruises himself, so that makes a difference. ...I have shown him the map with possible boating routes which makes clear that, if the lock re-opens, it could be possible to travel with your boat from Schoonhoven to Gouda. That performed wonders in the committee. ⁵⁻³⁸

A civil servant from Gouda municipality confirms that the Vlist alderman had effective telling and selling qualities:

[The Vlist alderman] had the charm and the flair to involve people in his ideas. That has been very important. He just set to work with it. ⁵⁻³⁹

The ideas of the Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren leader would not have resonated so well without the support of people from the Krimpenerwaard, who added to the credibility and salience of the story in the eyes of targeted supporters, as described in section 3. For example, the Vlist alderman states that he was only really convinced of supporting the ideas in Veenvaren when he realized that the chairman of the regional agricultural organization, LTO, participated in Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren:

Moreover, it was important that the local chairman of the LTO [agricultural interest group] is a member of Stichting Veenvaren. ...That to me is very important, because that so-called taboo did not exist for him. And that is why I found the Veenvaren Plan important and that is why I believed it. And I could push the idea, because [the LTO chairman] also participated! ⁵⁻⁴⁰

Connectors were also people who established the links with groups and networks that attributed credibility and relevance to stories, like in this example the chairman of the agricultural interest organization, LTO. Credible frame



articulators were sometimes initiators themselves, in which case credibility was strongly based on the knowledge and representativeness attributed to initiators, as well as positive experiences in former negotiations (see also section 5.3). Initiators also involved people who, because of their status and influence in networks, were considered credible.

Connectors: heroes or fellow performers?

From the case narrative we can derive that various persons performed as connectors, and that they established alignments by passing on stories in their networks and by incorporating other perspectives and relevant events. Specific heroes in the narrative cannot be identified, because multiple connectors performed at the same time or in different periods. Connectors are not by themselves able to bring about change; they perform as connectors always in the context of interplay both with other people who also perform as connectors and with the specific circumstances at stake. This means that the concept of connectors is very fluid and contextual. Whether people were connectors depended on the particular situation, the issue at stake, and the alignments that were to be made, and a particular period in which opportunities for alignment emerged. Connectors come and go depending on the issue at stake. When individual or group ambitions were achieved, others took over; but storytelling about the future of the fringe area and the wider region always continued, as demonstrated by the case study that covers 25 years. It was perpetuated by a great number of groups and people that participated in storytelling at different times. Therefore, we conclude that it is unrealistic to try to identify a few heroes or leaders of change and that the process in which stories spread and get adopted is facilitated by a multitude of connectors that link up a wider network. Moreover, it is difficult to predict who will perform a connecting role in what situation and in what period; it is a highly contextual property. Or in other words, connectors may be considered an emergent property in complex change processes (cf. Holland, 1998; Johnson, 2001; Van Gunsteren, 2006), meaning that connectors can emerge spontaneously, unpredicted and unintended, out of the many interactions between people who negotiate all kinds of issues.

That said, in this case study it was apparent that citizens performed connecting roles at crucial turning points in the story. Where alignment between different government organizations could not be established by government actors themselves, civic initiatives did align with government representatives and spanned institutional and cultural boundaries. For example, the bad relation between the city of Gouda and the Krimpenerwaard was one of the reasons why Gouda's municipal representatives left the lobbying for the lock restoration and a boating route mainly to civic initiatives, as explained by the former city of Gouda alderman:

[The Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard spokesman] and [the Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren leader] have lobbied in the Krimpenerwaard and that is how the municipality of Vlist joined in and how support from the

Krimpenerwaard was established. ...Parties in the Krimpenerwaard were strongly against it in the beginning. They saw the big city Gouda as a threat, so we were not able to talk to them.⁵⁻⁴¹

Also in this example, in the end, multiple actors with different backgrounds and network memberships were required to link up the network. The passion and energy of just a few was neither enough nor decisive. Civic initiatives in the fringe area were able to network the network effectively (cf. Gilchrist, 2000).

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the puzzle of how over time civic initiatives managed to position the protection and restoration of landscape values in the urban–rural fringe on the agendas of local and regional governments despite various institutional barriers and blockages related to governments’ self-referential perspectives. The main goal was to understand the processes that preceded tipping points in the agenda-setting process. On the basis of the theoretical framework and the previous chapter about civic initiatives in the Heuvelland region, we focused on storytelling as an agenda-setting mechanism, that is, how issues were framed into stories and how stories further developed over time. Moreover, the findings in the Heuvelland case directed attention to interactional processes, alignment strategies, and the extent to which trigger events were decisive.

Tipping points in agenda setting were usually marked by particular political events, shifts in coalitions, and sudden shifts in the attention paid by government organizations to issues in the fringe area. These were described; but, to understand why shifts occurred, we asked what happened in the process and in the period leading up to tipping points. We found that the continuous and everyday interactions between stakeholders were essential, as these interactions enabled continuous framing of stories and fitting stories to the frames and stories of targeted supporters. Ambitions of civic initiatives remained stable, but these were framed into an evolving story that over time shifted multiple times to emphasize new or different elements. Shifts in storytelling occurred when coalition building required alignments with other groups. To get support from governments, this especially concerned fitting the story to relevant policy stories. This was particularly apparent in the process in which the story about the future of the fringe was framed as a regional matter, as relevant to the rural redevelopment of the Krimpenerwaard, to secure the attention and commitment of the provincial authority.

We found a number of answers to the question of how alignments between different stories and groups of people were established. Frame alignment strategies, as described in chapter 2, concerned bridging, amplification, and extension of ideas to relate to the concerns and frames of potential supporters. Frames of citizen initiatives were not transformed in the sense that totally new



ideas were adopted. The issues in the case area remained the same, ambitions were stable, but the story about the future of the fringe area changed to fit well into policy stories in order to facilitate implementation.

Aligning and reframing stories

With regard to the question of why alignment strategies were successful in terms of resonance with, and increased responsiveness from, targeted supporters, the following explanations were found. First, positive response was enhanced by telling a story that was easy to understand and that triggered the imagination, for example through visualizations and design.

Second, we found that stories needed time to filter through or, in the words of Kingdon, the policy system had to be slowly warmed up to new stories. Repetition and continuously telling and sharing the story in various contexts helped this process of filtering through. Through continuous framing and reframing, civic initiatives and their coalition partners slowly enlarged governments' latitude of acceptance.

Third, alignment with others required resemiotization of stories to include targeted supporters' perspectives and to invite them to participate. With regard to securing attention and support of governments, their ambitions, concerns, and policy stories had to be incorporated into the story about the future of the fringe area. Incorporating the self-referential frames of others into storytelling increased the credibility and salience of the story by connecting to targets' values and beliefs as well as to their personal everyday experiences. This was especially demonstrated in the process in which alignments with initiatives for the rural development of the Krimpenerwaard were established. We describe this process as 'navigating the self-referential frames' of potential supporters. Thus, the responsiveness of targeted audiences, especially governmental stakeholders, was improved.

Fourth, empathy and listening to stories of others was an important condition to understand the perspectives of others, exchange views, and construct a shared story. Storytellers had to listen carefully to understand targeted supporters' frames and incorporate them effectively. Empathizing with targeted supporters was an effective strategy to get or keep a position at the negotiation table and to get access to relevant information. This means that telling and selling a story was important, but could not work without carefully listening to relevant other people.

Presenting a story that would be considered relevant and credible was the main challenge. This was achieved not only through the incorporation of perspectives of relevant others (resemiotization), but also by constructing an identity that would render proponents credible and relevant in the eyes of others. Civic initiatives framed themselves as the sort of partner with whom other groups,

especially governments, like to cooperate: knowledgeable, constructive, and representative. They continuously tried to maintain good relations with government to be included in planning processes and to get access to information. Furthermore, civic initiatives tried to be considered credible and relevant by connecting with people that already had this label.

Facilitating conditions: focusing events, connectors, and conversational settings

We found that other agenda-setting factors – focusing events and individual agents who performed as connectors of people and stories – derive meaning in the context of storytelling and frame alignment. The analysis of focusing events resulted in the conclusion that events only get meaning as triggers in relation to what has happened before and in relation to the stories being developed. Storytelling was supported by incorporating certain events that were meaningful to targeted supporters. Trigger events facilitated alignment processes. Whether events were noticed and considered meaningful to storytelling also depended on the extent to which stories had already filtered through in the wider network. Once stories about the fringe area increasingly resonated among governmental stakeholders, the chances increased of particular opportunities being connected to that story, like in the case of the sudden opportunity of the crisis fund.

We found that certain individuals, depending on the issue and situation at stake, perform as connectors in the network and stimulate the spreading of stories. Connectors had meaning in relation to one another and in relation to the stories shared. No single heroes or change agents were identified because the performance of connectors depended on their interactions with other connectors and the specific context in which they were given meaning as connectors. Connectors contributed to alignment processes through discursive acts: empathizing, listening, sharing perspectives, and telling and selling stories. They were able to recognize and exploit events that could trigger new mobilizations and connections, and they awaited favourable circumstances patiently while continuing their storytelling. In short, individuals who performed as connectors were characterized by patience, connectedness in the wider network, empathy to be able to reframe based on 'what they think', and by attentiveness to favourable contexts and opportunities.

The analysis revealed another element that facilitates storytelling and alignment: conversational settings that provide the opportunity to learn about, and share, perspectives and experiences. The case study points to the importance of informal communication, connection to informal networks of decision makers (in this case local and regional governors), and venues and meetings that aimed for open exploration and exchange of ideas to generate innovations, like the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis' participative design process and the conferences for innovative entrepreneurship in the context of the Krimpenerwaard Rural Development Project. Although informal interaction was especially important,



formal venues also provided the opportunity to meet people informally. In this case, civic initiatives took every opportunity to participate in both formal and informal conversations. This increased their chance of hearing about relevant stories that could strengthen their own story, as well as of learning about events that could be relevant, and provided the opportunity to share perspectives and invite others into storytelling.

Concluding remarks

In this case study, civic initiatives appeared to be very important connectors. To get support and overcome institutional barriers, they creatively fitted their story to stories of other initiatives and governments. In fact, their storytelling and coalition-building efforts resulted in connections between vertical and horizontal government departments that were not established by the government actors themselves. Government actors were more inclined to stick to their own policy stories, whereas civic initiatives were challenged to create bridges and connect different frames into their storytelling about the future of the urban–rural Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe.

Moreover, the case study illustrates that shifts in the agenda-setting process were often unexpected and could not be explained by any single cause or chain of causes. The development of the story about the fringe area and its various storylines depended on many interplaying processes. The connection of the story to other policy stories depended on changing circumstances, like political and financial opportunities or setbacks, as well as changes in coalitions, the creativity of connectors, and coincidental meetings. Opportunities were as emergent as the performance of connectors. Stories were emergent as well because beforehand it was not clear how various social interactions and participation in storytelling would lead to new storylines. Yet, the non-linearity of change did not mean that the process was without direction. The ambitions of civic initiatives and government stakeholders remained the same, but stories were slightly adapted to changing circumstances. The case further demonstrates that shifts, although sometimes perceived as sudden and unexpected, were actually the result of more gradual processes in which many small and seemingly meaningless events and social interactions in the end made a big difference.



**Sticky stories:
conversations,
connectors, and
opportunities**

"Truth [is] being involved in an eternal conversation about things that matter [...], truth is not in the conclusion so much as in the process itself" (Palmer 1990:12).

The chapters about the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard and Heuveland case studies narrated how civic initiatives tried to bring unsolicited proposals for local-regional spatial development to the attention of relevant governments. Some stories managed to attract and mobilize attention and support through processes of storytelling and frame alignment, whereas other stories faded away. We have analysed the processes and conditions in which stories became sticky, first for the case studies separately. In the cases, we first identified tipping points in the agenda-setting process. Next, we analysed what processes preceded tipping points by considering the construction of stories around the proposed issues through the interactions between initiatives and potential supporters in the region. Now, in this chapter, we bring together the results. The two cases enable a comparative perspective, but not in terms of a comparison based on pre-fixed variables and indicators. The aim of our comparison was not generalization of knowledge but improving insight into the unique cases to get in-depth understanding. The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case generated new understandings about agenda setting and storytelling processes which are used in this chapter to revisit the findings of the Heuveland case.



6.1 The two cases in a nutshell

Plots of the case narratives and characteristics

Table 6.1 provides a summary of the characteristics of the two cases. In short, the plots of the cases can be summarized as follows. The Heuvelland case contains three stories that in the end competed with one another for attention and support – both financial and political. All three started with the New Markets initiative to build a community of capital rich entrepreneurs who would invest in landscape qualities through new product–market combinations, which it was assumed would generate economic returns (improved tourism). However, this initiative could not mobilize enough support from entrepreneurs and relevant governments and stagnated, while at the same time the Healthy Living story and Regional Branding story emerged, around which a number of participating entrepreneurs self-organized. These were both successful in mobilizing support, although later on the Healthy Living initiative was dropped from the agenda in favour of the Regional Branding initiative, which received investments of several millions of euros for a regional branding campaign.

The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case concerns citizens' initiatives to propose plans for the protection and development of landscape values in the urban–rural Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe. Over a period of about 25 years, these led to successfully positioning the integrated development of the fringe area on governments' policy agenda. When the initiatives started, governments were paying only fragmented attention ('tunnel visions') to the relevant area, and the initiatives perceived this as a big threat to natural and historical landscape values. After 25 years, the attention and support of local and regional governments were mobilized, and this resulted in the investment of several millions of euros in the protection and development of landscape values.

Connecting to existing policy stories

In both cases, efforts were aimed at alignment with the provincial government, and initiatives were challenged with substantial institutional barriers to get 'inside' the formal perspective of the provincial government. Alignment with the provincial government involved storytelling and frame alignment processes in which the provincial government's existing policy frames were confirmed and reproduced. These policy frames concerned the provincial government's priorities, which related in both cases to the improvement of the region's economy. The initiatives' storytelling strategies were aimed at stretching the 'latitude of acceptance'¹ within the current policy story about regional economic development. Both in Heuvelland and in Gouda-Krimpenerwaard, successful initiatives did not present their proposals as complete alternatives, but as fitting

¹ Latitude of acceptance is the concept used to indicate the range of ideas that a person sees as reasonable or worthy of consideration (Sherif & Hovland, 1961; Sherif et al., 1965)

with, and contributing to, existing policy stories to increase the chance that their proposals would be considered relevant and meaningful by government actors. ‘Only the story with the best fit survives’ (Van Dijk, 2011, p. 138).

Table 6.1: Characteristics of the two case studies of civic initiatives

Cases/ characteristics	Gouda- Krimpenerwaard	Heuvelland		
Initiative (labels used in this thesis)	Citizen initiatives Landscape values Gouda- Krimpenerwaard initiative	Experts, entrepreneurs: New Markets initiative	Entrepreneurs: Healthy Living initiative	Entrepreneurs: Regional Branding initiative
Where?	Southern urban- rural fringe of city of Gouda, connecting to Krimpenerwaard polder region Local-regional level	Region South- Limburg Regional level	Idem	Idem
Reason for starting initiative	Lack of government vision about Gouda- Krimpenerwaard urban-rural fringe	Lack of government vision on how economic activities could improve landscape quality	Market potential of new product-market combination (living, leisure, healthcare, rural economy)	Strategy for regional (economic) development should be based on a good marketing (branding) strategy
Ambition	Getting attention and support (financial and political) for proposal for development and protection of landscape values (nature, traditional landscape structure, historic lock)	Integrated improvement of (tourist and rural) economy and landscape quality: founding of a business community around New Markets	Integrated improvement of health sector, leisure, and revitalizing rural economy and cultural heritage	Establishing a regional brand and a branding campaign to attract businesses and employees (dealing with shrinking and ‘silvering’ population)
Ambition achieved?	Yes	No	Partly: some spin- off*, but dropped from the political agenda	Yes (branding campaign was executed)
Connection to what sort of government agendas?	Local and regional development	Regional development	Local and regional development	Regional economic development
Duration of process	1988–2010	2006–2009	2006–2009	2007–2012

*Spin-off in Integrated Care Community concept (see Kranendonk & van Mansfeld, 2009; Haarmann et al., 2009)

Within these existing policy stories, there was subtle change in governments’ latitude of acceptance, but only gradually and with small steps. To understand the dynamics of such subtle changes and how they prelude change that is perceived as radical or sudden, we focused on what happens in human interactions and who tells what to whom, when, and why, and with what outcomes. Such questions elucidate the conditions in which, through storytelling, support and attention were mobilized and why at a certain juncture stories ‘tipped’.

6.2 Stories made to stick

To address how stories travel among a wider audience, how they are memorable or not to people and resonate, and how they fit to existing (policy) stories, we used a metaphor that we labelled 'sticky stories', inspired by the works of Heath & Heath (2007) and Gladwell (2000) who refer to 'sticky messages'. Sticky stories are stories that enable the building of coalitions and the mobilization of action, and that attract the attention of decision makers. Stickiness enhances the chances of a tipping point being reached in an agenda-setting process. Sticky stories are stories that are elastic and fluid (Baker, 2010); this means that listeners or readers can stick their own experiences and frames to the story. They enhance the responsiveness of potential listeners or readers by providing a framework for interpretation that connects well to the personal experiences, ambitions, and interpretive frames of targeted actors.

Not all stories are 'made to stick' (cf. Heath & Heath, 2007). Some stories fade away. Revisiting the case studies, we found a number of factors that influenced the stickiness of stories.

Clear and stable ambitions

In Chapter 2, we suggested that clear ambitions are an important part of putting across messages and constructing a strong plot for a story. In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, this condition was met very well. Initiatives in Gouda-Krimpenerwaard had a clear and stable ambition throughout the 25 years of campaigning. Even though the story shifted to an emphasis on the advantages of landscape protection for economic and nature development, the original ambitions, that is, the plot of the story (renovation of a historic lock and nature-oriented recreational development), remained the same. Many of the ideas developed in the 1980s were achieved throughout the 2000s without major alterations. The initiators in the fringe were very persistent and had patience to wait for the right time. The stability of ambitions and the sheer persistence and consistency of initiatives formed the basis for a sticky story about the value of the fringe. The story was sometimes adjusted when new partners entered the coalition, but it remained a story to which all relevant actors could stick their ambitions.

The New Markets initiative in the Heuvelland case, however, had many difficulties in establishing a clear ambition. And as there were no stable ambitions, no sticky story emerged from the interactions between the participants. There was continuous discussion and disagreement between entrepreneurs and experts about the organization of the project, and this deflected attention from constructing an ambition for the development of landscape qualities and economic activities. No storyline or plot emerged from the discussions. Finally, entrepreneurs self-organized around other storylines: first, the story of Healthy Living and later the story about the importance of a strong brand for

the region. The Regional Branding story became very sticky, and not only the initiating entrepreneurs, but also other entrepreneurs and local and regional governments clustered around it. Once the regional branding story had tipped, many supporters and resources flowed to it from all kinds of budgets for regional development. The story, with the motto 'Zuid-Limburg: Bright site of life', became a million-euro story.

Relevance, credibility, and salience

Stories that are considered credible and salient by audiences are more easily passed on from teller to listener in an expanding community (see also Chapter 2). In the original New Markets Heuvelland initiatives, it was not possible to develop a shared story because the proposed frames did not connect well to issues that were considered relevant and credible by other stakeholders (provincial government, entrepreneurs). The conditions of credibility and salience were not met, as illustrated below.

The talk about building a network organization and wider business community including interest groups, and so on, did not resonate with the culture of the region, in which communication was more informal and based on one-to-one relations on the one hand and relied on the authoritativeness of particular individuals on the other hand (network of executives). The story about building a network organization with equal participation of wide-ranging interests did not fit into the regional culture. Therefore, the storylines developed by experts in the project were not culturally resonant; they had no narrative fidelity. Moreover, such a story was not empirically credible, because participating entrepreneurs wanted to address problems that were real to them: the managerial and spatial obstacles in starting up innovative pilot projects and scaling these up to the regional level. Even though later on these wishes were fulfilled by the knowledge institutions in the project, it proved too difficult to compete with the stories that the entrepreneurs had set in motion themselves and around which they self-organized and attracted supporters. Another problem in the experts' storytelling was a lack of experiential commensurability. Both entrepreneurs and policymakers found the proposed concepts too abstract and too distant from their own work and understandings. In contrast, stickiness principles like simplicity, unexpectedness, specificity, credibility, and emotion (cf. Heath & Heath, 2007; Baker, 2010) were established in the construction of the Healthy Living and Regional Branding stories. Both were considered specific, simple, and credible stories by audiences. The Regional Branding message connected well to the personal concerns and ideas of entrepreneurs about what the regional economy needed. To tell the stories of Healthy Living and Regional Branding, many symbols were used that spoke to the imagination of targeted audiences, for example the beautiful hilly landscape, regional products (beer, syrup, and so forth) and culture (gastronomy, festivals, art). The name of the self-organized group of entrepreneurs, the Zwarte Ruiters (Black Riders), was connected with the traditional beer brewery, De Zwarte Ruiter.

The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case also provides many examples of the construction of clear, imaginative, credible, and attractive stories through social interactions. For the Veenvaren initiative, a strong emotive symbol was the traditional boat in which one of the initiators sailed the waters of the Krimpenerwaard polder, representing the ambition to reintroduce boating in the polder. He regularly sailed across the waters with his traditional boat and took visitors on board to show them the benefits of boating. By enacting the story of Veenvaren in actual practice, the initiator tried to prove that it was credible and consistent with existing practices and experiences. His boat became an important symbol for the Veenvaren initiative. It spoke well to the imagination of listeners as it resonated well with both the culture and the personal everyday experiences of listeners and their beliefs and values.

These examples show how symbols were used to construct strong, appealing stories that connected to the personal life experiences of targeted audiences. The continuous construction and shaping of stories show that credibility, salience, and emotion are never inherent qualities of stories. A story is not sticky in itself. A story becomes sticky because of what people do with it when they pass it on to one another.

Good stories are told by great listeners

The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case shows that stories became sticky when tellers were able to connect well to the beliefs, concerns, and ambitions of targeted listeners. This requires on the part of issue proponents a certain amount of empathy and the ability to listen. Initiators in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case strove to be open and responsive to ideas of potential partners. Empathizing entailed careful listening to the stories of conversation partners, seeking to see things from the other's perspective by relating to the other's everyday concerns and experiences. For example, the Werkgroep <--> Gouda Krimpenerwaard spokesman invested much time and energy in listening to the concerns of entrepreneurs and inhabitants in the Krimpenerwaard, as well as to the politicians with whom he wanted to connect. He thus became very knowledgeable about the frames with which he had to align his own story. Storytelling required a great deal of listening; or, in other words, strong sticky stories were told by great listeners with much patience.

The Heuvelland analysis suggests that the process managers – the experts – were focusing so hard on building the right coalition according to their own beliefs that there was little room left for listening and empathizing. The meetings and website set up to facilitate joint fact finding and exploring alternative perspectives did not provide enough opportunity for listening. One of the process managers complained that she really wished to talk in person to participant entrepreneurs in an informal atmosphere, but was unable to because she was excluded from such informal gatherings. This suggests that

in Heuvelland, cultural rules of community building were hindering 'outsider' actors from listening and empathizing. Thus, outsider participants were unable to align frames and start a sticky story. This view is supported by the examples of the initiatives (Healing Hills and Regional Branding) of entrepreneurs who were part of the regional executive network and apparently had no problems aligning their ideas with the dominant policy stories. They were able to navigate the self-referential frames of the provincial government formed by concerns about the economic competitiveness of the region in relation to other Dutch and European regions.

Processes in which stories become sticky

Stories have all kinds of properties, such as a beginning and end, a plot, and main characters; but whether a story is sticky, i.e. memorable and contagious, is not inherent in the story itself. A story becomes sticky because of how people construct and alter it when they pass it on to one another. This happens through careful navigation of the self-referential frames of targeted supporters, frame alignment, and resemiotization in social interactions (see also Benford & Snow, 2000; Van Herzele & Aarts, 2013). The case findings demonstrate that, to understand how people mobilize and influence the policy process, we can focus on the human interactions in which stories are told, listened to, aligned, and subtly altered. In other words, the power or fading of a story, for example policy stories, can be explained by what happens to stories in social interactions (see also Aarts, 2009). This process of meaning construction is influenced by a number of factors. Stories become sticky when they are connected to relevant policy stories at the right time, in the right 'language', and by the right persons. In the next sections, we discuss the findings of the two cases with respect to circumstances that influence the processes in which stories become sticky.

6.3 Formal and informal conversations as driver of sticky stories

In line with, for example, Huitema & Meijerink (2010) who identify the recognizing and exploiting of multiple venues as a strategy of policy entrepreneurs, our case findings indicate that stories were made sticky by creating and using various opportunities for conversation which enabled learning about different life worlds and frames. Through conversations, stories were shaped, reproduced, and resemiotized to connect to existing stories of potential supporters.

In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, many opportunities for conversation were used and created. The civic initiatives' strategy was aimed at conversing at all times, everywhere, and in every way. Throughout 25 years of campaigning, proponents of the initiative to protect landscape values in the fringe attended many meetings in the region about related topics, they talked informally on the street, wrote letters to governmental representatives and potential supporters,

contributed to newspaper coverage, held informal meetings, used channels of formal public participation, and more. This resulted very slowly in the resonance of the story in a large network of regional stakeholders.

The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case shows that frame alignment and the connecting and fitting of stories were supported by particular conversational settings that enabled participants to openly explore, share, connect, and reframe stories. Two things were noticed about favourable conversational settings. First, to enable attention and alignment, participants and supporters of initiatives avoided the existing official channels. They looked for settings in which there was room to openly and informally explore various options with targeted supporters and to be creative. The case provides many examples of such settings, like the competitions about future plans for the fringe area (*Gouda Havenstad* and *Stadsrand Natuurlijk*) and the participative design process for the Masterplan *Stolwijkersluis*. Secondly, informal conversation between decision makers (local and regional executives) was also essential to generate enough political and financial support. This involves settings in which local and regional governmental executives meet one another and both formally and informally discuss alternatives, or i.e. settings that enable informal networking and establishing connections and alignments. Informal conversation settings which favoured exploration of perspectives and brainstorming enabled actors to empathize and listen and thereby facilitated learning about various frames and stories which could be relevant for establishing connections.

In Heuvelland, one of the problems for the experts' initiative to advance an attractive story about area-oriented development was a lack of opportunity to discuss it in formal or informal conversations. It was suggested that the process managers – the experts – were focusing too much attention on building the right coalition according to their own beliefs and were unable to create a situation in which they could listen and empathize. Despite efforts to organize meetings and a virtual platform to facilitate informal and collaborative exchange of views and alternatives, sticky stories did not emerge. Process managers were not able to create conditions for informal conversations with entrepreneurs in which decisions in formal meetings could be prepared. In Heuvelland, informal one-to-one conversations were an essential vehicle for creating sticky stories and connecting different worlds and networks. However, they were excluded from informal conversations between the engaged entrepreneurs. The findings suggest that the closed character of the managerial network of entrepreneurs and government executives was hindering outsider actors from listening and empathizing. As a result, the stories of the experts and of the entrepreneurs developed separately and competed with one another. Outsider participants were unable to align ambitions and frames and start a sticky story.

The conclusions about favourable conversational settings are supported by a growing body of literature on the role of conversations in organization management (Shaw, 2002; Ford & Ford, 1995; Ford, 1999; Baker, 2010; Van Herzele & Aarts, 2013). This literature argues that the activity of conversation is the key process through which forms of organizing are reproduced and changed.

[Conversations] are integral to work and play and are a hub of organizational life. Conversations are the channel through which people work with others, make decisions, and build relationships. (Baker, 2010, p. 3).

Ford (1999, p. 483) indicates that conversations, at the most basic level, can be perceived as 'what is said and listened to' between people. But conversations also include the symbols, artefacts, theatrics, and so forth that are used in combination with or as substitutes for what is spoken (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Ford, 1999). The value of conversations lies in the opportunity they provide to make sense of ambiguity together and to understand a little bit better complex and continuous change (Baker, 2010). By storytelling through conversations, people can make sense of and anticipate change. Especially in complex change processes, conversations provide opportunity for feedback that may generate new and unimagined ideas (ibid.). People can explore differences in conversations, achieve a better understanding of the situation, and discover new aspects and possibilities. Through such conversations, new patterns, knowledge, and storylines may emerge, or they may lead to adjustment or transformation of existing stories.

Under certain circumstances, conversations are precursors to transformative change. Baker (2010) argues that conversations can 'catalyze' change when they have some qualitative properties; that is, when conversations provide a context of trust, respect, curiosity, and hope. Other conditions are acceptance of differences and patience with respect to the process. Such properties of conversations create an advantageous situation for people to open up their minds, become responsive, and come out of their comfort zone.

The arguments about catalytic conversations support the case findings about the type of conversational settings that favour storytelling and frame alignment. Our findings suggest that such a catalytic context can be achieved when conversations provide room for empathizing and listening². By listening genuinely, differences in perceptions can be discovered. And after understanding the other, one can try to be understood by presenting ideas in the context of the perceptions, paradigms, and concerns of the other person. Along similar lines, Scharmer (2001, 2010) points to the relation between states of conversation and the resulting extent of listening and learning. According to Scharmer (2010, p. 4), conversations which take the form of conforming and talking nice

2 See also Buizer (2008) who with similar cases of civic initiatives and their relation to government bodies points to the importance of empathy in coalition building.

lead to listening to what you already know (*downloading*). More confrontation through debate can lead to recognizing new facts (*factual listening*). Dialogue that provides room for empathizing and reflection, results in *empathic listening*, that is, seeing a situation through the eyes of another and thus seeing yourself as part of a larger whole. The three forms of listening combined can lead to *generative listening*, where creativity emerges and potential for innovation is recognized. Thus, conversations which provide room for empathizing are critical to innovation and collaboration.

The importance of conversations is often overlooked and taken for granted. However, on the basis of the case study results, and supported by a body of literature about conversations as triggers of change, we conclude that conversations were essential hubs in the shaping of sticky stories. Conversations were needed to start, shape, and spread a story. Frame alignment was stimulated by conversational settings that provided room for telling, listening, and empathizing. Building on the empirical findings and on the literature, we argue that stories are made sticky in human interactions through ‘catalytic conversations’ (cf. Baker, 2010), that is, conversations in which people are curious about new perspectives, accept differences, and take time to listen and empathize.

6.4 Events and opportunities: the power of the small and the many

The Heuveland and Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case studies point to the decisive roles of specific events in storytelling efforts. For example, the opportunity of the crisis fund in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case enabled the attachment of emotion and urgency to the story of the civic initiative by stressing that it was now or never, a unique opportunity which could not be missed. This enhanced the perceived urgency of the issue (to local and regional governments) to such an extent that the story about renovating the historic lock became sticky and tipped. In Heuveland, triggering events could also be observed. In the Regional Branding case, changes in political circumstances were used to make the story stickier. The story aligned well with the existing policy story about the regional economy, which was faced with the threat of young people leaving for other parts of the country.

Although political opportunities and events certainly triggered action, we found that they cannot explain change in themselves. The case study findings point to more subtle and smaller contextual factors and circumstances that were equally important to the process in which stories became sticky or faded. The findings support and strengthen arguments (e.g. Kingdon, 2003; Cheny & Christensen, 2001; Hudalah et al., 2010; Van Woerkum et al., 2011) that focusing events need something else to carry a subject onto a policy agenda. ‘Focusing events reinforce pre-existing perceptions of a problem (Zahariadis, 2007). The results from the case studies indicate that political and social events and opportunities

were social constructs which were given meaning as triggers in the light of many smaller and bigger events in the past, and in the light of negotiations and stories that had evolved over a long period of time. It was a matter of 'filling the cup', or in the words of Kingdon (2003), 'softening up' prospective adherents.

In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, the initiators used various opportunities to attract attention to alternative plans for the fringe area. Over a period of 25 years, they used design competitions, formal participation procedures around government plans for the region, the project Masterplan Stolwijkersluis, and their own yearly dawn walk to suggest alternative plans, and many other occasions. The variety of contexts in which they promoted their ideas enabled a slow filtering through in the policy system. The only thing required to actually implement the ideas was resources that, ultimately, had to flow from the provincial government. That happened when the province realized that they needed a few hectares more to achieve their ambitions for nature development. To solve that problem, the provincial government could connect to the proposals that had already been floated by the civic initiative. The province's problem of the hectares for nature development was the final small drop that made the cup run over. The concurrence of a large number of small things was what tipped stories and ideas. In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, civic initiatives enabled the cup to be filled with many small drops by telling their story always and everywhere over a long period of time. The right context was created to make the story stick.

The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard analysis provides many examples of more subtle and smaller circumstances that together precluded change. One of these is the vigorous debates about the construction of a new road around Gouda and the related industrial area that at first glance seem unrelated to the story that was promoted later on, but still mattered a great deal in the coalition-building process. The passionate engagement of Werkgroep <--> Gouda-Krimpenerwaard in the debate about the new road led them into a coalition with stakeholders from the Krimpenerwaard polder. These contacts remained and helped Werkgroep <--> Gouda-Krimpenerwaard to know about the beliefs, concerns, interests, and values of people in the Krimpenerwaard. They understood through on-going conversations with Krimpenerwaardians over a long period of time that the nature-agriculture controversy was the major concern also for the province, which was responsible for solving the conflicts. Thus, they knew exactly how to deal carefully with the political culture in the Krimpenerwaard and how to use that to get to the province. Because they knew that the intrusion of urban dwellers was undesired by Krimpenerwaardians, they gratefully accepted and stimulated the alignment with the Veenveren initiative. A sticky story was created out of it, in which the restoration of landscape values in the fringe (such as the historic lock) and recreational amenities were connected to a story about the economic opportunities of reintroducing boating in the Krimpenerwaard polder. At first glance, the conflicts and discussions about the new road at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s seem to have little to

do with the story about Veenwaren and the restoration of the lock. However, the Veenwaren story and the role of the lock in that story were only able to become sticky as a result of the previous engagements of Werkgroep Gouda <--> Krimpenerwaard with Krimpenerwaardians around the issue of the bypass. Little things can matter a great deal.

In Heuvelland, small contextual changes were at play as well and help explain why some initiatives tipped, whereas others faded. For example, the participation of Transforum and Alterra in the New Markets project subtly changed the context, and this had a big effect in terms of coalition building and agenda setting. Alterra's participation slightly changed the emphasis in the project's goals. Alterra believed that if the project was about landscape development and protection, then other stakeholders should be invited into the project (nature and landscape organizations, policymakers from relevant policy domains, and so on). The original project managers opposed this view because they felt that the key, innovative economic activities could only be provided by entrepreneurs. The small change of adding a new participant, who subtly and tacitly changed the project focus, led to a conflict about the project organization that deflected attention from a collective attempt to introduce a new approach to area-oriented development.

The tipping of the Regional Branding story in the Heuvelland case was also a result of smaller contextual changes that together made the cup overflow. During 2006 and 2007, the ideas about a 'silver economy' were slowly meeting increased resistance inside and outside the policy system. The observation that in fact a specialization in the elderly would lead to an even more rapid leaking away of youngsters from the region, and thereby present a real threat to the knowledge economy, led to a shift in political and policy attention towards retaining youngsters. The Regional Branding initiative was well aware of that changing political circumstance, and it fitted nicely into the concern already raised at province headquarters. However, a tipping point was reached only when the province took over the initiative as a result of other circumstances. The Regional Branding initiative had started out as an idea connected to efforts by the city Maastricht to develop a city marketing strategy. The province considered it undesirable for Maastricht to develop a brand for itself isolated from the other cities in the region. The province, conforming to its ambition to develop a strong urban network in the South-Limburg region, thought it would be wiser to construct a regional brand for the whole urban network. Therefore, the branding of the region, specifically in relation to the South Limburg Urban Network, became a major provincial concern in 2007. Thus, the story of Regional Branding gained more and more power as various circumstances reinforced its attraction.

On the basis of our findings, we argue that the triggering effect of an event or opportunity can only be understood by considering preceding events and processes of storytelling. As already stated, it is a matter of filling the cup, or

'softening up' prospective adherents. When the cup is filled, it only takes a small drop more to make the cup run over. This argument corresponds with complexity perspectives on change, indicating that small and seemingly irrelevant or unimportant changes can have large effects in relation to one another (Morgan, 1986). Change may then seem radical, but is in fact the result of gradual and step-by-step change.

In the context of storytelling processes and conditions that enable stories to become sticky, it is important to note the following: 1) events or circumstances were incorporated into storytelling as triggers or opportunities, when such events and circumstances were important and relevant to targeted supporters (for example the crisis fund) and 2) successful initiatives tried out novelties, proposals, and stories all the time and searched actively for various conversational settings in which these could be discussed. For both efforts, initiatives required much patience and had to continuously scan the environment for relevant events and opportunities. They created favourable circumstances to a certain extent. Although issues and events can arise unexpectedly, sometimes perceived as coincidence or luck, there is often a planned part (see also Van Woerkum et al., 2011).

6.5 Connectors: people who make things happen

The general argument in policy agenda-setting research, at least in the multiple streams model (Kingdon, 2003) and the punctuated equilibrium model (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), is that, although institutions and focusing events make things possible, people make things happen (Zahariadis, 2007; Huitema & Meijerink, 2010). The point made is that the importance of structure and institutions in policy change is tempered considerably by individuals, timing, and context. What people do, how they prepare change by 'selling' alternative proposals, and how they influence (policy) frames through their interactions is what matters. In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, we found that individual agents, who we labelled 'connectors' (after Gladwell, 2000; Shirky, 2008), connected ambitions, storylines, people, resources, events, and contexts. These connecting activities enabled the emergence, strengthening, spreading, adapting, and fitting of stories in the following ways.

Connecting qualities

First, the case study findings point to connectors who had key positions in networks and could therefore connect different networks and groups. Examples in the Heuveland case were the leading entrepreneurs who used their informal executive networks effectively. They bridged the entrepreneurial network and the relevant policy networks. In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, we found that connectors also included engaged citizens who spread and shared knowledge

with many others and thus made ideas spread rapidly through a wider network. Meeting and knowing many others, preferably in relevant sub-networks and groups, proved to influence the mobilization of attention.

Second, individual agents also operated as connectors when they were considered a credible storyteller by other people or when they were able to mobilize credible storytellers³. In Gouda-Krimpenerwaard, we identified a number of credible storytellers who had status or were considered experts in the field and therefore were able to persuade influential actors in their network. However, storyteller credibility was not exclusive to people who were considered to be authorities. Sometimes, storytellers had a good claim to a hearing because they were considered genuine and credible on the basis of their cultural background and knowledge about the place or region. The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case provides the example of the Veenvaren initiator who was considered as a credible conversation partner by crucial political actors in the Krimpenerwaard, because he belonged to the community of Krimpenerwaardians and contributed valuable local knowledge. In this way, the Veenvaren initiative established a fruitful connection between civic initiatives in the city of Gouda and decision makers in the Krimpenerwaard. In Heuvelland, people assigned with authority were credible storytellers. This worked out positively for the Regional Branding initiative. For the New Markets initiative, it was a delimiting factor as the experts themselves were not part of the select club of individuals who were considered to have authority. Here, they would have needed other connectors that did have the right cultural background and position and that could reinforce the story and pass it on. Apparently, sometimes credibility entailed the attributed authority of people, sometimes expertise mattered, or cultural background, or local knowledge. On this basis, we can conclude that a storyteller's credibility is a social construct, i.e. it depends on what is considered important by his or her conversation partners in particular situations.

A third connecting quality is being able to empathize and listen to stories of conversation partners. In Gouda-Krimpenerwaard, we see that even regular citizens, who were not part of a powerful managerial network, could still operate as connectors. They managed to align frames by empathizing and listening, that is, they tried to understand the other's perspective. People who could empathize with, and listen carefully to, potential supporters were crucial connectors. Moreover, key players were those connectors who liked to share information and knowledge to help other people; and by being very knowledgeable about different contexts they could bridge different networks and reach other connectors whose connecting qualities lay more in 'selling' and 'networking' the story.

³ Benford & Snow (2000) use the term 'credible frame articulators', see also Chapter 2.

A fourth connecting quality is being attentive to events, circumstances, and contexts that provide the opportunity to connect and align stories and people. For example, the group of entrepreneurs in the Regional Branding initiative built an informal network and provided a suitable context for informal conversations. They seized political opportunities and tried to create the right context. The same happened in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, in which initiatives continually searched for contexts to promote their messages and tell their story. Waiting, searching, and creating the right (conversational) context required a great deal of knowledge and sensitivity about various contexts as well as patience and perseverance. Successful connectors knew how to 'nudge' contexts, or in other words, they knew how to signal, use, and create contexts to a certain extent. Thus, connectors were critical agents in the construction of a sticky story, or conversely they could weaken a competing story.

No single heroes

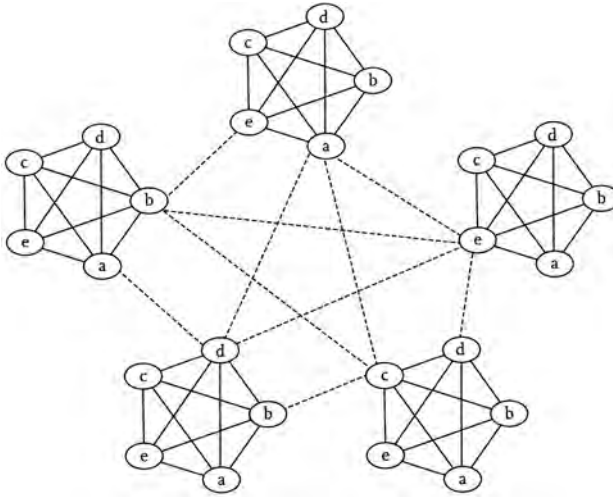
The case studies demonstrated that change could not be traced to single heroes or leaders of change. As one of the respondents in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case said, 'success had many fathers'. Connectors become connectors only in relation to other people also performing as connectors and in relation to specific issues. This conclusion is supported by arguments put forward in Shirky's work (2008). His central argument is that messages and stories are most effectively and efficiently passed on in network structures in which small, highly connected groups are linked to other small connected groups in a loose connection. See Figure 6.1. Connectors refer to the highly connected people that hold social networks together and enable robust connectedness in a wider network. Note that, in the figure, the connectivity of the smaller clusters in the network does not depend on one person, but multiple persons.

As long as a couple of people in each small group know a couple of people in other groups, you get the advantages of tight connection at the small scale and loose connection at the large scale. (Shirky, 2008, p. 216)

According to Shirky (2008, p. 225), connectors bring to the network the 'bridging capital' required to establish connections in the network that enable messages to spread, similar to our previous discussions about frame alignment processes. Shirky's model of the small world network and the importance of connectors says a great deal about innovative potentials within the network but does not elucidate the circumstances and processes through which connections are actually established. Our findings show that this depends on the actions and interactions of the connectors involved and the discursive contexts in which connections are deemed relevant. In our approach to connectors, we refer to social contact and the framing and reframing efforts of people in conversations. Our interpretation of the connector concept adds an emphasis on discursive abilities to the notion of mathematical connectedness.



Figure 6.1: Connectors in a network (Shirky, 2008, p. 217)



The connector concept is a relational concept involving the communicative process in which people connect to other people, stories, and frames, and relevant events and context. The concept tells us that people who take the lead in a group initiative cannot by themselves succeed in spreading a message and achieving goals. Any group initiative requires multiple connectors who link up a wider network. Connectors are not only leaders or initiators, but also group members who know how to establish connections with relevant other groups and make stories spread.

Policy entrepreneurs and discursive power

In relation to the concept of policy entrepreneurs, addressed in Chapter 2, we can make a few observations. First, our findings about the various strategies deployed by issue proponents to promote particular stories reflect many elements of studies about policy entrepreneurs and their strategies (cf. Huitema & Meijerink, 2010; Mintrom, 1997). Such strategies include the development and 'selling' of new ideas, building coalitions and networking, recognizing and exploiting windows of opportunity, and recognizing, creating, and exploiting multiple venues for getting attention. The main idea is that successful policy entrepreneurs are skilled at coupling, which means attaching problems to solutions and finding politicians receptive to their ideas.

Second, Kingdon (2003) and Zahariadis (2007) emphasize that entrepreneurs who have better access to policymakers and more resources (especially time) are more likely to have success. We have demonstrated that, although such aspects are important, ultimately it is what people do and communicate that matters. The critical factor that enables a story to spread and become sticky is how people 'sell' and connect ideas and stories through careful learning about the frames

and perspectives of targeted supporters and how they establish connections in the wider network (not only politicians). The concept of connectors, that is, our interpretation of the concept, emphasizes the discursive qualities that affect agenda setting: credibility, empathy, and listening, framing and reframing stories, and establishing connections between various relevant groups in the network. Of course, it helps when there is access, and when time and other resources can be invested facilitating on-going storytelling and fitting stories to existing policy stories, but what happens in interactions and how people come to a shared understanding is what makes the change, not resources or access in themselves. If stories get no response, do not touch a chord, then there is no attention and no support. We argue that successful policy entrepreneurship requires connectors: people who can connect stories, people, and events.

Citizens and business entrepreneurs

The question may be raised of whether it matters whether initiatives are essentially driven by business entrepreneurs (Heuveland case) or by citizens (Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case) with respect to goal achievement and agenda change. This is essentially a question about power, in policy agenda-setting research operationalized as 'access', 'resources', and 'manipulation' (e.g. Zahariadis, 2007). Do business entrepreneurs have more power than citizens and are they therefore more likely to be successful policy entrepreneurs? On the basis of our analysis, we are inclined to say that this is not the case. Business entrepreneurs had more financial resources and access through their connectedness in executive networks. However, we have demonstrated that resources and access were only one aspect of how stories became sticky and how issues got prioritized. The way ambitions were framed into attractive stories and how the story was fitted and resemiotized to establish connections with potential supporters was maybe even more important. 'Network power' can also come about through collective meaning construction (cf. Booher & Innes, 2002). We have demonstrated with the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case that citizens can effectively mobilize discursive power as well, without having many resources at their disposal or without access to decision-making arenas. How people in networks establish a flow of ideas and stories through conversations is what matters most. In other words, whether business entrepreneurs are more powerful agenda setters than residents depends entirely on the context and how they manage to bring about a spreading of a story in the wider network by connecting to relevant other people.

Context matters, connectors come and go

One final observation about connectors should be addressed. We concluded from the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case that the connector label is not exclusive to a particular person but depends on context, i.e. time, place, situation, and the stories being promoted or competing. Persons performed as connectors at certain junctures, whereas at other junctures other persons had this task.



Individual people performed as connectors at different times depending on the specific context and the qualities needed at the time. Therefore, we use the term connector to emphasize the communicative connections established by people in continuously changing webs of relations. We did not aim to locate particular individuals who performed as change agents. Change could not be attributed to a few people who merit the label of change agent or leaders of change. Change knew many 'fathers'. Moreover, connectors were always dependent on the interactions in the wider network of which they were part, so all they could do was 'nudge' contexts.

6.6 Conclusion

From the case study findings, we conclude that agendas are influenced by people essentially through the interactional framing of ambitions into sticky stories, and the incorporation of smaller and bigger events into those stories. Stories do not become sticky as result of their properties or by coincidence through focusing events; rather they are made sticky by people through their conversations with one another. This entails slow processes of continuous resemiotization and frame alignment in order to frame and 'story' issues into targeted audiences' latitude of acceptance. On the part of proposal promoters, this requires attentive listening to, and empathizing with, what is said and brought forward by potential supporters, i.e. attentive navigation of their self-referential frames. Thus, storytelling is not about transmitting stories, but about careful listening, empathizing, sharing, and aligning. Storytelling that enables the mobilization of political and policy attention is not so much *persuasive* (cf. Throgmorton, 1996; Sandercock, 2003) as *connective* (cf. Baker, 2010).

Three conditions have been identified that facilitate the process of stories becoming sticky: catalytic conversations, incorporation of smaller and bigger events, and people who perform as connectors of groups, stories, and events. In the next chapter, these three conditions and their interplay are further developed into a model that elucidates the process of stories becoming sticky.



**Planning as
connective
storytelling:
conclusions and
discussion**

7.1 Introduction

The goal of this research was to contribute to insights about how planners can make better connections with civic initiatives without falling into the trap of 'government-centrism'. It was argued that a more responsive and enabling planning practice should give careful attention to where civic initiatives emerge and to the meaning they have for planning practices to promote liveable and sustainable places (Healey, 2006; Booher, 2008; Albrechts, 2008). This requires an 'outside-in' approach to civic engagement in planning practices (e.g. Boonstra & Boelens, 2011); this, in turn, entails understanding the dynamics of social networks beyond the boundaries of formal planning processes. The focus of analysis was not on how planners engage citizens, but on how citizens engage planners in their planning work. The research aimed to elucidate how civic initiatives organize themselves and relate to government-led planning and policy practices, and the circumstances under which they manage to transform planning agendas for regional spatial development despite the blockages and dominating structures of a self-referential government (e.g. Healey, 2006).



The following question was central to the research:

How do civic initiatives connect to government organizations, and how can we understand outcomes of these connections in terms of the achievement of ambitions of civic initiatives and planning agendas for regional spatial development?

In Chapter 2, we operationalized this research question by focusing on whether and how civic initiatives mobilize support and attention for their proposals about improving the quality of places by constructing inviting stories. Strategic framing of issues, selecting certain aspects and ignoring others (cf Entman, 1993), was considered a powerful agenda-setting mechanism (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005; McCombs & Shaw, 1993). This implied a focus on the day-to-day social interactions and use of language that constitute, reconfirm, and transform the way we think about things and act upon them, and how this subtly influences political agendas (Healey, 2006; Fischer & Forester, 1993).

The analysis was based on the idea that storytelling is a strategic form of framing in which problem definitions, solutions, strategies, and motivations for action are brought together in a coherent whole, providing an interpretive framework for the listener to make sense of an ambiguous reality. The chances of stories mobilizing support are increased if they are inviting to listeners who will then pass the story on to others. Civic initiatives are challenged to fit stories to the self-referential frames of targeted supporters to get attention and support. This happens in an interactive process of 'making sense' together, in which the telling and sharing of stories plays an important role. We have argued that stories mobilize attention and support when they are told and framed such that they are considered relevant, credible, truthful, and emotive by listeners. Moreover, the attraction of stories is enhanced when they are connected to events and specific contexts that are considered important or relevant by targeted audiences. Therefore, in this study, we have looked for the way civic initiatives construct, align, and reshape stories in their interactions with other actors and in relation to the specific context. Basically, this involved asking 'who is telling what to whom in what context, why, and with what kind of outcomes?'

In Chapter 3, we elaborately discussed the interpretive methodology used to analyse the agenda-setting and storytelling endeavours of civic initiatives. Two in-depth case studies were selected concerning civic initiatives which produced unsolicited proposals for local and regional spatial development in two different regions in the Netherlands: 1) the New Markets initiatives in the Heuvelland region, and 2) the positioning of landscape values in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard urban-rural fringe on policy agendas. The results of these case studies were presented and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, and compared with each other in Chapter 6. In this final chapter, we wrap up the findings and discuss the implications for planning and policy research and practice.

7.2 Civic initiatives and unfolding sticky stories

The case studies demonstrated that agenda setting is not only achieved by the 'usual suspects', i.e. influential lobby groups, politicians, and policymakers, but can also be influenced by common citizens and entrepreneurs. Under certain circumstances, they are able to self-organize and mobilize support in the webs of relations that define shared spaces (Castells, 2004, 2012; Healey, 2006), i.e. they can develop 'network power' (Booher & Innes, 2002). Similar conclusions have been drawn in other recent research about citizens' self-organized action and how this can lead to changes in policymaking and spatial planning (e.g. Winnubst, 2011; Warner, 2008; Aarts et al., 2007; Buizer, 2008). We contribute a number of new insights on the way citizens may contribute to policy change through agenda setting and storytelling. In this section, we discuss the main findings of this research, and in section 3 we discuss the contributions of these findings to policy and planning science.

Storytelling and agenda setting in Heuvelland

In the Heuvelland case, experts' initiatives to propose an alternative approach to spatial development with the New Markets philosophy slowly faded. Two initiatives emerged from the New Markets process which further developed in informal settings outside the control of the New Markets project organization. These two initiatives managed to construct strong stories which gained political support. Two major shifts in the agenda-setting process were identified. First, the Healthy Living initiative was prioritized and assigned a central role in the next phase of the New Market project, but only a short time later this story was suddenly replaced by a story about Regional Branding, which emphasized stimulating the knowledge economy by creating and marketing an attractive region for young talented workers. The analysis of shifts in the agenda-setting process pointed to the importance of storytelling and strategic framing processes. In relation to framing processes and the question of why some stories were successful whereas others faded, we drew the following conclusions.

First, we concluded that a clear direction, in the form of an appealing story, was of the utmost importance. In the New Markets process, it was not possible to formulate an appealing and directional ambition for spatial and economic development of the region. There was too much focus on building coalitions and managing relations, and too little on identifying issues. Identifying issues in a collective multi-stakeholder setting proved difficult because stakeholders preferred to realize their own ambitions through smaller and informal settings. As a result, the New Markets initiative, presented as an alternative approach to existing spatial policies and planning strategies for the region, was not able to develop an appealing storyline that would generate attention and broad support for the proposed ideas. The lack of direction was compounded by a coming and going of stakeholders in the New Markets coalitions. Coalitions seemed to be unmanageable and directionless. In contrast, in smaller and



informal settings, two initiatives framed their ambitions into strong stories that connected well to existing policy stories about future economic development in the region. From this, we derive that, to become sticky, stories required stable ambitions that were flexibly framed into a story that was recognizable and relevant to targeted audiences.

Second, a clear connecting strategy with relevant governmental actors was essential, in this case to the provincial government. Stakeholders perceived the provincial government as crucial and decisive in regional development. Therefore, agenda-setting strategies were mainly aimed at the provincial policy agendas and at getting the attention of provincial representatives. The province was characterized as authoritative and highly self-referential, and this challenged initiatives with a major barrier to becoming noticed and prioritized. However, ambiguity about the extent and way of involving various provincial departments resulted in an unstable alignment strategy and prevented the establishment of a meaningful connection. On the one hand, government involvement was considered necessary for resources (money, land, knowledge, regulations) as well as coordination, and, on the other hand, too much government involvement was believed to dampen the innovative energy of grass-roots initiatives. Similar experiences with ambiguous views about (provincial) government engagement in regional innovation networks in the Netherlands were found by Aarts et al. (2007). In contrast to the New Markets project, the coalition building strategies of Healthy Living and Regional Branding were more straightforward and entailed building good relations with the policy network around economic development. Overcoming the barriers of a limited government perspective on social reality required a stable alignment strategy that fitted to ways of working and ways of viewing the world of targeted supporters.

Third, the Healthy Living and Regional Branding initiatives established meaningful alignments through informal networks of business and government executives that provided the opportunity to share stories and explore alternatives. Informal communication in personal, one-to-one meetings seemed to prevail and was accepted generally as the way things were negotiated in the region. This in part explains why the stories of Healthy Living and Regional Branding could spread through relevant networks and managed to include decision makers in storytelling. In addition, the Regional Branding initiative in particular managed to strengthen its story by connecting it to political and social events that were considered highly important by the provincial government. By interweaving these events and the provincial government's problem frames into the story about a future 'dynamic and vibrant' region, it triggered wide support from local governments and the provincial government, as well as businesses.

Storytelling and agenda setting in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe

In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, tipping points in agenda setting were marked by particular political events, shifts in coalitions, and sudden shifts in the attention paid by government organizations to issues in the fringe area. To understand why shifts occurred, we asked what happened in the process and in the period leading up to tipping points. We found that the continuous and everyday interactions between stakeholders were essential, as these interactions enabled continuous framing of stories and fitting stories to the frames and stories of targeted supporters. The ambitions of civic initiatives remained stable, but these were over time framed into an evolving story that shifted multiple times to emphasize new or different elements. Shifts in storytelling occurred when coalition building required alignments with other groups. To get support from governments, this especially concerned fitting the story to relevant policy stories. This was particularly apparent in the process in which the story about the future of the fringe was framed as a regional matter, as relevant to the rural redevelopment of the Krimpenerwaard, to get the attention and commitment of the provincial authority.

We found a number of answers to the question of how alignments between different stories and groups of people were established. Frame alignment strategies, as described in Chapter 3, in this case study concerned bridging, amplification, and extension of ideas to relate to the concerns and frames of potential supporters. Citizen initiatives' frames were not transformed in the sense that totally new ideas were adopted. The issues in the case area remained the same, ambitions were stable, but the story about the future of the fringe area changed to fit well into policy stories that could facilitate implementation.

With regard to the question of why alignment strategies were successful in terms of resonance and increased responsiveness of targeted supporters, the following explanations were found. First, positive response was enhanced by telling a story that was easy to understand and that triggered the imagination, for example through visualizations and design.

Second, we found that stories needed time to filter through or, in the words of Kingdon (2003), the policy system had to be slowly 'softened up' to new stories. Repetition and continuously telling and sharing the story in various contexts helped this process of filtering through. By continuously framing and reframing, civic initiatives and their coalition partners slowly enlarged the 'latitude of acceptance' of governments (cf. Sherif & Hovland, 1961).

Third, alignment with others required resemiotization (cf. Iedema, 2001; Van Herzele & Aarts, 2013) of stories to include perspectives of targeted supporters and to invite them to participate. To secure their attention and support, governments' ambitions, concerns, and policy stories had to be incorporated into the story about the future of the fringe area. Incorporating the self-referential frames of others into storytelling increased the credibility and

salience of the story by connecting to the values and beliefs of targets as well as their personal everyday experiences. This was especially demonstrated in the process in which alignments with initiatives for the rural development of the Krimpenerwaard were established. We described this process as navigating the self-referential frames of potential supporters. In this way, the responsiveness of targeted audiences, especially governmental stakeholders, was improved.

Fourth, empathy and listening to stories of others was an important condition to understand the perspectives of others, exchange views, and construct a shared story. Storytellers had to listen carefully to understand the frames of targeted supporters and incorporate them effectively. Empathizing with targeted supporters was an effective strategy to get or keep a position at the negotiation table and to get access to relevant information. This means that telling and selling a story was important, but could not work without carefully listening to relevant other people.

Presenting a story that would be considered relevant and credible was the main challenge. This was achieved not only through the incorporation of perspectives of relevant others (resemiotization), but also through construction of an identity that would render the proposal's promoters credible and relevant in the eyes of others. The diverse civic initiatives in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case framed themselves as the sort of partner with whom other groups, especially governments, like to cooperate: knowledgeable, constructive, and representative. They continuously tried to maintain good relations with government to be included in planning processes and to get access to information. Furthermore, the diverse civic initiatives tried to be considered credible and relevant by connecting with people that already had this label.

Wrapping up: how stories became sticky or faded

The case studies demonstrated that storytelling and story alignment efforts of civic initiatives and their supporters resulted in subtle and step-by-step changes in existing policy stories rather than structural or radical change. Fitting stories to existing policy stories through a slow process of softening up the policy system implied a reproduction of hegemonic policy stories. This is illustrated by the Regional Branding story in the Heuvelland case and the story about economic vitality and rural renovation in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case. Existing policy stories became a bit wider, but only to include new elements which re-confirmed rather than transformed the original story. This confirms arguments in other agenda-setting research that change is almost never radical (Kingdon, 2003) and even punctuated change (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005) can be explained as a slow filtering through, a slow framing and reframing of new ideas and proposals. Civic initiatives contribute to change only in subtle ways. However, such subtle and small changes are crucial to understand larger effects (cf. Morgan, 1986).

Some stories became epidemic through on-going framing processes and 'tipped', resulting in the achievement of ambitions of civic initiatives, like the story about the urban–rural fringe as a gateway between city and countryside in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case. And sometimes stories faded away to the benefit of other stories that became more dominant, like the fading of the Healing Hills story in favour of the Regional Branding story in the Heuvelland case.

Synthesizing the results of the empirical chapters, including the comparison of the case studies in Chapter 6, we conclude that the following processes and conditions were critical for stories to become sticky.

1. Framing clear and stable ambitions into flexible stories

Successful civic initiatives had clear and stable ambitions which they packaged in flexible stories that changed over time. Storytelling enabled the incorporation of different perspectives and different ambitions of targeted supporters as well as adaptation to changing circumstances such as political events, new actors on the scene, and so forth. Flexible stories enabled alignment with potential supporters' stories. Moreover, stories had to be flexible to incorporate occurring events that provided opportunities. Thus, ambitions remained stable, but they were incorporated into elastic stories that changed subtly through framing and reframing in social interactions.

2. Navigating targeted supporters' self-referentiality

We concluded in Chapter 6 that stickiness involves connecting to and enhancing the responsiveness of targeted supporters. In the cases this was done by stretching audiences' latitude of acceptance (cf. Sherif & Hovland, 1961). Civic initiatives did not present stories as completely alternative ideas, but as ideas that fitted into existing (policy) stories. Thus, the chances were increased that potential supporters would consider the proposed stories credible, relevant, and meaningful. The extent to which original stories changed varied. In some cases, only bridging of similar stories took place, whereas, in other cases, stories were extended and amplified to include new storylines, like the inclusion of the Veenwaren storyline in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case. Thus, connections and stickiness of stories were established in storytelling processes where participants navigated one another's self-referential frames and stories.

3. Empathizing and listening

Connecting to the beliefs, concerns, and ambitions of targeted listeners required on the part of issue proponents a certain amount of empathy and the ability to listen. Empathizing entailed careful listening to the stories of conversation partners, seeking to see things from the other's perspective by relating to the



other's everyday concerns and experiences. Thus, storytelling required a great deal of listening; or, in other words, strong sticky stories were told by great listeners with much patience.

4. *Enabling conditions: focusing events, catalytic conversations, and connectors*

The research results point to three enabling conditions which, in relation to one another, clarify how stories become sticky or fade away. These conditions are 1) focusing events and changing contexts that provide opportunity for alignment, 2) conversations as the medium of storytelling, and 3) connectors as the people who connect stories, people, and events.

First, the case studies showed that stories became sticky at certain critical junctures marked by events interpreted and framed by proponents as a trigger or window of opportunity. By connecting a story to particular events that focus attention, alignment was enabled with potential supporters to whom these events were meaningful. However, events did not trigger by themselves and cannot by themselves explain change. The case studies showed that the triggering effect of an event could only be understood in relation to the way people framed and interpreted those events as triggers in the light of past events and discussions. Over time the interactions, conversations and storytelling between civic initiatives and potential supporters shaped the context in which new events were given meaning. In Chapter 6, we described this process as the filling of a cup where the final drop that makes the cup run over represents the event that is interpreted as the trigger or tipping point. That final drop can be a big event, like a shift in the national mood or a catastrophe, or a relatively small or seemingly meaningless event, like a coincidental encounter on the street with the right person. Thus, we concluded that even a small event or change can tip a new idea or story.

Second, stories did not become sticky because of their own inherent properties, they were 'made to stick' by people through everyday conversations. The research revealed that to understand how stories become sticky and result in tipping points, one has to consider the medium of storytelling: formal and informal conversations¹. Civic initiatives that engaged in all kinds of conversations, everywhere and at all times, increased the chance of learning about relevant stories of potential supporters, and of connecting their own stories to them through frame alignment processes. (Re)framing stories can be strategic but can also be unplanned. It happens in the flow of conversations as people start to see things differently when they listen to other stories and add their own experiences. Building on the empirical findings and the literature, we concluded in Chapter 6 that stories are made sticky in human interactions through 'catalytic conversations' (cf. Baker, 2010), that is, conversational settings in which people are curious about new perspectives, accept differences, and

¹ For a discussion of formal–informal conversations, see also Van Assche et al., 2012.

take time to listen and empathize. The case studies demonstrated that although informal conversations provided the best settings for catalytic conversations, such opportunities for informal interaction were also provided via formal conversation contexts.

Third, we argued that stories become sticky because of certain people who are critical to the spreading and connecting of stories. Using the term of Shirky (2008), we called these people connectors: people who connect people, ambitions, stories, resources, and events through storytelling in conversations. Connectors enabled the emergence, strengthening, spreading, adapting, and fitting of stories through a number of connecting qualities which are discussed in Chapter 6. Summarized, people performing as connector 1) had key positions in network which enabled them to establish connections between different networks and groups; 2) were considered credible storytellers themselves, or were able to mobilize other people who were considered credible storytellers; 3) empathized with targeted supporters and listened carefully to the stories of targeted supporters to be able to connect their own story, and 4) 'nudged' and created favourable contexts for agenda setting by signalling events that were considered important and relevant by targeted supporters, and by incorporating these events into their stories.

A stories-becoming-sticky model

With Figure 7.1 we aim to model the agenda-setting process as a process of storytelling and interactional framing in which issue proponents frame their ambitions into elastic stories, and continuously resemiotize these stories to establish a 'fit' with the stories of potential supporters as well as with events that are considered important and relevant by potential supporters.

The model aims to emphasize that stories do not become sticky, or in other words, successfully mobilize attention and support, as result of their own properties or by coincidence through focusing events; rather, they are made sticky by people through their conversations with one another. This entails slow processes of continuous resemiotization and frame alignment in order to frame and 'story' issues into the targeted audiences' latitude of acceptance. This requires promoters of proposals to listen attentively to, and empathize with, what is said and the issues raised by potential supporters, i.e. attentive navigation of their self-referential frames. Thus, storytelling is not about transmitting stories, but involves careful listening, empathizing, sharing, and aligning. Furthermore, the model visualizes how stories become sticky through the interplay of the three enabling conditions discussed in the previous section: 1) conversations as the medium of storytelling; 2) incorporation of focusing events, and 3) people who perform as connectors of people, stories, and events.



The relation between conversations and focusing events can be described as follows: Creating opportunities for conversations in which knowledge and information are shared can enhance the innovation and self-organization of people around stories. Such an opportunity for conversation can come about when certain focusing or shock events give impetus to bring a story to the attention of targeted supporters. Moreover, conversations can open up windows on new perspectives and possibilities when people tell one another about relevant events and contexts. Events are socially constructed in conversations as trigger events or as windows of opportunity. They are given meaning as triggers of change in the light of past events and negotiations. This also means that an event can only trigger when there has been preparation in the form of ‘filling the cup’ with discussions and conversations, in which a story’s attraction can become stronger, until an event comes along that is the drop that makes the cup run over.

Figure 7.1: Stories becoming sticky: a model

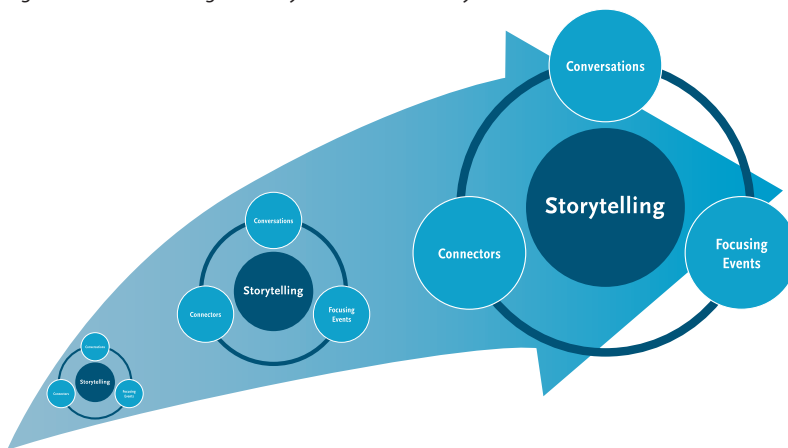


The relation between conversations and connectors is just as important. Through conversations, connectors can bring together people, ambitions, resources, and meaningful events. Moreover, connectors develop an antenna for creating a conversational context that enables collective storytelling and coalition building. Connectors use conversations to share information and perspectives on problems and solutions with one another, and to transfer emotion and establish frame alignment. To do this, connectors use conversations to empathize with, and listen to, other people’s perspectives and stories. In order to convince other people to support a particular story and contribute to storytelling, connectors have to be considered credible frame articulators or should be able to connect

to others who are considered credible frame articulators. Credibility is also a social construct that is established through conversations in which people connect frames to the values, beliefs, and personal concerns and experiences of conversation partners.

Focusing events trigger the spreading and tipping of a story only when connectors recognize them as opportunities. This requires connectors to have a great deal of patience, attentiveness, persistence, and perceptiveness to establish connections at the right time, or in other words, to recognize when an idea's time has come (cf. Kingdon, 2003). Connectors recognize and exploit focusing events by incorporating them into storytelling. They can nudge the context of storytelling and coalition building by framing bigger and smaller events as windows of opportunity. These events are not necessarily major events that shock (cf. Wiering & Immink, 2006; Veenman et al., 2009) like crises and disasters, but can include even small events such as newly emerging issues, relations, and procedures, i.e. changing contexts, that provide the opportunity for connections. Connectors may frame particular events and circumstances as the right moment for action, a window of opportunity that cannot be missed. In other words, connectors connect not only people and ambitions, but also events.

Figure 7.2: The unfolding of a story that becomes sticky over time



In sum, the stories-becoming-sticky model provides a way to understand the process and outcomes of attempts by civic initiatives to connect to local and regional governments to achieve goals. The model conceptualizes agenda setting and mobilization in terms of the discursive practice of storytelling. In the model, a successful story is a story that can self-multiply and travel rapidly through a wider social network, or in other words, a story that evolves over time into a story that sticks. The unfolding and evolution of a story that becomes sticky through a process of fitting, aligning, and resemiotization is represented



in Figure 7.2. Stories become sticky in a process of on-going social interactions in which (interplaying) conversations, focusing events, and connectors are critical conditions.

7.3 Scientific contributions and research recommendations

Complexity, communication, and storytelling

With this thesis, we join those who point to the potential of the concept of social self-organization to move away from the instrumental–rational trap that results from a high degree of self-referentiality in government-led planning (e.g. Healey, 2008; Booher, 2008; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Rauws & De Roo, 2011). This research supports the argument that a communicative approach to planning, focusing on the processes of interaction and meaning construction between people, is critical to understanding complexity, that is, the dynamics and unpredictability in systems and networks which result from the multiplicity of interactions between people and organizations. We have added a strong emphasis on the social construction of meaning through storytelling and how this mobilizes social self-organization and agenda change. Storytelling enables coordination and interpretation of the multiple rationalities that occur within complex webs of relationships (Throgmorton, 1996). The stories-becoming-sticky model helps to elucidate why ideas or innovations that emerge in self-organizing networks become sticky or not, and are adopted or not. Hence, it contributes to debates among planners and policy scientists about managing complex change, and, related to that, how meaningful connections between government and civil society may be enabled.

Navigating structural forces

The starting point of the research was the difficulty for any collective effort to break through structural forces presented by policy routines and planning institutions. These structures are characterized by powerful self-referentiality, consisting of the systems of meaning and sets of values and norms that have evolved over time, leading to a limited perspective on social reality and the seeds of change that reside there. In Giddens' structuration theory (1984), individuals and groups have power to change and shape structural forces, and these in turn shape our actions. 'We have choices about what to accept of our structured, social embeddedness, and what to reject. As we make these choices, so we maintain, modify and transform the structuring forces which shape our lives' (Healey, 2006, p. 57) In structuration theory, it is emphasized that our day-to-day decisions, which are established in social interactions, not only affirm routines, repertoires, and systems of meaning that have developed over time, but can also modify and change them.

The conclusions of this research, building on and contributing to the storytelling literature, imply that action in the form of storytelling has the power to produce, reproduce, and alter structuring forces. Stories provide frameworks that guide our actions and are constitutors of social realities (Yanow, 2000; Gabriel, 2010; Bate, 2004; Boje, 1991; Throgmorton, 1996; Rein & Schön, 1996). When we tell stories, listen to stories, discuss them, and pass them on, we are creating the future that the story is representing (Van Dijk, 2011; Sandercock, 2003).

Furthermore, our conclusions confirm the views of those who argue that structural forces are never radically transformed by introducing new stories and proposals (Ford, 1999; Kingdon, 2003; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). By listening to, telling, sharing, and aligning stories, promoters of proposals navigate targeted supporters' existing structures and frames of reference. Every new story is interpreted and given meaning by listeners in a context of existing structures constituted by 'background conversations' (Ford, 1999, p. 484) and by existing stories (Ford & Ford, 1995; Van Dijk, 2011). Agency thus concerns the meaningful connecting of one's own story to existing modes of thinking, to create room to manoeuvre within the structure presented by dominant modes of thinking. The metaphor of the widening *attractor* (Coleman, 2006, 2007) or subtle nudging of formal perspectives of government (Wagemans, 2002), illustrates how the dominant mode of thinking, which structures action, is subtly and more or less imperceptibly widened to include new ideas. Storytelling is thus considered an important form of action that constitutes, reconfirms, and transforms structural forces.

Strategic communication

The communicative approach to planning, based on Habermas' notion of communicative action and rationality (1984), understands planning as a process of collective reasoning, carried out through the medium of language, in discourse. In this conception of planning, the focus is on how priorities are identified, and how strategies for collective action are developed through interaction, through a debate in which claims and arguments are subject to critical reflection (Healey, 2006; Leeuwis, 2000). With the conclusions of this thesis we argue that strategic communication, as the interactive construction of good reasons for decisions and actions is best understood as continuous storytelling in everyday conversations. This builds on a growing body of literature in the planning field that focuses on the way knowledge is given meaning in stories, thereby providing a framework for action (Forester, 1999; Throgmorton, 1996; Sandercock, 2003; Mandelbaum, 1991; Van Dijk, 2011; Van Woerkum et al., 2011). 'In most planning-related cases, the facts matter far less than their interpretation. It is how facts are configured relative to one another, how they are interpreted, or, in a word, what they mean that matters' (Throgmorton, 2003, p. 131). The persuasive power of storytelling lies in the integration of 'knowledge of what happened with an understanding



of why it happened and a sense of what it means to us' (Sandercock, 2003, p. 19). Thus, it is argued that storytelling is the necessary link between knowledge and action (Throgmorton, 1996; Marris, 1997; Sandercock, 2003).

The conclusions of this thesis emphasize the importance of storytelling as mobilizer of meaning and action, and as a vital link between knowledge and action. They elucidate how some stories come to dominate planning strategies and policies, instigated by social movements or from within government walls. It was stressed that stories do not become sticky as result of their own properties or by coincidence through focusing events; rather, they are made sticky by people through their conversations with one another. This involves slow processes of continuous resemiotization (Iedema, 2001) and frame alignment in order to frame and 'story' issues into the targeted audiences' latitude of acceptance. This requires promoters of proposals to listen attentively and empathize² with what is said and raised by potential supporters, i.e. attentive navigation of their self-referential frames (see also Van Herzele & Aarts, 2013). We build on the argument of Forester (1999) that telling stories that matter, requires from storytellers the capacity to empathize with the particular situation, needs, and possibilities of their listeners. Strategic communication as storytelling is not about telling stories in a one-way direction, but involves careful listening to and empathizing with targeted audiences. Sticky stories are generated through the on-going interaction between tellers and listeners, or writers and readers. In that process stories are shared, connected, reframed and adjusted. Thus, storytelling that enables the mobilization of political and policy attention is not so much persuasive (cf. Throgmorton, 1996, 2003) as connective. The model presented in this chapter further contributes to the storytelling literature the idea that stories become sticky when new and existing stories are connected in 'catalytic conversations' (cf. Baker, 2010) at the right time by the right people.

Catalytic conversations

With this research, we make a further contribution to the literature by emphasizing the importance of conversation, especially in the form of storytelling, in (organizational) change and social self-organization (Shaw, 2002; Stacey, 2000; Ford, 1999; Baker, 2010). The case studies in this research have shown how, in efforts to become noticed in the context of background conversations (Ford, 1999) that have shaped existing structures and routines, it is again conversations that provide contexts in which alternative stories can be constructed and reframed. Storytelling in conversations invites different perspectives, various information sources, arguments, and alternative storylines. In this way, continuous reflection on such alternative storylines and

² See Chapter 6 and the works of Baker (2010) and Scharmer (2001, 2010) who also argue that conversations that provide room for empathic listening are critical to innovation.

elements takes place and facilitates the selection of best options. Conversations that enable storytelling enhance cyclic interactions of feedback, memory, and learning (Baker, 2010; Johnson, 2001; Rycroft & Kash, 1999).

Both organizational change and communicative planning approaches point to the importance of 'shifting conversations' in the management of change, especially through dialogue (Ford, 1999; Healey, 2006; Innes & Booher, 1999). 'The power of dominant discourses can be challenged at the level of dialogue, through the power of knowledgeable, reflective discourse, through good arguments, through the transformations which come as people learn to understand and respect each other across their differences and conflicts' (Healey, 2006, p. 67). Dialogue refers to conversations that take people out of the daily discourses that generate the way things are and facilitates learning in which alternative perspectives are explored and new meanings are constructed (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Bateson, 1972; Ford, 1999). Innes & Booher's (1999, 2010) concept of authentic dialogue suggests that chances for innovative self-organization and adaptation to changing circumstances are increased when conversations enable open information sharing, and allow for ambiguity and differences. Baker's (2010) notion of catalytic conversations adds to this an emphasis on conversations that are based on trust and informal relationships and leave room for spontaneity. Based on our research findings we have concluded that especially conversations that provide room for empathizing and listening can catalyse change.

Planning approaches that address dialogue and storytelling in the management of change focus strongly on the role of professional planners in storytelling. It is argued that planners, if they want to be more effective in translating knowledge into action, should pay more attention to the craft of storytelling in both written and oral forms (Sandercock, 2003; Forester, 1999; Van Dijk, 2011). This emphasis on what planners should do is also present in notions about storytelling as an interactive activity in collaborative dialogue. Innes & Booher (2010) argue that authentic dialogue requires careful facilitation by professional mediators. They suggest that interventions are required to organize diversity, feedback, and interaction, in order to catalyse desirable forms of self-organization in networks. As problematized at the start of this thesis however, such an approach may entail the danger of planners or other professionals trying to get direct control over the interaction process, thus hampering spontaneous interaction and diversity and resulting in outcomes that are ineffective or less smart than might be expected.

The conclusions of this research suggest that there can also be situations in which people themselves create the opportunity for catalytic conversation, and that catalytic conversation can occur spontaneously in the middle of self-organized movements of people in the wider network. Catalytic conversation

may concern a larger group of people in which discussion is facilitated, but it can also occur between two people who perform as connectors in the wider network and are able to provoke a rapid travelling of stories in their networks.

Therefore, the question is open as to what the role of planners is in catalytic conversation, and the extent to which facilitation and mediation can leave room or even provide room for spontaneity and open information sharing. Further research might focus on conditions in which diversity is enhanced or dampened, starting from the competing assumptions that consensus building dampens diversity (e.g. Hillier, 2003) versus that it actually generates and enhances diversity (Innes & Booher, 1999, 2010). More generally, we have demonstrated how the concepts of conversation and storytelling can contribute to understanding agenda change and socio-spatial change, but still relatively little of the literature on policy and planning is devoted to language-based perspectives. Consequently, there is room to expand the inquiry of planning practices as phenomena in language using the discursive analysis literature.

Networks beyond governance

The network perspective refers to the connections of individuals and groups, or specific technologies or policies, performing as interacting nodes in boundless webs of relationships (Castells, 2004). Such networks are not centrally steered, but constantly shaped and reshaped through the pushing and pulling by different actors who try to influence the situation (Aarts & Lokhorst, 2012). Various models of network management have emerged in the policy sciences (e.g. Kickert et al., 1997; Rhodes, 1997; Adam & Kriesi, 2007) ever since Scharpf (1978) predicted that the increasing interweaving and organizational fragmentation in society would lead to a network-like structure of policy processes in which governments would cooperate with civil society stakeholders. However, many of those network models are still reasoning from the perspective of governments taking up central positions in policy and governance networks.

The conclusions in this thesis point to the active role of civic initiatives in the establishment of meaningful connections in networks in sometimes unexpected and invisible ways. They may even be able to do this more effectively than government actors who have highly self-referential views on what goes on in social reality. The point made is that we should view social networks not only from government perspectives focusing on the construction and implementation of policies, but also from the perspective of non-governmental actors and how they mobilize attention in wider networks, bringing about dynamical change in relationships over time. People are active agents, interacting with one another and organizing themselves in order to get things done. The conclusions of this research emphasize that, in many cases, change cannot be understood or explained by the behaviour of an individual or

identifiable group of actors. Mutual interdependence between people and the way they interactively construct and reconstruct realities ultimately determine the course of things (cf. Elias, 1978; Stacey, 2001).

Contributing to work on network governance (e.g. Gilchrist, 2000; Aarts & Lokhorst, 2012), we point out that, in a network perspective, governments need to be constantly alert to what is happening, paying attention to informal networks. People engaged in planning work, on behalf of both government and social movements, face the challenge of 'networking the network' (Gilchrist, 2000, p. 271). We have demonstrated, using a historical and holistic perspective, that it is the interplay between focusing events, conversations, and connectors in the network that helps to elucidate how various actors in the wider network make a difference in policy and planning or not.

Connectors and policy entrepreneurs

This research has generated a dynamic explanatory model of change in which connectors play an important part. We have concluded that individual people who perform as connectors in social networks enhance the stickiness or travelling capability of a story by establishing a flow of information through the wider network. Connectors are the individual agents in a network who connect ambitions, storylines, people, resources, events, and contexts. They are creative and credible storytellers, as well as empathic listeners and patient scouts of opportunities.

The connector concept in the sticky story model corresponds with the general argument in policy agenda-setting research, in the multiple streams model (Kingdon, 2003) and the punctuated equilibrium model (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), that, although institutions and focusing events make things possible, people make things happen (Zahariadis, 2007; Huitema & Meijerink, 2010). The point made is that the importance of structure and institutions in policy change is tempered considerably by individuals, timing, and context. What people do, how they prepare change by 'selling' alternative proposals, and how they influence (policy) frames through their interactions is what matters.

In our model, the concept of connectors is used to emphasize that individual agents become connectors only in relation to other people also performing as connectors and in relation to specific issues. We contribute to this the focus on the discursive power that connectors generate when they connect different networks, stories, events, and contexts. People who take the lead in a group initiative cannot by themselves succeed in spreading a message and achieving goals. Any group initiative requires multiple connectors who link up a wider network. They are not only leaders or initiators, but also other members of groups who know how to establish connections with relevant other groups and make stories spread.



This adds perspective to other policy science concepts that focus on the role of individual agents in change processes, such as knowledge and innovation brokers (Winch & Courtney, 2007; Klerkx & Leeuwis, 2009), bricoleurs (Lévi-Strauss, 1966; Cleaver, 2002; Padt, 2007), boundary spanners (Noble & Jones, 2006; Williams, 2002), policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon, 2003; Zahariadis, 2007; Mintrom, 1997), and leadership (Horlings & Padt, 2011; Collinge & Gibney, 2010). For example, Kingdon (2003) and Zahariadis (2007) emphasize that entrepreneurs who have better access to policymakers and more resources (especially time) are more likely to have success. We have demonstrated that, although such aspects are important, ultimately it is about what people do and communicate that matters. The critical factor that enables a story to spread and become sticky is how people 'sell' and connect ideas and stories through careful learning about the frames and perspectives of targeted supporters and how they establish connections in the wider network (not only politicians). The concept of connectors, that is, our interpretation of the concept, emphasizes the discursive qualities that affect agenda setting: credibility, empathy and listening, framing and reframing stories, and establishing connections between various relevant groups in the network.

Policy change at different levels of governance

We argue that the model is robust enough to assist in elucidating socio-spatial change processes, such as agenda setting and adoption of innovation, at other levels of governance, local and international. Agenda-setting research, on which our model builds, often concerns the national and the supranational level. However, at a local level also, initiatives encounter regional, national, and sometimes European governance levels. Civic initiatives' agenda-setting efforts usually have a multi-level character, except for issues that do not exceed local jurisdictions (e.g. management of public space in neighbourhoods). Questions about the transferability of the sticky stories conceptual model to other governance levels can inform further case-study research. For example, such case studies might concern initiatives with proposals for the planning, design, or management of a larger area, or initiatives influencing planning at higher governance levels.

Our research involved the question of how novel ideas of grass-roots initiatives may lead to changing planning agendas to learn something about civic engagement in the context of managing change. However, grass-roots initiatives can be seeds of structural change or even transition (Rotmans, 2001; Geels, 2004). It would be interesting to investigate the role of small groups of citizens or entrepreneurs vis-à-vis professional planners or change managers in transitions and the processes through which initial ideas developed into socio-spatial transition. See for example the case study about Plan Ooievaar in De Jonge (2009) and Hagens (2010). Much of the work of transition and innovation researchers already aims to find answers to this question but focuses mainly on macro-level drivers (economy, politics, physical calamities, and so forth)

or institutional conditions. We suggest that a focus on human interactions at a micro level and on the processes of meaning construction can reveal more detailed insights about why and how more structural change and transitions come about.

In this research, using a holistic perspective, we have demonstrated how micro-level processes may influence processes at other and higher levels of governance. We have shown how small contextual changes can make big differences as they develop in relation to one another. Latent attractors, or stories, that on the surface seem to have little meaning, can under certain circumstances grow to become strong attractors, or sticky stories, around which people self-organize. Using a historical, comparative, and holistic perspective, focusing on the construction of meaning, our research indicates that transformative change may be explained by factors such as patience, timing, creating coincidence, empathizing and listening, and sharing stories, in relation to the more structural forces at macro levels.

7.4 Towards connective planning practices and practitioners

The conclusions of this research have a number of implications for the planning work of governmental planners who aim to establish meaningful connections with civil society initiatives, i.e. capitalize on civic initiatives, as well as for the planning work of self-organizing citizens and other non-governmental actors.

First of all, contrary to the argument that a self-organization perspective reduces the role of planners to spectating or a humble activity (e.g. Devisch, 2008; Portugali, 2000), we argue that professional planners have a meaningful and active role in the management of change. Creating conditions for meaningful connections between emerging initiatives from both governments and civil society actors can be the key to a planning approach that is able to deal with complexity and non-linearity and that is responsive to movements and initiatives in civil society. Creating room for self-organization does not mean letting go and leaving planning initiatives to civil society completely. It does not imply governance without any government participation. The engagement of planners and government actors in the work and activities of civic initiatives is required, not to control what happens, but to create conditions in which initiatives can develop solutions that promote the sustainable development of places. Planners are necessary to carefully observe the directions, desirable or undesirable, in which forms of self-organization are moving. Planners can engage in self-organizing processes as the promoters of common interests or the more vulnerable interests in the process. They can actively help integrate forms of self-organization, private and public, that would otherwise be fragmented and ineffective. Moreover, planners can bring their knowledge and experience about sustainable regional development into the storytelling processes that take place among various initiatives.



Second, professional planners have an inevitable 'will to order' that should take the shape of a 'will to connect' (see also Hagens, 2010). Connecting refers to people, groups, issues, stories, resources, spatial scales, and governance scales. Professional and non-professional planners with a will to connect may be able to create conditions that enable innovative self-organization as well as the development of sticky stories that envision sustainable and liveable places. A will to connect enables a form of planning that is responsive to emerging alternative stories in civil society. On the basis of the conclusions and the model presented earlier in this chapter, we now summarize a number of suggestions to help government actors and civic initiatives improve their connective competences while performing their planning work.

Empathizing and listening

Connecting requires attentive listening to, and empathizing with, what is said and raised by conversation partners. Forester (1999) advises to listen carefully to the stories of stakeholders (*practice stories*) the way one might do with friends, meaning that friends can make us see what really matters to us, and remember relevant events in the past, and this way they can make us see new perspectives and blind spots in critical ways. Thus, connective storytelling is not a matter of transmitting a message, by professional planners to a target group or by civic initiatives to governmental planners and other targeted actors, but happens in everyday interactions between people engaged in planning practice and involves careful listening, empathizing, and sharing. This means being open and receptive to alternative views, trying to enter into the life world of the other and seeking to see things from the other's perspective.

Using and creating opportunities for catalytic conversations

To discover, and connect to, promising (or undesirable) stories, opportunities for informal conversation should be valued and created to enable open exploration and exchange of stories and favourable circumstances. Conversations can take many forms, like one-to-one meetings that are organized, but also spontaneous conversations 'on the street' or through social media. Planners do not necessarily have to initiate and facilitate conversations themselves, although there are situations where this is favourable (see the earlier discussion on catalytic conversations).

Accepting and embracing diversity

When striving for conversations that have the potential to catalyse change, professional and non-professional planners have to suppress the tendency to focus too much on establishing consensus and getting control. To develop a sticky story, it is neither necessary nor desirable that ambitions are fully shared and agreed upon. Participants' ambitions can differ and still be connected to a shared story. Thus, planners should accept and embrace diversity and differences

and aim to create conditions that provide room for different ambitions, open exploration of different opinions, and reflection. This may also involve allowing for experimentation and accepting failures.

Attentiveness to meaningful events and opportunities

Another important competence is being attentive to and exploiting events and opportunities that can trigger the tipping of a story. This requires from practitioners good timing as well as patience and perseverance to await the right circumstances. Good timing can be established by carefully monitoring the situation by participating and listening in storytelling processes. Before events can trigger, audiences have to be warmed up to an unfolding story. Planners can help by keeping the storytelling process running. They can use the local knowledge of citizens, for example residents, in monitoring and continuous storytelling. Good timing can be achieved by using the wisdom that flows from the wider network of people who may be interested in a particular story.

Network the network: identifying and mobilizing connectors

Finally, as planners should aim to avoid government-centrism and try to create room for innovative self-organization, they can take up the challenge of letting (other) connectors establish meaningful connections between people, sub-networks, stories, and events. The main challenge, also for non-governmental issue proponents, is to mobilize potential connectors, representing a diversity of groups and networks, in storytelling processes to increase the chance of stories spreading through the network and becoming sticky. The challenge is to stimulate innovative self-organization by 'networking the network'. Engaging in all kinds of conversations increases the chance of encountering and engaging people who are potential connectors.

7.5 Concluding remarks

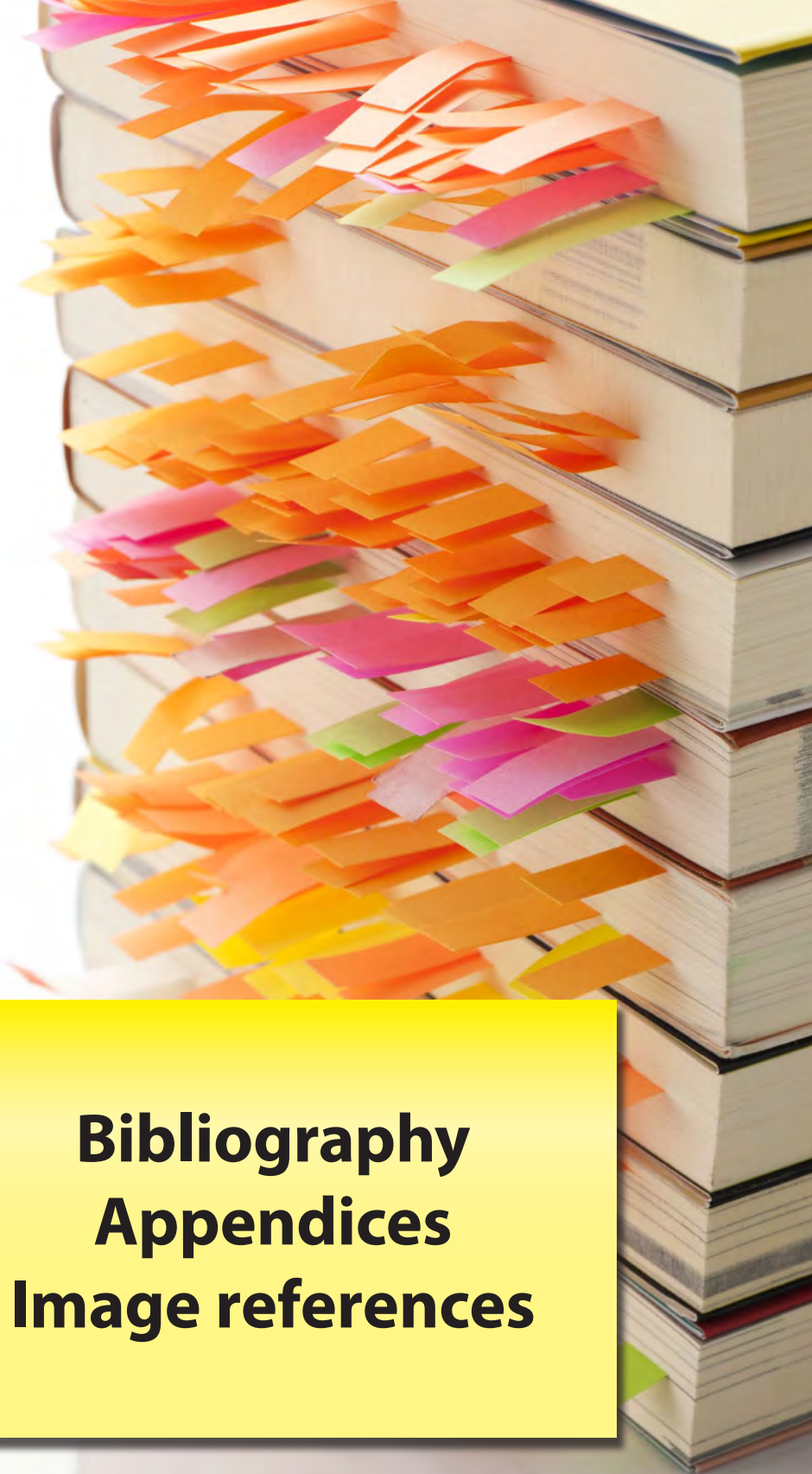
A complexity perspective on planning reveals that self-organization is everywhere. Planning is part of the self-organizing processes that influence the futures of places. Although it seems a paradox, such a view on planning can provide plausible and innovative starting points for a better understanding of socio-spatial change processes in regions, as well as for a form of planning that is more adaptive and more responsive to potentially innovative civic initiatives.

Planning with a complexity perspective accepts reality as unpredictable, non-linear, complex, and chaotic and views this as an opportunity rather than a threat. We become better planners if we acknowledge chance and unplanned change and take into account our limited power to plan. Spatial planning can



assist sustainable futures of places and regions by encouraging conditions for innovative self-organization by engaging in the storytelling processes that emerge in civil society.

We began this thesis with the story about The Dutch Mountain, an example of citizens' self-organization which is successfully connecting businesses and knowledge institutions to it. Right now, the initiative can still be considered a grass-roots initiative that is challenged to mobilize support to enable further feasibility research. The initiators are looking for forms of private investment because they do not want to depend on government (subsidies). Even though I am still ambivalent about the idea of a mountain in the middle of our characteristic flat and open landscape, like many others, I cannot help but become enthusiastic about the story of sustainable-energy and food production on the mountain. The initiative manages to tell a story that is contagious and potentially can become epidemic. But is it made to stick? The framework developed in this thesis suggests that the chances of this happening will be increased if the initiators and their adherents navigate existing structures by listening carefully to targeted supporters' stories and frames and aligning these with the Mountain story through subtle resemiotization. Such an endeavour may be supported by creating opportunities for catalytic conversation, by continuously scanning the environment for events and opportunities that can enhance the attraction of the story, and by mobilizing connectors to connect relevant social and professional contexts in the wider network.



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Appendices
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Appendix 1. Attended and reported meetings in the New Markets Project

Meeting	Date	Participants
Steering group New Markets	11 april 2006	RABO, Thermae 2000, van Melik/food group/ Achmea Arbo, ZRO, Orbis, Time spots, Chateau Hotels, Transforum, Provincie Heuvelland Hotels, LIOF, core team
Workshop steering group plus (Maastricht provinciehuis)	21 augustus 2006	23 participants from the five New Markets projects, core team, observants
Core team – knowledge institutions (Telos)	23 augustus 2006	Telos, UvT, WUR
Workshop (Kasteel Vaeshartelt)	21 september 2006	Core team, Transforum, City marketing Maastricht Heuvelland Hotels, ZRO, Dolce, Valkenburg, VVV, RABO
Workshop New Markets Heuvelland (end of phase I) Maastricht NH hotel	9 november 2006	43 participants from the five New Markets, and interest organisations, core team
Evaluation New Markets phase I	24 November 2006	TransForum, Provincie Limburg, Alterra, Wageningen UR
Joint Fact Finding Meeting “Heerlijkheid Heuvelland” (phase II) (Kasteel Vaeshartelt)	5 December 2007	Core team, monitoring team, Orbis, ProYact, Rabobank, Hogeschool Zuyd, Alterra, TransForum, RO-groep, MyLimburg, Expertise Centrum ICT, vertegenwoordiger Heuvellandgemeenten, Universiteit Maastricht, Universiteit Tilburg, Provincie Limburg.
Meeting IP Heuvelland (phase II) (Kasteel Limbricht)	11 March 2008	Core team, Monitoringteam (Telos, WUR), Provincie Limburg, representative Heuvelland-municipalities, Orbis, Hogeschool Zuyd, Arvalis, My Limburg, Rabobank, RO-groep, Alterra, 5 external experts
Core team “Ons Zuid-Limburgs Landschap” (Orbis)	16 April 2008	Orbis, ProYact, TransForum, Alterra, monitoring team (Telos, WUR), Urban Unlimited

Appendix 2. Interview topics and questions Heuvelland Case

Two groups of interviewees were distinguished in the Heuvelland Case:

1. Participants in the New Markets Heuvelland initiatives (entrepreneurs, experts, project managers)
2. Governmental stakeholders and other involved stakeholders who were at some point in time involved in the process and who could give information about the initiative or the relevant policy context.

Topics and questions group 1: participants New Markets initiatives

- Why did the New Markets initiatives emerge? What were the goals?
- How should the rural area of Heuvelland develop spatially in the initiative's view? How does the initiative contribute to that future image?
- Which actors were involved in the initiative, who were central/ leading, when, and why?
- Did the participating actors change over time, why?
- What were key events, decisive moments, for the initiative. Why decisive?
- How did you / the initiative try to achieve goals? Which formal and informal strategies were used?
- Did you / the initiative try to get support from government actors? When, why, how?
- What were hindering or enabling factors for goal achievement. Why?

Topics and questions group 2: governmental stakeholders and other indirectly involved stakeholders

- Do you know the New Markets initiatives? How? Why involved or not?
- What do you think of the goals of the initiatives?
- How should the rural area of Heuvelland develop spatially in your view? How do the New Markets initiatives contribute to that future image?
- Is the initiative successful? Why (not)?
- What were key events, decisive moments, for the initiative. Why decisive?
- Were you approached by the New Markets initiatives for support? When, how, why and with what result?
- What were hindering / enabling factors for the initiative. Why?

Depending on the interviewee and the way my insight into the situation progressed, I asked additional questions to learn more about specific events and relations between certain actors and policy issues and processes.

Appendix 3. List of interviewed actors Heuvelland Case

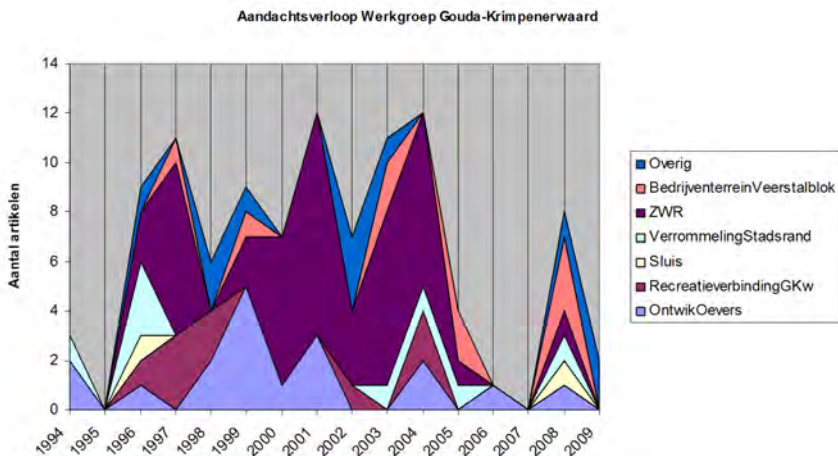
Name	Affiliation	Date	Place	Interviewer	Taped
Dhr. R. Eweg	TransForum, projectregisseur	17-03-2008	Wageningen	Hetty van der Stoep	No
Dhr. H. van Muyden	Initiatiefnemer Zwarte Ruiter Overleg, marketingspecialist	08-04-2008	Cadier en Keer	Hetty van der Stoep, Christian Curré	Yes
Dhr. P. Roomberg	Staatbosbeheer, Koepelproject Nationaal Landschap	08-04-2008 07-05-2008	Schin op Geul	Hetty van der Stoep, Christian Curré	Yes No
Dhr. M. Valk	Provincie Limburg, Economische Zaken, projectleider Cluster Leisure	10-04-2008	Maastricht	Hetty van der Stoep	No
Dhr. H. Meijers	verbindingsofficier Heuvellandgemeenten	10-04-2008	Maastricht	Hetty van der Stoep, Christian Curré	Yes
Dhr. M. Eurlings	Burgemeester Valkenburg, ex-gedeputeerde Economische Zaken, Provincie Limburg	22-04-2008	Valkenburg	Hetty van der Stoep, Christian Curré	Yes
Dhr. De Jongh	Provincie Limburg, afdeling Landelijk Gebied, programmaleider Meerjarenprogramma	25-04-2008	Maastricht	Hetty van der Stoep	Yes
Mevr. G. Silanoe	ProYact, projectmanager Nieuwe Markten Heuvelland namens de ondernemers	25-04-2008 15-07-2008	Maastricht	Hetty van der Stoep	No Yes
Dhr. H. Mommaas	Universiteit Tilburg / Telos, initiator New Markets (chairman phase I) until 2007	13-05-2008	Utrecht	Hetty van der Stoep	Yes
Dhr. J. Houwen	Provincie Limburg, afdeling Ruimtelijke Ontwikkeling, projectleider Landschapsvisie	15-07-2008	Maastricht	Hetty van der Stoep	yes
<i>Interviews performed by research team in earlier phase (process monitoring New Market project)</i>					
Dhr. H. Burks	LIOF, hoofd ontwikkeling en innovatie	21-06-2006	Maastricht	Ina Horlings, Wim Haarmann	No
Dhr. E. Rosier	R2M, City Marketing Maastricht 2006-2007	21-06-2006	Maastricht	Ina Horlings / Wim Haarmann	No
Dhr. F. Verkooyen en dhr. H. Dassen	Provincie Limburg, Economische Zaken	25-06-2006	Maastricht	Ina Horlings, Wim Haarmann	No
Mevr. G. Silanoe	ProYact, vertegenwoordiger ondernemers Nieuwe Markten	18-07-2006	Maastricht	Ina Horlings, Wim Haarmann	No
Dhr. W. Uitterhoeve	Hogeschool Zuyd, directeur Expertise centrum ICT	18-07-2006	Maastricht	Ina Horlings, Wim Haarmann	No
Mevr. M. van Mansfeld	Alterra, procesmanager Nieuwe Markten Heuvelland	14-08-2006 24-11-2006	telefonisch Nijmegen	Ina Horlings (Hetty van der Stoep)	No No
Dhr. H. Mommaas	Universiteit Tilburg / Telos, initiator New Markets (chairman phase I) until 2007	16-08-2006	?	Ina Horlings	No
Dhr. G. Broos	Orbis Zorgconcern, directeur	15-06-2007	Sittard	Ina Horlings	No

Appendix 4. Attention analysis Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case

Development of attention of Werkgroep Gouda-Krimpenerwaard for issues in the period 1994-2009 was analyzed with regional newspaper articles. I selected 130 articles from the regional daily newspapers Rijn & Gouwe (1994–2005) and AD Groene Hart (2005–2009) by using as a search term the name Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard and a related interest group called Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard.

Results:

- The diagram below indicates that most attention is paid to the construction of a new bypass through the urban-rural fringe Gouda-Krimpenerwaard (the purple color labeled ZWR).
- Until 2005 there is much attention for the bypass and after that year only little. Peaks in attention are visible in the years 2001, 2003 en 2004. A reason for the sudden fading of attention for the bypass after 2005 can be that Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard gave up the fight for the alternative trajectory the working group proposed. See chapter 5.1.
- Attention for the planned industrial area seems to increase from 2006.
- Only a few articles about the aims and plans to restore the historic lock Stolwijkersluis.
- In addition to articles about the bypass, there are many articles about 'cluttering' of the banks of the rivier Hollandsche IJssel and the urban-rural fringe as a whole.
- Between 1998 and 2001 there is relatively much attention for the development of the river banks of the river Hollandsche IJssel.



Appendix 5. Interview topics and questions Gouda-Krimpenerwaard Case

With a first round of data collection, an extensive collection of (e-mail) correspondence related to the process of the Masterplan Stolwijkersluis, reports of meetings, a collection of newspaper articles about civic initiatives for the fringe area, and policy documents, I had constructed a detailed time table which enabled a reconstruction of important event in the agenda-setting process. To fine-tune information about certain critical junctures, about why stories were framed and reframed in particular ways, and why coalitions developed the way they did, I completed the data collection with 9 interviews with key stakeholders. These concerned semi-structured interviews in the period November 2009 to the summer of 2011 with representatives of both civic initiatives and the local governments with whom they interacted the most.

Two groups of interviewees were distinguished in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard Case:

1. Representatives / key players of the relevant civic initiatives in the fringe area: Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard / Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard, Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren, Neighbourhood Stolwijkersluis (residents)
2. Representatives of the municipalities of Gouda and Vlist who could give information about the agenda-setting process at local and regional policy levels, and who were directly involved in discussions about the fringe area.

Topics

The interviews with key stakeholders served to clarify and get more contextualized and detailed understanding of the relations between certain events, the agenda-setting strategies used, and relations between actors that mattered. They also provided more in-depth information about how issues were framed and 'storied' over time. I used the developing time table of events to structure the different interviews, depending on the interviewee, and asked which events were perceived as decisive and why. I also asked about particular events and issues that seemed important and asked what exactly happened, when, who were involved, what were the outcomes, and why. Thus, depending on the interviewee and the issues at stake, different topics and events were discussed. Essentially, the interviews provided feedback on my interpretations of important patterns in the process and pointed to other patterns that were meaningful in understanding the agenda-setting process.

Specific topics for interviews with civic initiatives:

- most important issues / goals
- For issues that were important to the relevant civic initiative:
- decisive junctures, tipping points
 - most important strategies to achieve goals (communication, relations, coalitions)
 - results of the process and hindering and enabling factors for goal achievement

Specific topics for interviews with governmental stakeholders

- How did you become aware of civic initiatives for protection of landscape values in the fringe?
- [Check of the reconstruction of events with interviewee]: decisive junctures, tipping points in agenda-setting process
- How did landscape values over time become prioritized on local planning agendas (e.g. historic lock). Why was there initially little attention for the development of the fringe?
- What did you do yourself to support or oppose to proposals of civic initiatives, with what results, and why? Specifically, what did municipal representatives do to get support from other governments for proposals of civic initiatives they supported (e.g. Masterplan Stolwijkersluis)?

Appendix 6. List of interviewed actors Gouda-Krimpenerwaard Case

Name	Affiliation	Date	Place	Taped
Dhr. H. du Pré	Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard	24-09-2009 11-05-2011	Gouda	Yes
Dhr. C. van der Horst	Stichting Buurtschap Stolwijkersluis, voorzitter	27-09-2009	Stolwijkersluis	No
Dhr. J. Potharst	Bestuurslid Historische Vereniging die Goude; Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard; ex- wethouder Gouda	01-12-2009	Gouda	Yes
Dhr. A. Menkveld	Ex-wethouder Gouda	25-06-2010	Gouda	Yes
Dhr. L.F.M. Crouwers	Wethouder gemeente Vlist	01-07-2010 07-07-2010	Stolwijk	Yes No
Mevr. M. van Loon	Gemeente Gouda, beleidsadviseur cultuurhistorie / Hollandse Waterstad	06-07-2010	Gouda	Yes
Dhr. P. Schraven	Gemeente Gouda, beleidsadviseur openbare ruimte	13-08-2010	telephone	No
Dhr. J. Jager	Stichting Veenvaren	30-08-2011	telephone	No
Dhr. R.H. van der Pols	Early promoter restoration historic lock and one of initiators to get the lock status of National Monument, oud- gemeenteraadslid Gemeentebelangen Gouda	16-09-2011 20-09-2011	e-mail	No

Appendix 7. Quotations in Dutch, Heuvelland case (ch.4)

1. Ik vraag me af of ik wel goed begrepen heb wat de lijn van denken van Nieuwe Markten was. Ik heb wel samen met de vertegenwoordiger van Economische Zaken een voorstel geschreven. De benadering van EZ was echter: begin met profit, dat trekt de anderen mee. De probleemdefinitie van ons project is niet erkend door de ondernemers. De meeste ondernemers denken alleen aan geld verdienen.
2. In 2012 ontwikkelt Zuid-Limburg veel nieuwe toegevoegde waarde in de zogenaamde Health, Care & Cure. Met inventieve producten en diensten helpt Limburg de vergrijzende bevolking van Noordwest-europa gezond te worden en te blijven.... Het actieve seniorenbeleid werpt zijn vruchten af. Het Limburgse bedrijfsleven loopt voorop in de ontwikkeling van nieuwe producten en diensten voor deze doelgroep. Limburg biedt ruim voldoende levensbestendige woningen met comfort-, welzijn- en zorgarrangementen in of nabij de woning. Ook het toerisme neemt hierin zijn verantwoordelijkheid. In 2012 genereert Limburg de meeste overnachtingen en bestedingen door senioren omdat de toeristische producten en diensten ook toegankelijk zijn voor de minder vitalen onder hen.
3. Limburgers worden aangezet om ondernemend en zelfbewust de kansen te grijpen voor een technologische topregio (industrie inclusief agribusiness), voor een kwaliteitsimpuls aan het toerisme én voor een senioreneconomie, zowel gericht op behoud van ouderen voor de arbeidsmarkt, als door inzet op productinnovatie voor oudere doelgroepen (ICT, zorg, vrije tijd, service).
4. Daar waar overig Nederland pas over vele jaren geconfronteerd wordt met demografische gevolgen, moet Limburg een demografische proefregio worden... We willen mensen aanspreken op hun talent en daarbij speciaal jongeren een uitdagende omgeving bieden.
5. De beschikbaarheid van voldoende kenniswerkers is onmisbaar voor het realiseren van de innovatieambities zoals die in deze Versnellingsagenda zijn neergelegd. De demografische ontwikkeling werkt daaraan evenwel niet mee.... Laten we dit op zijn beloop, dan dreigt zowel kwantitatief als kwalitatief een nijpend tekort aan kenniswerkers te ontstaan. De instroom van jong talent vanuit andere regio's, landen en continenten... zal het tekort niet verhelpen als we dat talent vervolgens niet kunnen vasthouden. Natuurlijk is het verheugend om te constateren dat onze afgestudeerden wereldburgers zijn en zo goed gekwalificeerd dat ze overall aan de slag kunnen. Nog verheugender zou het zijn als die wereldburgers hun wereldbaan hier zouden vinden! Tot op dit moment schiet de regio hierin helaas tekort. Actieve programma's zijn nodig om te komen tot het opwaarderen van de zittende werknemers... voor het aantrekken van kenniswerkers van elders... en voor het in de regio hechten van talenten.

6. De vergrijzing van de bevolking gaat in Limburg harder dan in andere delen van het land. Vergrijzing leidt tot meer vraag naar zorg, voornamelijk chronische zorg. Deze zorg moet bovendien steeds meer aan de wensen van de individuele zorgvrager voldoen: zorg op maat... Vernieuwende topzorg wordt gecombineerd met de ontwikkeling van onder andere biomedische materialen, moleculaire geneeskunde en moleculaire apparatuur.
7. Een zorglandschap alleen kan negatief werken. Het beeld van struikelen over karretjes. Dat is geen goed imago. Misschien zou je los van die zorg moeten denken. Je moet goede woonomgevingen realiseren.
8. In het branding traject is een tegenstelling gecreëerd tussen high tech, zeg maar kenniseconomie, en zorglandschap. Volstrekt onbegrijpelijk, omdat alle onderzoeken die over kenniseconomie verschijnen kwaliteit van leven als een enorm belangrijk aspect zien. Zorglandschap is niet per definitie een verlaten landschap. Integendeel. Het ging daar juist met name in die preventieve lifestyle trajecten om het koppelen van HRM aan het landschap.
9. We willen een in alle opzichten uitnodigend vestigingsklimaat voor bedrijven, personeel en gasten ontwikkelen. Daarom zetten we in op versterken van regiobranding en inzet van onze beeldbepalende Limburgse culturele instellingen en media, grensoverschrijdende cultuureconomie, en koppeling van grote evenementen aan economische speerpunten.
10. Een eenduidige promotie van deze regio ten behoeve van het werven van internationale kenniswerkers is van groot belang.
11. Zuid-Limburg is een Europese regio bij uitstek, waar mensen vanuit de hele wereld samenkomen om hoogwaardige producten te maken. Het is een regio met een uitgekiende balans tussen werken en leven. Innovatie en hoogwaardige kwaliteit gaan samen met 'joie de vivre'. Maastricht is de parel van de regio die de cultuur en traditie van de regio uitstraalt.
12. Wij zetten niet in op de senioren economie. Het is een gemeengoed, wat is de toegevoegde waarde ten opzichte van de Achterhoek? Dit gebeurt in heel Nederland al. Wij zijn niet onderscheidend. De overheid moet er wel op inzetten, dat is een kerntaak, om voorzieningen aan te leggen. Maar men moet niet verwachten dat markt zich daar op inzet. Zorgen dat er geen ontgroening plaatsvindt. De jeugd mag best in het buitenland studeren, maar daarna moeten ze terugkomen. Wij praten over een 'work-life balance'.
13. We richten ons niet op senioren. Die worden al goed bediend, en wonen bij voorkeur niet in een vergrijsde regio. In het merk moet dus niet te veel nadruk worden gelegd op wellness en zorg. Het gaat in eerste instantie over genieten voor de actieve bevolking en bezoekers.

14. Het hoofddoel van Regiobranding is om de reputatie van Zuid-Limburg te verbreden van vooral 'bourgondisch' naar de ideale 'work-life balance'. Zodat Zuid-Limburg niet alleen als een aantrekkelijke plek wordt gezien voor een vakantie, maar ook voor blijvende vestiging.
15. Ondernemers eerst! Het economische belang staat voorop en de andere belangen koppelen mee.
16. Ik kan niet helder krijgen bij ondernemers wat de benefits zijn van het hogere doel van het behouden van landschapskwaliteit. Het projectteamlid van Alterra heeft ook modellen ontwikkeld maar het duizelt de ondernemers.
17. De procesbegeleiding is lastig en nu niet helder. We willen sturen maar ook heel veel ruimte geven. Zolang het niet georganiseerd is moeten wij de regierol nemen. We hebben TransForum ingehuurd, maar moesten op de rem gaan staan. Hun aanpak en instrumenten werken hier niet. We dachten dat TransForum volgend zou zijn als instrument om kennisvragen uit te zetten, maar ze stelden zich leading op. We zitten of twee golfengtes. De houding van experts is te veel 'het instrument werkt' en men houdt onvoldoende rekening met de cultuur van het besturen. Daarmee waren we niet gelukkig en daarom hebben we de regie teruggenomen.
18. Wat je hier in Limburg wel hebt: Je bent een factor als regionale bestuurder, dat kun je niet overal zeggen. Hier hebben we niet echt een grote stad, waardoor de provincie meer invloed heeft. Er staat ook wel iedere dag iets over de provincie in de krant of op televisie. Mensen kennen hun bestuurders. Hier kiest men heel erg op personen die mensen aanspreken. Dat is een nationale trend, maar in Limburg wel evidentier aanwezig dan in andere regio's. Mensen willen een persoonlijk contact hebben, een gevoel, een beleving. Mensen maken het verschil.
19. Wij Limburgers zijn overigens autoriteit gevoelig. Status en wie het zegt is belangrijk.
20. De regio komt op bepaalde dingen echt tekort. Zelfbewustzijn, teveel naar Den Haag kijken en niet zelf iets neerzetten en willen, zelf je grenzen verleggen, kijken naar kansen en mogelijkheden, niet zeuren. Zelf de handen uit de mouwen steken. We zijn de op een na jongste provincie die bij Nederland is gekomen. We hebben er eigenlijk nooit helemaal bij gehoord. We zijn in 1839 verbonden zijn aan Nederland, maar we zijn ook een tijd lid geweest van de Duitse Bond, we hoorden eigenlijk overal bij. We zijn ook altijd internationaal wisselgeld geweest. Misschien dat wij daardoor te weinig hebben geleerd dat we ergens bij hoorden en nooit de 'guts' en de 'spirit' hebben gehad om onze eigen keuzes te maken voor de toekomst van de regio.

21. Soms zie je ook, zoals rond het middengebied van het Heuvellandgeburen, het Nationale Landschap, dat daar ook een aparte stuurgroep ontstond die hetzelfde bleek te gaan doen als de gebiedscommissie doet. Vervolgens is Grand Design ingelijfd bij die gebiedscommissies, waardoor er nu nog maar een structuur is... Zo probeer je te komen tot een nuttige samenwerking, dat organiseer je dan.
22. We willen wel iets samen doen, maar dan wel onder één plan, dus geen versnippering alsjeblieft. Provincie, coördineer dat! Zorg dat het geregeld wordt. Maar bij de provincie mist een stuk continuïteit of capaciteit en organisatie. Ondernemers zijn vaak niet op zoek naar instituten, maar naar mensen die zelf ook ondernemend zijn. Zodat ze direct van start kunnen gaan.
23. Qua proces ben ik niet gelukkig met alle één-op-één's de laatste tijd. Er is geen context, geen gevoel van samenhang. Eén-op-één relaties worden hier belangrijker gevonden dan overleg met z'n allen. Je hoort er wel bij of niet. Als je er niet bij hoort, wordt je buitengesloten mits je een formele positie hebt. Je krijgt een opdracht als je Limburgs spreekt. Het is heel erg incrowd. Het gebeurt in achterkamertjes, zoals het Zwarte Ruiter Overleg.
24. Je kunt samenwerking niet rationeel organiseren. Ik denk dat dit met name geldt in Limburg. Hier ben je denk ik toch heel erg afhankelijk van hoe politieke en bestuurlijke verhoudingen liggen, van wie kent wie, en wie vindt het nou handig om vanuit zijn politieke ambitie op de ene plek iemand anders op een andere plek te pushen of te dulden of eigenlijk niet te willen hebben. Dat gebeurt eigenlijk altijd 's avonds rond acht uur, telefonisch. Dan staan alle telefoonlijnen in de provincie roodgloeiend, dan worden in Limburg zaken gedaan. Dat is vaak heel ongrijpbaar.
25. De gedeputeerde van Economische Zaken wist niets van de deelname van TransForum in het Nieuwe Markten proces. Zijn belang is dat aan het einde van zijn termijn het project Nieuwe Markten stevig staat. Vervolgens is de gedeputeerde naar de Orbis directeur gegaan.
26. Zwarte Ruiter Overleg zijn mensen uit het ronde tafel overleg Nieuwe Markten. Ik kwam ze regelmatig tegen en het bleek dat wij veel van dezelfde opvattingen hebben over het gebrek aan dynamiek en samenwerking, alleen zijn zij hier geboren en getogen en kennen hoe de hazen hier lopen. Dus ik heb die mensen bijeengebracht om te kijken of er initiatief kan komen voor ondernemersbelang. Er is gekeken wie er wel en wie er niet bij kan Op uitnodiging van de voormalig directeur van de Gulpener brouwerij, was de eerste bijeenkomst in zijn café de Zwarte Ruiter in Gulpen. Aan het einde hadden we een naam nodig; Zwarte Ruiter Overleg.

Appendix 8. Quotations in Dutch, Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case (ch.5)

1. We hebben de meest spraakmakende ontwerpen genomineerd voor de prijsvraag Gouda Havenstad, waaronder een groene en een rode. Er zaten ook ontwerpen tussen die mijn keuze niet zouden zijn. Maar het is een manier om aandacht te krijgen voor dat gebied. En dan ontdek je later, nadat je het vijf jaar los hebt gelaten, dat een aantal mensen van de afdeling stedenbouw van de gemeente heel erg geïnspireerd waren door het rode model. Dat Manhattan aan de IJssel. Dat vertaalde zich in het plan dat naar buiten kwam bij de start van het Project Hollandsche IJssel, die 6 urban villa's. Toen dacht ik ho! Dat is niet onze keuze. We moeten maar weer eens een andere groep oprichten.
2. De werkgroep is in 1994 speciaal in het leven geroepen om de unieke en bijzondere relatie tussen de historische binnenstad van Gouda met de aangrenzende open groene ruimte van de Krimpenerwaard te behouden en te versterken. ...Dit unieke gebied, dat wij als het ware geadopteerd hebben, doet ons Groene Hart sneller kloppen, in de toekomst hopelijk ook het uwe.
3. De zuidelijke stadsrand intrigeert ons. De vaak abrupte overgang tussen stad en ommeland maakt het landschap verrassend en afwisselend. ...Het polderlandschap van de Krimpenerwaard versterkt met haar rust en ruimte het contrast.
4. We zijn eerst aan de slag gegaan met de structuurschets PHIJ in 1994, maar toen kwam die randweg op onze weg. ...Daar hadden we onze handen vol aan. Maar dat heeft ons ook heel veel contacten opgeleverd met mensen in die stadsrand. Dat heb je nodig.
5. Er waren wel telkens mensen uit Gouda die brieven wilden schrijven. Maar volgens mij had dat geen zin meer. Leuk om nog een brief te schrijven, maar de mensen uit de Krimpenerwaard moeten het zeggen! Er waren wel mensen die voor waren, maar dat moest wel naar buiten komen. Die moesten uitgedaagd worden. Je moest zorgen dat zij brieven gingen schrijven of dat ze brieven gingen ondertekenen. Dat is toen op gang gekomen. Dat begon met het helpen van het idee van Veenwaren. ...[De voorzitter van Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren] had ik wel eens gesproken. Die was helemaal gek van houten schouwen en had een vaarroute in zijn hoofd van 25 kilometer als de sluis gerestaureerd zou worden. Die ideeën vond ik geweldig. Toen hebben wij hem geholpen. Want dit hadden we nodig om die sluis gerestaureerd te krijgen. Het geluid vanuit de Krimpenerwaard!

6. En toen kwam de klap dat de subsidie niet werd toegewezen. En toen werden ze wakker in de Krimpenerwaard. Toen gingen zelfs raadsleden in Schoonhoven zich ermee bemoeien.
7. Er kwam een krantenbericht van 'einde verhaal' en ik zag een brief waarin de wethouder van Gouda schreef dat hij mee zou werken aan die sloopvergunning. En ik dacht 'jeetje, wat doe je nou man!' En toen zijn we aan de slag gegaan.
8. Het is een kwestie van een lange adem en van volhouden. Soms zit er wat schot in bij de gemeente, als er een wethouder is die er wel gevoel voor heeft. Maar vervolgens heb je een wethouder die er niets aan wil doen of er niks van weet.
9. Wat ook een rol heeft gespeeld is een bezoek van de Commissaris van de Koningin en alle gedeputeerden aan de Krimpenerwaard. Tijdens dit bezoek is door met name [VVD gemeenteraadslid] van de gemeente Vlist aangedrongen op steun bij de provincie voor restauratie van de Stolwijkersluis. Ik herinner mij dat ik dat las in de krant en dacht 'het lobbywerk van [voorzitter Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren] en [woordvoerder Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard] en de verontwaardiging over het niet doorgaan van de restauratie na de tweede afwijzing werkt toch door.
10. Het contact met de provincie was lastig. Je wist niet wie je moest hebben. Je had gesprekken met verschillende mensen die niet gemandateerd waren om uitspraken over bepaalde zaken te doen of die geen draagvlak wisten te creëren binnen de eigen organisatie. Intern liep het binnen de provincie heel moeizaam. Soms verliep de communicatie tussen provincieambtenaren via de gemeente en gebruikten ambtenaren van de provincie de gemeente om collega's bij de provincie aan de slag te zetten. Iedereen was erg bezig met zijn eigen vakgebied. De ambtenaar van het Bureau Cultuur richtte zich alleen op de sluis en niet op de stadstuin. Vervolgens kwam er iemand van het Bureau Groen, die niets deed met de sluis en geen contact had met de ambtenaar van het Bureau Cultuur. Daarnaast was er de discussie over de doorvaarthoogte van de brug van de randweg over de Stolwijkervaart en over de langzaamverkeersverbinding. Dat ging over de randweg en die had ook een eigen projectteam.
11. De gemeente Vlist wil nu ook meedoen. Die ziet het belang voor de gemeente nu wel in. Dat is niet ineens. Onderhuids zijn er heel veel contacten. We organiseren ook dauwtrappen hier in de polder. ...Dat dauwtrappen is een goede manier om een informeel met mensen te kunnen praten. De vorige keer was een van de wethouders van Vlist erbij en daar hebben we een hele poos mee zitten praten. Zo doe je dat met meer mensen, zoals het Zuid-Hollands Landschap. Die zijn ook in de organisatie van de dauwtraptocht betrokken en dat is een goede manier om hen ook eens informeel te spreken.

12. In ons informele circuit is dat dauwtrappen heel belangrijk geweest. Dat is ooit als geintje begonnen en inmiddels al 15 jaar georganiseerd. Het is nu zo populair dat we een grens hebben gelegd bij 300 deelnemers. Het moet geen massaal evenement worden. Daar nodigen we altijd de raadsleden uit en dat is hét moment voor gesprek. Je kan samen met iemand oplopen. Vorig jaar liep de wethouder van Vlist mee. Die had daar nog nooit gewandeld en ze vond het een eye-opener.
13. Soms moet je er wel heel erg bovenop zitten en actief zijn om wat te bereiken. En dan werkt het ook. ...Ik stuurde op vrijdagmiddag een mailtje naar de wethouder en naar de gemeenteraad en de maandag erop hoorde ik dat ze datzelfde weekend informeel hadden overlegd met als resultaat dat een conceptmotie woensdag naar de provincie werd gestuurd. Zo zie je dat je best een invloed kan hebben. ...Als je eenmaal in dat circuit zit, vergeten ze je niet zo snel. Door de gemeente wordt ik voor van alles wat er speelt uitgenodigd. Tot aan een VIP-kaart voor de kaarsjesavond. Je zit standaard in de distributielijst. Dat krijg je als je regelmatig reageert en enthousiast mee wilt doen.
14. Veel ideeën zijn maatschappelijk ontstaan en worden overgenomen door de gemeente. Zo ook de Werkgroep krimpenerwaard met het 'venster op de krimpenerwaard'.
15. Je moet vooral niet je naam verbinden aan een plan. Het gaat om het idee. Je moet zelf op de achtergrond blijven. ...Je moet het presenteren als een idee van het beraad stadsrand, of van de Krimpenerwaard of van de stad Gouda. Je moet de opening bieden dat anderen het kunnen overnemen. Op een gegeven moment zie je dat ambtenaren dat ook gaan gebruiken. En dan moet je vooral niet zeggen dat je het zelf bedacht hebt. Dan ben je op de goede weg. Als het in stukken van de ambtenarij terecht komt, dan moet je je heel stil houden. Dan moet je het loslaten, want dan is het geland.
16. Boeren zijn met name tegen varen omdat ze dat associëren met geluidsoverlast en oeverbeschadiging door golfslag. ...Het lastig om gedeeltelijke vaarverboden te handhaven. In het verleden was er gebrek aan handhaving, waardoor er veel overlast was. Mensen gaan in het land zitten en laten rotzooi achter. ...De boeren zijn ook overvallen door het plan om de sluis te herstellen. Ze zijn bang dat er net zoals vroeger weer jachten gaan varen in de polder. ...Toen de bedrijfsvaart eindigde, hebben de boeren aangedrongen op het afdammen van de sluis. Ze wilden absoluut geen recreatievaart meer. ...De boeren hebben in die tijd hard gevochten voor het slopen van de sluis.
17. Als de Stolwijkersluis na herstel in gebruik kan worden genomen, dan ligt er een pracht kleinschalig vaargebied beschikbaar, waar met kleine vaartuigjes prima gevaren kan worden. ...Door de Stolwijkersluis als enige en natuurlijke

- toegang te benutten is recreatiedruk op de erachter gelegen vaarroute prima in de hand te houden. ...Het zal ook slechts die mensen trekken, die nu al wandelend en op de fiets deze Waard doorkruisen. Namelijk: rust- en natuurschoonzoekers. Dus geen jachten vol uitgelaten mensen en drommen bootjes met stille verstorende benzinebuitenboordmotoren, en of speedboten. Daar zijn immers geijkte vaargebieden genoeg voor. Geen verstoring van de nu aanwezige rust, ook niet de Zondagse.
18. Tegen [voorzitter Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren] hebben we gezegd dat hij iemand moest vinden die uit de streek komt. Toen was er [het] Statenlid voor de VVD en heel enthousiast vertegenwoordiger van de streek. Woont in Stolwijk. Zij was gevlaid dat ze daarvoor gevraagd was en zo ontstaat er een vliegwiél, want zij is het ook gaan promoten. Dan is het niet meer alleen [voorzitter Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren]. Die andere VVD'ers gingen het ook dragen, want ze zagen kansen om zo de economie van de Krimpenerwaard te stimuleren.
 19. Maar ik heb het om kunnen draaien en zei 'meneer Boer, die waterrecreatie kan ook jouw business zijn. Jij kunt de aanbieder zijn. Die vaarroutes zijn jouw vaarroutes, dus ik kan me ook een vorm voorstellen waarbij jij de beheerder bent van de vergunningen. Waarbij jij met andere agrariërs in een Stichting of cooperatie gaat zitten om dat te beheren. Dus de agrariërs worden dan Stichting Veenvaren Krimpenerwaard. De agrariërs verlenen de vergunningen en krijgen de inkomsten en leggen aanlegsteigers aan om bij de boerderijen te kunnen komen. Dus niet de partij die gedoogd en die er last van heeft, maar de partij die het doet en die het aanbiedt.' En toen gingen ze er anders inzitten. Dus niet 'wat gaan jullie doen om te zorgen dat ik er geen last van heb', maar 'als je zelf de aanbieder bent, dan weet je zelf of het goed geregeld is'. Dat vond ie een aantrekkelijke optie.
 20. Wij zagen dat het plan mooi paste in het Veenweidepact. Je zou het gebied voor natte natuur kunnen aankopen. ... Eigenlijk was het handiger om daar de agrarische bestemming eraf te halen. En ook in die context was het handiger om het gebied te betrekken bij het Veenweidepact. Ik heb dat toen ook aangegeven in de stuurgroep, dat ze het gebied beter konden verbreden. Je probeert steeds meer mensen probleemeneigenaar te maken van dat masterplan.
 21. De stadstuin heet nu het Veenweidepark, want men wilde niet dat het geassocieerd werd met Gouda. Het woord stadstuin roept het beeld op dat het een tuin voor Gouda is, maar het gebied is voor de hele omgeving. [De wethouder van Gouda] heeft die naam Veenweidepark zelf bedacht.

22. 'Namens wie bemoeit u zich met het Veerstalblok en de Krimpenerwaard?'
[De woordvoerder van Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard]:
'Het Beraad Stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard, een professionele werkgroep van zes mensen. In het beraad zijn alle belangengroeperingen vertegenwoordigd'.
23. De Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard heet niet voor niets een werkgroep. Het bestaat uit een man of vijf die wat willen doen. Ik houd niet van die structuren met een vereniging van een groot aantal mensen met allemaal een mening, maar die niets doen. Ik heb liever mensen die hun mening willen omzetten in daden. Verder werd de werkgroep opgebouwd rondom kennis. Ieder lid had een bepaalde kundigheid en kennis op het gebied van landschap en bouwkunde. We hadden een cartograaf, planoloog, architect en weg- en waterbouwkundigen.
24. Wij hebben toen wel ingezien, we kunnen dit model nog tien jaar volhouden, maar dat wil niet zeggen dat we het gerealiseerd krijgen. Want dan zou men op dat tracé al stadsvernieuwingsactiviteiten in werking zetten die dat Weidebloemtracé uiteindelijk onmogelijk zouden maken. Zo was de tactiek. De overheid ging zich ook ingraven. Toen hebben we de handdoek in de ring gegooid. In de WGK hebben we gestimuleerd dat je dat dan wel openlijk moet doen. Samen met Zuid-Hollands Landschap en de Bewonersgroep Ouderkerk hebben we een brief geschreven waarin we officieel kenbaar maakten dat we ons neerlegden bij het voorkeustracé van de overheid en dat we vanaf dat moment constructief mee wilden denken. Dat hebben veel mensen enorm op prijs gesteld. ...Wij vonden het belangrijk dat we weer aan tafel konden komen.
25. Bezwaar maken doen we niet zo vaak hoor. Daar maak je geen vrienden mee. ...Je moet voorzichtig omgaan met die sympathie. Als we bij de randweg waren doorgedaan, dan hadden we de sympathie verspeeld. Dat is iedere keer weer een delicate afweging. ...Als je te vaak bezwaar maakt kan je de informatiestroom en samenwerking met ambtenaren verspelen. Je moet mensen in die voorfase zien te overtuigen, te inspireren tot een andere richting. En als je er vroeg bij bent, lukt het ook vaak.
26. Bijvoorbeeld ... is heel professioneel en dan kan je op hem vertrouwen. Hij kende de ongeschreven regels van het spel. Anderen zeggen 'en ik ga nu naar de pers' en dat is helemaal niet goed, want het geeft ruis en verstoort de gesprekken. Partijen hebben er belang bij om te fungeren als 'luis in de pels', maar ze moeten wel blijven praten. Je kan er veel aan hebben, maar als mensen hun rol niet duidelijk kennen en als het politiek raar wordt ingezet, dan ontstaat ruis. Als ambtenaar heb je dan een moeilijke positie, want je moet het bestuur volgen. ...is wel een lastpak, maar hij weet wanneer hij z'n mond moet houden en hij heeft veel contacten. Door zijn jarenlange ervaring is hij heel goed geworden in het spel.

27. En ze spreken vaak namens een hele rij organisaties, waarin wel vaak dezelfde organisaties zitten. Maar dat geeft bij andere partijen het beeld dat er een heel groot maatschappelijke draagvlak is. En dan wil niemand een spelbreker zijn. ...Zo zorg je dat er sympathie ontstaat voor die mensen in Gouda met dat leuke idee. Niet alleen die wethouder, maar het is een hele groep mensen die dat wil. Dat maakt het wel bijzonder. Ze willen hier iets wel en vaak gaat het om een groep mensen die juist tegen een bepaald plan is.
28. [De woordvoerder van de Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard] is iemand die heel empathisch kan denken. Hij is heel inlevend is voor de problemen die je als wethouder hebt. Voor hoe jouw dag eruit ziet, jouw agenda en wat er speelt. Daar heeft hij veel meer gevoel voor dan anderen. Dus hij slaagt erin om een leuk gesprek met [de wethouder van Vlist] te hebben. En laat zien dat hij heel veel kennis heeft over de polder.
29. Doordat [de voorzitter van Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren] een echte autochtoon in de polder is en daar met zijn vader al vaarde heeft hij naar mijn mening de gevoeligheden die er zo al leven in de polder over varen goed meegenomen in zijn plan.
30. Tijdens een vergadering van een vereniging voor boeren in de Krimpenerwaard [Vereniging Duurzame Waterbeheersing en Landbouw in de Krimpenerwaard] werd er flink tekeer gegaan tegen het plan voor herstel van de sluis. 'De sluis moet dicht! Er wordt hier niet gevaren!'. Ik heb toen het boetekleed aangetrokken en verteld dat ik de veroorzaker was. 'Ik heb het plan geschreven vanuit jullie ergernis. Jullie hebben er zelf nooit werk van gemaakt. Jullie hebben altijd de kans gehad om het zelf naar je hand te zetten, maar dat is nooit gebeurd.' ...Er zijn vele vormen en manieren om te varen, dat is niet beperkt tot motorboten. Dus ik heb nogmaals uitgelegd dat elektrisch varen geen overlast oplevert voor boeren. ...Ik zei tegen ze: 'Jullie geschiedenis hangt aan die sluis. Door de sluis kon de landbouw hier floreren!' Daar waren ze het wel mee eens.
31. Het probleem in de Krimpenerwaard is vooral dat velen wars zijn van alles wat met toerisme of recreatie te maken heeft. Dat komt door de calvinistische inslag van de mensen. Ik probeer daarom telkens om met de boeren in gesprek te komen als ik ze tegenkom. En dan vraag ik aan ze hoe ze het vroeger zelf ervaren toen ze met de schouw megingen. Nou dat vonden ze wel mooi. En dan opper ik dat een ander dat toch ook mag. Ze erkennen wel dat de beleving van de polder vanaf het water heel anders is. ...De zondagsrust is hoe dan ook een heikel punt. Maar ik praat graag met die mensen als ik ze tegenkom en dan probeer ik het gesprek daarover op gang te brengen. Het hoeft ook niet meteen. Ik trek er jaren voor uit. Het mag ook niet snel gaan, want dan overval je ze.

32. Ik heb [aan de wethouder van Bergambacht] laten zien dat het nog aankwam op 20.000 van hem om die 2.7 miljoen los te krijgen. Dus daar kon hij geen nee op zeggen. Dat is zo'n klein aaltje voor zo'n walvis!
33. In de Strategiegroep Veenweidepact zitten de mensen en het geld, dus daar moet je spelen. Je hebt er de vijf gemeentes en de provincie en een grote zak geld. ...In november 2008 nam ik tijdens een of ander etentje van de strategiegroep [de gedeputeerde] apart samen met [de dijkgraaf] van 'kom op, het moet toch lukken om die sluis te restaureren'. Zo werd [de gedeputeerde] aanspreekpunt van 'jij kan dat geld binnenhalen'. ...En weer eens bij een afscheidsdineetje ook weer [de dijkgraaf], [de gedeputeerde], zo even met z'n drieën bij elkaar van 'goh, kan dat niet lukken zo, twee ton daar, drie ton daar'.
34. Wandelpaden en fietspaden zijn al belegd, maar de waterrecreatie is niet belegd. Dus dat gingen wij doen binnen het programma Vitaal Platteland. Dat was de manier om buiten de andere gremia om dat zogenaamde taboe eens aan te pakken. Want op de officiële tafel was het taboe zo verhard, zo dat geeneen wethouder daar z'n vinger aan durfde te branden.
35. Onderhuids zijn er heel veel contacten. Wat dat betreft moet ik toch [de woordvoerder van Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard] wel weer complimenteren. Die kent heel veel mensen en contacten en heeft daar ook de tijd voor. Dat scheelt. Het is lobbywerk en daar doet hij actief aan mee.
36. Er was toen ook een ambtenaar van Monumentenzorg in Gouda. Die zei ik wil met jullie meedoen. Maar jij bent ambtenaar bij de gemeente! Ja, maar ik vind het een geweldig idee, ik wil graag meehelpen om dat uit te werken. Hij zei: dan houden jullie mij toch af en toe in de luwte als dat nodig is. Hij heeft meegewerkt aan dat rapport toen. Ik vond het wel bijzonder dat hij dat als ambtenaar durfde.
37. [De voorzitter van Initiatiefgroep Veenvaren] heeft een belangrijke rol gespeeld. Al jaren is hij heel consequent bezig met vragen van aandacht voor Veenvaren. Hij is de belangrijkste lobbyist. Hij heeft ons heel consequent voorzien van informatie en heeft ons laten zien dat het kan. Hij heeft ook een keer voor de raadscommissie van Vlist een presentatie gegeven, nog ver voor 2008. Wat mij betreft is hij sterker en invloedrijker dan [lobbyisten in de stadsrand]. Want hij laat heel mooi zien dat het kan, met welke routes en hoe het verbonden is aan de historie. Hij laat op overtuigende manier zien dat het opnieuw in leven brengen van varen past bij het gebied.
38. Ik heb de burgemeester van Bergambacht meegenomen voor een tochtje over de Lansingervaart en die was daar laaiend enthousiast over. Die was onmiddellijk om. Die was zelfs zo enthousiast: haar wethouder was nog

- steeds grimmig, maar zei zij publiekelijk dat 'we gaan dat gewoon doen'. ...Die nieuwe wethouder van Schoonhoven had wel oog voor andere belangen dan alleen die van Schoonhoven. En hij vaart ook zelf, dus dat scheelt. ...Ik heb de kanskaart, route kaart, laten zien die duidelijk maakt dat als de sluis opengaat ... dat je dan met je bootje van Schoonhoven naar Gouda kan. Dat deed wonderen in de commissie.
39. [De wethouder van Vlist] had de charme en de flair om mensen mee te nemen in zijn ideeën. Dat is erg belangrijk geweest. Hij ging er gewoon mee aan de slag.
40. Daarnaast was het ook belangrijk dat [de voorzitter van LTO Krimpenerwaard] lid is van de Stichting Veenwaren. ...Dat is wat mij betreft heel belangrijk, want dat zogenaamde taboe was bij hem al lang weg. En daarom vond ik Veenwaren erg belangrijk en hechtte ik er veel geloof aan. En ik kon daar zwaar op leunen, want [de LTO-voorzitter] doet ook mee!
41. [De woordvoerder van Werkgroep Gouda <—> Krimpenerwaard] en [de voorzitter van Initiatiefgroep Veenwaren] hebben gelobbyd in de Krimpenerwaard en daardoor is de gemeente Vlist aangeschoven en is er steun van de Krimpenerwaard gekomen. ... De Krimpenerwaard-partijen waren in het begin sterk tegen. Ze zagen de grote stad Gouda als een bedreiging, dus wij konden niet met hen praten.

Summary

Stories becoming sticky

How civic initiatives strive for connection to governmental spatial planning agendas

Chapter 1. The dilemma of civic engagement

In reaction to difficulties of government-controlled citizen participation to fulfil the promises of more effective and democratic spatial planning strategies, attention is growing for self-governing and self-organizing movements in civil society. It is believed that such civic initiatives have the potential to construct their own places, to envision possible futures, and to construct relevant governance structures. However, concern is expressed about what happens when civic initiatives look for the support of government actors to achieve their goals. It is argued that the promotion of the idea of active citizenship is just political rhetoric, that citizen-driven engagement will be either overlooked or 'regularized' and adjusted to fit in existing government procedures and frameworks, squeezing out their transformative energy.

This thesis aims to understand the phenomenon of self-organizing civic initiatives, how they engage in, and connect to, planning practices aimed at the improvement of the quality of places, and why these connections lead or do not lead to alteration or transformation of governmental planning agendas. By providing greater understanding about these processes, the thesis aims to contribute to debates about how governmental planners can make better connections with civil society initiatives and how a more responsive and adaptive attitude towards a dynamically changing society can be achieved.

The following question was central to the research:

How do civic initiatives connect to government organizations, and how can we understand outcomes of these connections in terms of the achievement of ambitions of civic initiatives and planning agendas for regional spatial development?

Chapter 2. Shifting agendas: framing and storytelling

The research question was operationalized with agenda-setting and framing theory. A powerful agenda-setting strategy is issue framing, selecting certain aspects and ignoring others. For the analysis, this implied a focus on the day-to-day social interactions and use of language that constitute, reconfirm, and transform the way we think about things and act upon them, and how this subtly influences political agendas. The analysis was based on the following assumptions: Civic initiatives mobilize support and attention for their proposals through the construction of stories that act as latent attractors of people and resources. Storytelling is a strategic form of framing in which problem definitions, solutions, strategies, and motivations for action are brought together in a

coherent whole, providing an interpretive framework for the listener to make sense of an ambiguous reality. The attractiveness of a story is increased if it is considered inviting, credible, relevant, truthful, and emotive by listeners who will then pass the story on to others. Thus, civic initiatives are challenged to fit stories to dynamically changing self-referential frames of targeted supporters to get attention and support. This happens in an interactive process of making sense together, in which the continuous construction and sharing of stories plays an important role. The attractiveness of stories is enhanced when they are connected to events and specific contexts that are considered important or relevant by targeted audiences. Thus, in this study, we have looked at the way civic initiatives construct, align, and reshape stories in their interactions with other actors and in relation to the specific context.

Chapter 3. A tale of doing interpretive analysis

Two in-depth case studies were selected concerning civic initiatives that produced unsolicited proposals for local and regional spatial development in two different regions in the Netherlands. The New Markets Heuvelland case contains three stories that in the end competed with one another for attention and (financial and political) support. All three started with the New Markets initiative to build a community of capital rich entrepreneurs who would invest in landscape qualities through new product-market combinations, which it was assumed would generate economic returns (improved tourism). However, this initiative could not mobilize enough support from entrepreneurs and relevant governments and stagnated, while at the same time stories about Healthy Living and Regional Branding emerged, around which a number of participating entrepreneurs self-organized. This latter initiative was very successful in mobilizing support and resulted in collective investments of some 8 million euros in a regional branding campaign.

The Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case narrates how initiatives of citizens in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe area led to landscape values being successfully positioned on the planning agenda over a period of 25 years. The initiative started because governments were paying only limited and fragmented attention to the area in question, and this was perceived by the initiative as a big threat to natural and historical landscape values. After 25 years, the attention and support of local and regional governments were mobilized, and this resulted in the investment of several million euros in the protection and development of landscape values.

The research, with its focus on human interactions, communication processes, and struggles for meaning in spatial planning contexts, is positioned within the interpretive research tradition. The focus was on the way language shapes what things we see, how we see them, and how this shaping of things constitutes reality. We aimed to get meaningful and convincing interpretations through a holistic, evolutionary, and comparative research approach. Sensitizing concepts

were refined as we went up in the 'hermeneutic circle'. Triangulation, using a combination of interviews, (policy) document analysis, participant observation, visual data, and in the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case also newspaper articles and (e-mail) correspondence, enabled detailed data collection about relevant events and social interactions.

Chapter 4. New Markets Heuvelland: coalition building and agenda setting

For the Heuvelland case, in relation to framing processes and the question of why some stories were successful whereas others faded, we drew the following conclusions. First, we concluded that a clear direction, in the form of an appealing story, was of the utmost importance. In the New Markets process, it was not possible to formulate an appealing and directional ambition for regional spatial and economic development. There was too much focus on building coalitions and managing relations, and too little on identifying issues. In contrast, in smaller and informal settings, two initiatives framed their ambitions into strong stories that connected well to existing policy stories about future economic development in the region. Stories that successfully attracted attention and support were founded on stable ambitions that were flexibly framed into a story recognizable and relevant to targeted audiences.

Second, a clear connecting strategy with relevant governmental actors was essential, in this case with the provincial government. The province was characterized as authoritative and highly self-referential, and this challenged initiatives with a major barrier to becoming noticed and prioritized. However, ambiguity about the extent and way of involving various provincial departments resulted in an unstable alignment strategy and prevented the establishment of a meaningful connection. In contrast to the New Markets project, the coalition building strategy of Healthy Living and Regional Branding was more straightforward and entailed building good relations with the policy network around economic development. Overcoming the barriers of a limited government perspective on social reality required a stable alignment strategy that fitted to targeted supporters' ways of working and ways of viewing the world.

Third, the Healthy Living and Regional Branding initiatives established meaningful alignments through informal networks of business and government executives that provided the opportunity to share stories and explore alternatives. Informal communication in personal, one-to-one meetings seemed to prevail and was accepted generally as the way things were negotiated in the region. This in part explains why the stories of Healthy Living and Regional Branding could spread through relevant networks and managed to include decision makers in storytelling. In addition, the Regional Branding initiative in particular managed to strengthen its story by connecting it to political and social events that were considered highly important by the provincial government. By interweaving

these events and the provincial government's problem frames into the story about a future 'dynamic and vibrant' region, it triggered wide support from local governments and the provincial government, as well as businesses.

Chapter 5. Positioning landscape values of the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard fringe on the policy agenda

In the Gouda-Krimpenerwaard case, ambitions of civic initiatives were stable, but the story about the future of the fringe area changed to fit well into policy stories that could facilitate implementation. Shifts in storytelling occurred when coalition building required alignments with other groups. To get support from governments, this especially concerned fitting the story to relevant policy stories. Frame alignment strategies concerned bridging, amplification, and extension of ideas to relate to the concerns and frames of potential supporters.

The following explanations were found with regard to why certain alignment strategies were successful in getting a response from targeted supporters: First, positive response was enhanced by telling a story that was easy to understand and that triggered the imagination, for example through visualizations and design. Second, stories needed time to filter through or, in the words of, the policy system had to be slowly softened up to new stories. By continuously telling and sharing the story in various contexts, civic initiatives and their coalition partners slowly enlarged governments' latitude of acceptance. Third, frame alignment required resemiotization of stories to include perspectives of targeted supporters and to invite them to participate. To secure governments' attention and support, governments' ambitions, concerns, and policy stories had to be incorporated into the story about the future of the fringe area. Navigating potential supporters' self-referential frames, connecting to the values and beliefs of targets as well as their personal everyday experiences, increased the credibility and salience of the evolving story. Fourth, this required a great deal of empathy and listening on the part of storytellers to understand the perspectives of others, reframe, resemiotize, and construct a shared story. Telling and selling a story could not work without careful listening. Fifth, a relevant and credible story was achieved through construction of an identity that rendered storytellers credible and relevant in targeted supporters' eyes.

Chapter 6. Sticky stories: conversations, connectors, and opportunities

On the basis of the case studies, we concluded that agendas were influenced by people essentially through the interactional framing of ambitions into stories, and the incorporation of smaller and bigger events into those stories. Stories did not become sticky as a result of their own properties or by coincidence through focusing events; rather, they were made sticky by people through their conversations with one another. It entailed slow processes of continuous resemiotization and frame alignment in order to frame and 'story' issues into the targeted audiences' latitude of acceptance. This required proposal promoters to

listen attentively to, and empathize with, what was said and the issues raised by potential supporters, i.e. attentive navigation of their self-referential frames. Thus, storytelling was not about transmitting stories, but involved careful listening, empathizing, sharing, and aligning.

Storytelling and story alignment efforts of civic initiatives and their supporters resulted in subtle and step-by-step changes in existing policy stories rather than structural or radical change. Fitting stories to existing policy stories through a slow process of softening up the policy system implied a reproduction of hegemonic policy stories. Civic initiatives contribute to change only in subtle ways. However, such subtle and small changes are crucial to understand larger effects.

The case-study comparison points to three interplaying conditions that facilitate framing processes through which stories become sticky:

Focusing events and opportunities

Stories became sticky at certain critical junctures, marked by events interpreted and framed by proponents as a trigger or window of opportunity. When a story was connected to particular events, alignment was enabled with potential supporters to whom these events were meaningful. This required a softening up of the policy system to new ideas and stories by 'filling the cup' with many events and discussions. This implies that even a small change could 'tip' a new idea or story. It required a great deal of patience and perseverance on the part of proposal promoters.

Conversations as medium of storytelling

Civic initiatives that engaged in all kinds of formal and informal conversations, everywhere and at all times, increased the chance of learning about relevant stories and events and of connecting their own stories to them. Informal settings which favoured exploration of perspectives and brainstorming enabled actors to empathize and listen. Favourable conversational settings were first of all settings in which there was room to openly and informally explore various options with targeted supporters and to be creative. Secondly, informal conversation between decision makers (local and regional executives) was also essential to generate enough political and financial support.

Connectors

Some people were at certain junctures critical to the spreading and aligning of stories. We called them connectors: people who connect people, ambitions, stories, resources, and events through storytelling in conversations. They enabled the emergence, strengthening, spreading, adapting, and fitting of stories in the following ways: 1) they had key positions that enabled them to

connect relevant networks and groups; 2) they were considered credible storytellers themselves or were able to mobilize credible storytellers; 3) they had the empathic and listening abilities essential to storytelling; and 4) they were attentive and perceptive to favourable events and contexts that provided the opportunity to connect and align stories and people.

Chapter 7. Planning as connective storytelling. Conclusion and discussion

Besides summarizing the main findings of the thesis, this chapter presents a model in which the relations between sticky stories, conversations, focusing events and contexts, and connectors are visualized. The model offers a way to elucidate dynamic change in political and planning agendas by focusing on the interactive construction, connection, and subtle alteration of stories in day-to-day conversations by the right people at the right time.

Scientific contributions

The sticky story model helps to elucidate why ideas or innovations that emerge in self-organizing networks become adopted or not. Hence, it contributes to debates among planners and policy scientists about managing complex change, and, related to that, how meaningful connections between government and civil society may be enabled in a number of ways. First, it shows that action in the form of storytelling has the power to produce, reproduce, and alter structuring forces. Agency concerns the meaningful connecting of one's own story to existing modes of thinking in order to create room to manoeuvre within the structure presented by dominant modes of thinking. Strategic storytelling is not about transmitting stories; rather, it involves careful listening, empathizing, sharing, and aligning. Storytelling that enables the mobilization of political and policy attention is not so much persuasive as connective. The model contributes the idea that stories become sticky when new and existing stories are connected in catalytic conversations at the right time by the right people. The question is open as to what the role of planners is in catalytic conversation, and the extent to which facilitation and mediation can leave room or even provide room for spontaneity and open information sharing. Further research might focus on conditions in which diversity is enhanced or dampened, starting from the competing assumptions that consensus building dampens diversity versus that it actually generates and enhances diversity. More generally, we have demonstrated how the concepts of conversation and storytelling can contribute to understanding agenda change and socio-spatial change, but still relatively little of the literature on policy and planning is devoted to language-based perspectives. Consequently, there is room to expand the inquiry of planning practices as phenomena in language by using the discursive analysis literature.

Second, the conclusions in this thesis point to the active role of civic initiatives in the establishment of meaningful connections in networks in sometimes unexpected and invisible ways. They may even be able to do this more effectively than government actors who have highly self-referential views on what goes on in social reality. The point made is that we should view social networks not only from government perspectives focusing on the construction and implementation of policies, but also from the perspective of non-governmental actors and how they mobilize attention in wider networks, bringing about dynamic change in relationships over time. People are active agents, interacting with one another and organizing themselves in order to get things done. Contributing to work on network governance, we point out that, in a network perspective, governments need to be constantly alert to what is happening, paying attention to informal networks. People engaged in planning work, on behalf of both government and social movements, face the challenge of 'networking the network'. We have demonstrated, using a historical and holistic perspective, that it is the interplay between focusing events, conversations, and connectors in the network that helps to elucidate how various actors in the wider network make a difference in policy and planning or not.

Third, grass-roots initiatives can be seeds of structural change or even transition, but there is still little known about how small initiatives, latent attractors, evolve into socio-spatial transition. Much of the work of transition and innovation researchers aims to find answers to this question but focuses mainly on macro-level drivers (economy, politics, physical calamities, and so forth) or institutional conditions. We suggest that a focus on human interactions at a micro level and on the processes of meaning construction can reveal more detailed insights about why and how more structural change and transitions come about. We have shown how small contextual changes can make big differences as they develop in relation to one another. Latent attractors, or stories, that on the surface seem to have little meaning, can under certain circumstances grow to become strong attractors, or sticky stories, around which people self-organize. Using a historical, comparative, and holistic perspective, focusing on the construction of meaning, our research indicates that transformative change may be explained by factors such as patience, timing, creating coincidence, empathizing and listening, and sharing stories, in relation to the more structural forces at macro levels.

Towards a connective planning practice

Creating room for self-organization does not mean letting go and leaving planning initiatives to civil society completely. It does not imply governance without any government participation. The engagement of professional planners and government actors in the work and activities of civic initiatives is required, not to control what happens, but to create conditions in which initiatives can develop solutions that promote the sustainable development of places. Creating conditions for meaningful connections between emerging

initiatives from both governments and civil society actors can be the key to a planning approach that is able to deal with complexity and non-linearity. It can be the key to planning that is more responsive to emerging alternative stories in civil society.

The following recommendations for improving the 'connective' competences of planners, both governmental and non-governmental, were suggested: 1) empathizing and listening: connective storytelling is not a matter of transmitting, but involves careful listening, empathizing, and sharing; 2) using and creating opportunities for catalytic conversations; 3) accepting and embracing diversity: when striving for conversations that have the potential to 'catalyse' change, planners have to suppress their tendency to focus too much on establishing consensus and getting control; 4) attentiveness to meaningful events and opportunities: this requires from practitioners good timing as well as patience and perseverance to await the right circumstances; and 5) network the network: identifying and mobilizing connectors.

Planning with a complexity perspective accepts reality as unpredictable, non-linear, complex, and chaotic and views this as an opportunity rather than a threat. The acknowledgment of chance and unplanned change stresses the enduring importance of spatial planning. Spatial planning can assist sustainable futures of places and regions by engaging in, and providing conditions for, innovative self-organization by engaging in storytelling processes that emerge in civil society.

Samenvatting

Plakkende verhalen

Hoe burgerinitiatieven streven naar verbinding met ruimtelijke planning agenda's van overheden

1. Het dilemma van burger betrokkenheid

De verwachting dat de overheid via interactieve beleidsvorming en burgerparticipatie meer effectieve en democratische besluitvorming kan realiseren, blijkt in de praktijk tegen te vallen. In reactie daarop groeit de aandacht voor zelfsturing en zelforganiserende bewegingen in de burgermaatschappij. Verondersteld wordt dat burgerinitiatieven een groot innovatief potentieel hebben om zelf hun leefomgeving te (her)ontwikkelen, om zelf mogelijke toekomsten te verbeelden, en ook om zelf structuren te bedenken waarmee dit aangestuurd kan worden. Tegelijkertijd wordt zorg geuit over wat er gebeurt met dergelijke initiatieven wanneer zij steun zoeken van overheden om hun doelen te verwezenlijken. Critici beweren dat het propageren van actief burgerschap puur politieke retoriek is en dat burgerinitiatief dan wel over het hoofd wordt gezien, dan wel wordt 'gereguleerd' en aangepast om te passen in bestaande procedures en kaders van de overheid. Resultaat: de transformerende energie van burgerinitiatief wordt gesmoord.

Het doel van dit proefschrift is een beter begrip te krijgen van het fenomeen zelforganiserende burgerinitiatieven die alternatieve voorstellen ontwikkelen voor de verbetering van de ruimtelijke kwaliteit van plekken en gebieden. Het gaat in het bijzonder om de wijze waarop deze burgerinitiatieven zich verhouden met bestaande planning- en beleidspraktijken en waarom aandachtstrategieën van burgerinitiatieven al dan niet leiden tot aanpassing of transformatie van ruimtelijke planning agenda's van overheden. Door een groter begrip te krijgen van deze processen, draagt dit proefschrift bij aan het debat over de relatie tussen overheid en initiatieven uit de samenleving en hoe overheidsfunctionarissen een meer ontvankelijke en adaptieve houding kunnen ontwikkelen ten aanzien van een snel veranderende samenleving.

De volgende vraag stond centraal in het onderzoek:

Hoe verbinden burgerinitiatieven zich met overheidsorganisaties, en hoe kunnen we de uitkomsten van deze verbindingen begrijpen gelet op de ambities van burgerinitiatieven en de planning agenda's van overheden voor regionale ruimtelijke ontwikkeling?

2. Theoretisch kader: schuivende agenda's, framing en verhalen vertellen

De onderzoeksvraag is geoperationaliseerd met *agenda-setting* theorie en *framing* theorie. Een krachtige agenda-setting strategie is *framing*, dat wil zeggen het selectief articuleren van kwesties, waarbij bepaalde aspecten

worden benadrukt en andere aspecten worden weggelaten. Framing analyse richt zich op de dagelijkse sociale interacties en het taalgebruik waarmee we onze manier van denken en ons handelen vormgeven, bevestigen en veranderen en hoe daarmee politieke agenda's subtiel worden beïnvloed. *Storytelling*, verhalen construeren en doorvertellen, is een strategische vorm van framing waarmee percepties van problemen, oplossingen, strategieën en motivaties voor acties samen worden gebracht in één interpretatief kader. Zo'n verhaal stelt de luisteraar in staat om betekenis geven aan de complexe en dubbelzinnige werkelijkheid en daarop zijn handelen te baseren.

Voor de analyse werd verondersteld dat burgerinitiatieven steun en aandacht voor hun voorstellen mobiliseren door het construeren van verhalen die werken als attractoren. Dat wil zeggen, verhalen die een sterke aantrekkende kracht hebben op mensen met als doel beschikking te krijgen over middelen waarmee ambities verwezenlijkt kunnen worden. De aantrekkingskracht van een verhaal wordt groter als luisteraars het beschouwen als uitnodigend, geloofwaardig, relevant, waarheidsgetrouw, en emotief. Dit impliceert dat burgerinitiatieven voor de opgave staan een verhaal te vertellen dat potentiële medestanders vanuit hun eigen perspectief op de sociale werkelijkheid beschouwen als uitnodigend en relevant. De aantrekkingskracht van een verhaal wordt onder meer vergroot wanneer het wordt verbonden aan gebeurtenissen die door luisteraars relevant en belangrijk worden gevonden. Het mobiliseren van steun en aandacht betreft dus een interactief proces waarin mensen verhalen uitwisselen en aan elkaar verbinden om daarmee betekenis te geven aan de wereld om hen heen. In dit onderzoek hebben we geanalyseerd hoe burgerinitiatieven in relatie tot de specifieke context verhalen construeren, aan elkaar verbinden, en herscheppen via hun interacties met andere groepen en individuen.

3. Een verhaal over het uitvoeren van interpretatieve analyse

Het onderzoek bestond uit twee casestudies over burgerinitiatieven die eigen voorstellen ontwikkelden voor lokale en regionale ruimtelijke ontwikkeling in twee verschillende Nederlandse regio's. De casus Nieuwe Markten Heuvelland gaat over het proces waarin drie toekomstverhalen over de regio tot stand kwamen die met elkaar concurreerden om aandacht en steun, financieel en politiek. Het initiatief Nieuwe Markten richtte zich op het ontwikkelen van nieuwe product-marktcombinaties met een collectief van kapitaalskrachtige ondernemers die een nieuwe economische drager zouden vormen voor landschapswaarden in Heuvelland. Het uiteindelijke doel was het verbeteren van de economische perspectieven van de regio, met name het toerisme. Het initiatief slaagde er echter niet in om voldoende steun te genereren van ondernemers en de provincie en stagneerde. Ondertussen werkten enkele van de betrokken ondernemers op eigen houtje aan plannen die wel succesvol bleken: Gezond Leven en Regiobranding. Met name het laatste initiatief was erg succesvol in het mobiliseren van bedrijven en overheden in de regio. Dit

resulteerde in een collectieve investering van ongeveer acht miljoen euro in een marketing campagne voor de regio, momenteel bekend met het motto “Zuid-Limburg: Bright site of life”.

De casus Gouda-Krimpenerwaard gaat over de aandachtstrategieën van verschillende burgerinitiatieven voor de bescherming en ontwikkeling van landschapswaarden in de stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard. De initiatieven ontstonden als reactie op een gebrek aan aandacht van de overheid voor de integrale ontwikkeling van de stadsrand en de landschapskwaliteiten in het gebied. De door de overheid voorgestelde sectorale maatregelen, zoals een randweg en een industrieterrein, werden gezien als een grote bedreiging voor de natuurwaarden en de cultuurhistorische waarden in de stadsrand. In reactie daarop ontwikkelden burgers door de tijd heen eigen voorstellen en vormden coalities met andere belangengroepen. Gedurende 25 jaar werd langzamerhand aandacht en steun van lokale en regionale overheden gemobiliseerd. Het resultaat was een investering van een paar miljoen euro in de bescherming en ontwikkeling van landschapswaarden in de stadsrand.

Het onderzoek focust op interacties tussen mensen, communicatie processen en de strijd om betekenisgeving in de context van ruimtelijke planning. Het past daarmee in de wetenschappelijke traditie van interpretatieve analyse. Het onderzoek richtte zich op de wijze waarop taal vorm geeft aan de dingen die we zien, hoe we ze zien, en hoe daarmee werkelijkheden worden geconstrueerd. Ons doel was het verkrijgen van betekenisvolle en overtuigende interpretaties van de gegevens uit de casestudies, door een holistische, evolutionaire en vergelijkende benadering. Zogeheten *sensitizing* concepten werden aangescherpt terwijl we gegevens uit de cases interpreterden en herinterpreterden. Door triangulatie, het gebruiken van verschillende methoden van dataverzameling, werd gedetailleerde en genuanceerde informatie verkregen over relevante gebeurtenissen, planning processen en communicatie processen. Het ging om een combinatie van interviews, analyse van (beleids)documenten, observatie van bijeenkomsten (participant observatie), beeldmateriaal, en in de casus Gouda-Krimpenerwaard werden daarnaast ook krantenartikelen en (e-mail) correspondentie geanalyseerd.

4. Nieuwe Markten Heuvelland: coalitievorming en agendering

Ten aanzien van de casus Heuvelland werden de volgende conclusies getrokken over framing processen en de vraag waarom sommige verhalen succesvol bleken terwijl andere verhalen van het toneel verdwenen. Allereerst was een duidelijke richting, in de vorm van een aantrekkelijk verhaal, van groot belang. In het proces van Nieuwe Markten bleek het niet mogelijk om een duidelijke en richtinggevende ambitie te formuleren voor de ruimtelijke en economische ontwikkeling van de regio. Het proces richtte zich teveel op het inrichten van een business community en een breder netwerk van relevante actoren, terwijl er relatief weinig energie werd geïnvesteerd in het identificeren van de

problemen en mogelijke oplossingen. Mede in reactie hierop, ontstonden er in kleinere en informele settingen twee ondernemersinitiatieven die hun ambities wisten te vertalen in aantrekkelijke verhalen die goed aansloten bij bestaande beleidsverhalen over de toekomstige economische ontwikkeling van de regio. Verhalen die succesvol de aandacht en steun wisten te trekken waren stevig verankerd in stabiele ambities die flexibel verpakt werden in verhalen die voor beoogde luisteraars herkenbaar en relevant waren.

Ten tweede was een duidelijke strategie voor het verbinden met relevante overheidsactoren essentieel, in dit geval met de provinciale overheid. De provincie werd gekarakteriseerd als autoritair en in zichzelf gekeerd (zelfreferentieel), en dit stelde de Nieuwe Markten initiatieven voor een flinke uitdaging om opgemerkt en geprioriteerd te worden. Omdat er ambiguïteit heerste over de mate waarin en de manier waarop de verschillende provinciale afdelingen betrokken zouden moeten worden, lukte het niet om de provincie op een zinvolle manier te betrekken bij de initiatieven. Daarentegen werkten het Gezond Leven initiatief en het Regiobranding initiatief vanaf het begin aan het opbouwen van een goede relatie met het beleidsnetwerk rondom regionale economische ontwikkeling en wisten zij zich effectief te verbinden met de relevante provinciale beleidsmakers. Daaruit valt te concluderen dat het slechten van institutionele barrières, die voortkomen uit een beperkt perspectief van de overheid op de sociale werkelijkheid, een stabiele verbindingstrategie vergt die aansluit bij de manier van werken en manier van denken van beoogde medestanders.

Ten derde konden het Gezond Leven initiatief en het Regiobranding initiatief zinvolle verbindingen met overheden en andere ondernemers tot stand brengen omdat zij al waren ingebed in een informeel netwerk van bestuurders dat de gelegenheid bood om verhalen te delen en alternatieven te verkennen. Zaken werden gedaan via informele communicatie in persoonlijke één-op-één ontmoetingen. Uit de interviews blijkt dat deze manier van onderhandelen en samenwerken werd geaccepteerd als een kenmerk van de regionale cultuur. Dit verklaart voor een deel waarom de verhalen van Gezond Leven en Regiobranding zich konden verspreiden door relevante netwerken en waarom beleidsmakers gingen participeren in het vertellen en doorvertellen van die verhalen. Bovendien was vooral het Regiobranding initiatief in staat om de aantrekkingskracht van het verhaal te versterken door daarin politieke en sociale gebeurtenissen op te nemen die de provinciale overheid erg belangrijk vond. Door de *frames* van de provinciale overheid op de regionale problematiek te verweven met een verhaal over een toekomstige dynamische en levendige regio, kwam brede steun op gang van zowel de lokale en provinciale overheid als bedrijven.

5. Het agenderen van landschapswaarden in de stadsrand Gouda-Krimpenerwaard op de beleidsagenda

De volgende conclusies werden getrokken over het proces storytelling als aandachtstrategie en waarom dit al dan niet leidde tot steun en verandering van agenda's van de overheid voor ruimtelijke ontwikkeling.

Ten eerste vertaalden burgerinitiatieven hun stabiele ambities in elastische verhalen over de toekomst van de stadsrand zodat deze goed aansloten bij beleidsverhalen die het vehikel voor daadwerkelijke uitvoering konden vormen. Verschuivingen in storytelling vonden plaats telkens wanneer men de hulp nodig had van andere groepen en organisaties. Dit betekende dat bij het zoeken van steun van bepaalde overheden het eigen verhaal werd aangepast aan relevante beleidsverhalen van die overheden. Zogeheten *frame alignment* strategieën bestonden uit overbruggen (*bridging*), uitbreiding (*amplification*), en het aanvullen van ideeën (*extension*) om daarmee aan te sluiten bij de zorgen en referentiekaders van mogelijke medestanders.

Daarnaast zijn een aantal verklaringen gevonden voor de vraag waarom inspanningen om verhalen aan te sluiten op die van anderen al dan niet leidden tot een positieve weerklank. Allereerst was het van belang een verhaal te vertellen dat makkelijk te begrijpen was en dat tot de verbeelding sprak, bijvoorbeeld door visualisaties en een aantrekkelijk ontwerp. Ten tweede hadden verhalen tijd nodig om door te dringen in de geheugens van mensen en organisaties. Met andere woorden: het beleidssysteem moest opgewarmd raken om ontvankelijk te worden voor alternatieve verhalen. Door verhalen continu te vertellen en te delen in diverse contexten waren burgerinitiatieven en hun medestanders in staat om langzaam de *latitude of acceptance* van overheden te vergroten. Ten derde vergde het op elkaar afstemmen van frames dat nieuwe betekenissen werden geven aan het verhaal (*resemiotization*), zodat deze voor de beoogde medestanders herkenbaar werd en uitnodigend. Om de aandacht en steun van overheden te trekken, werden ambities, zorgen en beleidsverhalen van de overheid opgenomen in het vertellen van verhalen over de toekomst van de stadsrand. De aannemelijkheid en opvallendheid van het zich ontwikkelende verhaal werd vergroot door aan te sluiten bij de waarden, overtuigingen, en persoonlijke ervaringen van luisteraars. Ten vierde impliceert dit navigeren op de zelfreferentialiteit van beoogde medestanders dat verhalenvertellers moesten beschikken over een goed empathisch en luisterend vermogen. Een verhaal vertellen en verkopen ging niet zonder eerst de perspectieven van gesprekspartners te begrijpen, verhalen uit te wisselen en geleidelijk een gedeeld verhaal te construeren. Tot slot werd de kracht en aannemelijkheid van het verhaal vergroot wanneer de vertellers zelf werden beschouwd als geloofwaardig. De burgerinitiatieven in de casus werkten bewust aan een geloofwaardige identiteit door zich op te stellen als constructieve, representatieve en goed geïnformeerde gesprekspartners.

6. Plakkende verhalen: gesprekken, verbinders en *windows of opportunity*

Op basis van de bevindingen in de casestudies concludeerden we dat agenda's voor ruimtelijke planning subtiel veranderden via een geleidelijk proces waarin ambities werden vertaald in elastische verhalen die aansloten bij bestaande beleidsverhalen en gebeurtenissen die belangrijk waren in de ogen van overheden. We gebruikten hiervoor de term *plakkende verhalen* (*sticky stories*), dat wil zeggen verhalen die memorabel zijn en een sterke aantrekkingskracht uitoefenen omdat ze plakken aan de ervaringen en verhalen van luisteraars. Verhalen zijn dus niet plakkend uit zichzelf, maar ze worden plakkend gemaakt door mensen via hun onderlinge gesprekken. Dit omvatte langzame processen van betekenisgeving en het afstemmen van frames, zodat kwesties werden beschouwd als relevant en belangrijk door beoogde medestanders. Initiatiefnemers die zich goed inleefden en goed luisterden naar de verhalen van beoogde medestanders, waren in staat om het eigen verhaal te koppelen aan de perspectieven en ervaringen van beoogde medestanders. De kunst van storytelling ligt dus niet zozeer in het aanprijzen en uitzenden van het verhaal, maar in het empathisch luisteren en het delen en subtiel aanpassen van verhalen.

De inspanningen van burgerinitiatieven en hun medestanders om een aanstekelijk verhaal te vertellen en verhalen aan elkaar te verbinden resulteerde in subtiele stap-voor-stap veranderingen in bestaande beleidsverhalen. Van radicale of ingrijpende verandering was geen sprake in de casestudies. De wijze waarop burgerinitiatieven bijdragen aan verandering was dus heel subtiel. Maar juist die subtiele en kleine veranderingen waren wel cruciaal in het begrijpen van grotere effecten.

De vergelijking van de casestudies wijst op drie met elkaar samenhangende factoren die conditioneren hoe verhalen plakkend worden of van het toneel verdwijnen:

Focusing events en windows of opportunity

Verhalen werden plakkend wanneer deze werden verbonden met politieke en maatschappelijke gebeurtenissen die de speciale aandacht trokken van mogelijke medestanders. Dergelijke *focusing events* werden verpakt als *windows of opportunity* in het verhaal. In afwachting van betekenisvolle gebeurtenissen en gunstige momenten werd continu gewerkt aan het warm maken van het beleidssysteem voor nieuwe ideeën en verhalen door het verhaal telkens weer te vertellen en te delen in verschillende contexten. Als het ware werd een emmer gevuld met allerlei conversaties, vertellingen, en gebeurtenissen waarbij het verhaal steeds meer omarmd werd, totdat een bepaalde gebeurtenis de emmer deed overlopen en er sprake was van een *tipping point*. Dat is het moment waarop het verhaal werd aanvaard als een relevant en belangrijk verhaal en daarmee een prominente plek kon krijgen op de beleidsagenda. Dit betekende ook dat zelfs een kleine gebeurtenis, zoals een toevallige ontmoeting, de

emmer kon doen overlopen. Het signaleren van betekenisvolle gebeurtenissen, en het langzame proces van het opwarmen van het beleidssysteem voor een alternatief verhaal, vergde veel geduld, volharding en oplettendheid van initiatiefnemers.

Gesprekken als het medium van storytelling

Burgerinitiatieven die zich mengden in allerlei formele en informele gesprekken, overal en altijd, vergrootten hun kans om te leren over relevante verhalen en gebeurtenissen en daarmee de kans om hun eigen verhalen daarmee te verbinden. Informele settingen die gelegenheid boden voor een open verkenning van diverse perspectieven, stimuleerden participanten om zich in te leven en om te luisteren naar elkaar. Gunstige gespreksituaties waren in de eerste plaats settingen met ruimte voor open en informele verkenning van diverse opties en voor creativiteit. Ten tweede waren informele gesprekken tussen besluitvormers (lokale en regionale bestuurders) essentieel om voldoende politieke en financiële steun te bewerkstelligen.

Verbinders

Het handelen van sommige mensen was op bepaalde momenten cruciaal in de verspreiding en het op elkaar aansluiten van verhalen. We noemden deze mensen *connectors*, oftewel *verbinders*. Dit zijn mensen die via gesprekken verbindingen tot stand brengen tussen individuen, verschillende groepen en subnetwerken, ambities, verhalen, middelen en gebeurtenissen. Op de volgende manieren maakten verbinders het mogelijk dat verhalen ontstonden, werden versterkt, zich verspreidden, werden aangepast en op elkaar werden aangesloten: 1) ze hadden sleutelposities waarmee ze in staat waren om relevante sociale netwerken en groepen met elkaar te verbinden; 2) ze werden zelf beschouwd als geloofwaardige verhalenvertellers of ze konden andere mensen mobiliseren die door mogelijke medestanders werden gezien als geloofwaardig; 3) ze hadden het empathische en luisterende vermogen dat essentieel is voor storytelling, en 4) ze waren alert en oplettend ten aanzien van windows of opportunity voor het verbinden van verhalen en mensen.

7. Planning als verbindende storytelling. Conclusies en discussie

Dit hoofdstuk vat de bevindingen samen en presenteert een model waarin de concepten plakkende verhalen (*sticky stories*), gesprekken (*conversations*), betekenisvolle gebeurtenissen (*focusing events*) en verbinders (*connectors*) met elkaar in verband worden gebracht. Het model werpt licht op de dynamische verandering van politieke en planning agenda's door te focussen op de interactieve constructie, verbinding en subtiele aanpassing van verhalen in alledaagse gesprekken door de juiste mensen op het juiste moment.

Wetenschappelijke bijdrage

Het plakkende-verhalen-model helpt verklaren waarom ideeën en innovaties, die opkomen in zelforganiserende netwerken, al dan niet worden opgemerkt en aanvaard. Aldus draagt het model bij aan het debat tussen planners en beleidswetenschappers over het omgaan met complexe veranderprocessen, en daaraan gerelateerd, hoe betekenisvolle verbindingen tussen overheid en samenleving tot stand kunnen komen. Allereerst laat het model zien dat actie in de vorm van storytelling kan leiden tot het produceren, reproduceren en veranderen van structurerende krachten. Handelingsvermogen (*agency*) betreft het betekenisvol verbinden van het eigen verhaal met bestaande denkwijzen. Strategische storytelling omvat dus niet alleen het overbrengen en verkopen van verhalen, maar begint met nauwgezet luisteren, inleven, delen en aaneensluiten. Storytelling waarmee politieke en beleidsaandacht succesvol wordt gemobiliseerd is niet zozeer overtuigend als wel verbindend. Het model voegt de notie toe dat verhalen plakkend worden wanneer nieuwe en bestaande verhalen met elkaar worden verbonden in zogeheten katalytische gesprekken op het juiste moment door de juiste mensen.

De vraag is welke rol planners hebben in katalytische gesprekken, en de mate waarin procesmanagement en bemiddeling ruimte laat of creëert voor spontaniteit en open uitwisseling van informatie en perspectieven. Nader onderzoek zou zich kunnen richten op de condities waarin diversiteit wordt bevorderd of beperkt. Gestart kan worden vanuit de elkaar tegensprekende veronderstellingen dat *consensus-building* een beperking vormt voor diversiteit dan wel juist diversiteit voortbrengt en stimuleert.

Meer in het algemeen hebben we laten zien hoe de concepten gesprekken en storytelling kunnen bijdragen aan het begrijpen van agendaverandering en maatschappelijk-ruimtelijke verandering. Echter, betrekkelijk weinig literatuur over beleidsvorming en planning wordt gewijd aan discursieve perspectieven. Er is dus ruimte om het onderzoek naar ruimtelijke planning praktijken als ‘taalfenomenen’ uit te breiden, gebruik makend van literatuur over discoursanalyse.

Ten tweede wijzen de conclusies van dit proefschrift op de actieve rol van burgerinitiatieven in het bereiken van betekenisvolle verbindingen in beleidsnetwerken op soms onverwachte en onzichtbare manieren. Ze zijn wellicht zelfs beter in staat om zinvolle verbindingen tot stand te brengen dan overheidsactoren met hun zelfreferentiële blik op de sociale werkelijkheid. Dit punt impliceert dat we sociale netwerken niet alleen zouden moeten beschouwen vanuit formele overheidspectieven die de nadruk leggen op beleidsvorming en beleidsuitvoering, maar juist ook vanuit het perspectief van zelforganiserende initiatieven in de samenleving en hoe deze initiatieven aandacht mobiliseren in het bredere netwerk en daarmee in de loop van de tijd dynamische verandering in gang kunnen zetten. Mensen zijn ondernemende individuen, die elkaar continu opzoeken en zich organiseren om doelen te

bereiken. Voortbouwend op studies naar netwerksturing, betogen we dat een netwerkperspectief betekent dat overheden constant alert moeten zijn op wat er gebeurt en aandacht moeten hebben voor informele netwerken. Mensen die zich mengen in planningactiviteiten, zowel namens overheden als maatschappelijke groepen, staan voor de uitdaging om 'het netwerk te netwerken'. We hebben laten zien, gebruikmakend van een holistisch en evolutionair perspectief, dat juist de wisselwerking tussen focusing events, gesprekken en verbinders in het sociale netwerk verklaring biedt voor de manier waarop actoren al dan niet het verschil maken in planning en beleid.

Ten derde kunnen burgerinitiatieven, ook wel aangeduid als samenlevingsinitiatieven of grass-roots initiatieven, de kiem zijn van structurele verandering of zelfs transitie, maar er is nog weinig bekend over de wijze waarop kleinschalige initiatieven evolueren naar maatschappelijk-ruimtelijke transitie. Veel van het werk van transitie en innovatie wetenschappers richt zich op deze vraag, maar focust vooral op drijvende krachten op macroniveau (economie, politiek, natuurrampen, etc.) of op institutionele condities. Wij wijzen op het belang van menselijke interactie op het microniveau en op processen van betekenisgeving om meer gedetailleerde inzichten te krijgen over waarom structurele veranderingen en transitie tot stand komen. We hebben laten zien hoe een opeenstapeling van kleine contextuele veranderingen een groot verschil kan maken. Latente alternatieve verhalen, die aan de oppervlakte weinig betekenis lijken te hebben, kunnen onder bepaalde omstandigheden uitgroeien tot verhalen met een grote aantrekkingskracht, tot plakkende verhalen waar omheen mensen zichzelf organiseren. Gebruikmakend van een holistisch, evolutionair en vergelijkend perspectief, gericht op de sociale constructie van betekenissen, wijst dit onderzoek op het belang van factoren als geduld, timing, toeval creëren, empathie, luisterend vermogen en het uitwisselen van verhalen, in relatie tot de meer structurele krachten op macroniveau.

Naar een verbindende planning praktijk

Het scheppen van ruimte voor zelforganisatie betekent niet dat planning initiatieven zomaar worden losgelaten en worden overgelaten aan de burgermaatschappij. Het impliceert geen planning zonder overheid. De betrokkenheid van professionele planners en overheidsactoren bij het werk en de activiteiten van burgerinitiatieven blijft nodig, niet om controle uit te oefenen, maar om de condities te scheppen waarin burgers gezamenlijk oplossingen kunnen ontwikkelen die bijdragen aan de duurzame ontwikkeling van gebieden en plekken. Het scheppen van condities voor betekenisvolle verbindingen tussen initiatieven van zowel overheid als samenleving kan de sleutel vormen voor een planningpraktijk die kan omgaan met complexiteit en onvoorspelbaarheid. Het kan de sleutel vormen voor een planningpraktijk die ontvankelijk is voor opkomende alternatieve verhalen in de samenleving.

De volgende aanbevelingen worden gegeven voor het verbeteren van de verbindende competenties van planners (overheid en niet-overheid): 1) inleven en luisteren: verbindende storytelling bestaat niet zozeer uit zenden, maar uit nauwgezet luisteren, inleven en delen; 2) gebruiken en scheppen van kansen voor katalytische gesprekken; 3) aanvaarden en omarmen van diversiteit: in het streven naar katalytische gesprekken moeten planners hun neiging onderdrukken om consensus te organiseren en controle uit te oefenen; 4) alert zijn op betekenisvolle gebeurtenissen en omstandigheden: dit vereist goede timing als ook geduld en volharding; en 5) het netwerk netwerken: identificeren en mobiliseren van verbinders.

Planning met een complexiteit perspectief aanvaard de sociale werkelijkheid als onvoorspelbaar, non-lineair, complex en chaotisch en beschouwt dit eerder als een kans dan als een bedreiging. De erkenning van toevallige samenlopen en ongeplande verandering benadrukt het voortdurende belang van ruimtelijke planning. Ruimtelijke planning kan duurzame toekomst van plekken en gebieden faciliteren door gunstige omstandigheden te scheppen voor innovatieve zelforganisatie. Dat kan onder meer door te participeren in het vertellen en doorvertellen van verhalen die ontspringen in de samenleving.

Training and Supervision Plan WASS

Hetty van der Stoep
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)
Completed Training and Supervision Plan



Name of the course	Department/ Institute	Year	ECTS (1=28 hrs)
I. General part			
Information Literacy	WGS	2006	0.6
Project- and Time Management	WGS	2006	1.5
Scientific Writing	CENTA	2006	1.7
PhD Competence Assessment	WGS	2006	0.3
Creating your scientific network	WGS	2006	1
Creatief denken wetenschappelijk verantwoord	NWO (Talent Classes)	2007	0.3
The Art of Writing	Centa	2009	1.7
II. Mansholt-specific part			
Mansholt Introduction course	MGS	2006	1.5
Mansholt Multidisciplinary Seminar	MGS	2008	1
'Conversations that trigger change: Entering landscape development of a forgotten place on local and regional agendas'	6th Interpretive Policy Analysis Conference, Cardiff	2011	1
'Sticky stories. How civic initiatives connect to regional planning agendas'	AESOP, Ankara	2012	1
III. Discipline-specific part			
Research methodology I	MGS	2007	4
Discourse Analysis	Amsterdam Discourse Centre	2007	5
PhD Workshop Aesop, July 2007, Paestum	Aesop	2007	2
Presentation: 'Space in transition. Planning and action in metropolitan landscapes'			
Field Research Methods: Methods and Tools for Qualitative Data Analysis -Module III Atlas Practical Case Study Research	MGS	2008	0.5
Network Analysis	NIG	2008	0.6
Content Analysis	NIG	2008	1.2
Intensive course on 'doing' Interpretative Analysis	NIG	2008	0.6
Organization of seminars for Network Land and Water: 7 November 2007: 'Planning als gesprek. Seminar over de fundamenteen van de ruimtelijke planning'	MGS	2010	3
11 May 2006: 'Gebiedsontwikkeling IJsseldelta: Bypass Kampen'	NLW	2006-2007	1
IV. Teaching and supervising activities			
LUP 30306 Policy Tools	LUP	2007	1
Academic Master Cluster II, Environmental Sciences, May-June 2007	LUP	2007	1
MSc Students	LUP	2007-2009	2
Total			33,5

Image references

Cover page:

Top left: fragment of the lock Stolwijkersluis, photo by Famke Bakker, 2004 (see also: Jutstra, G. Kuijer, F. Bakker. 2004. Cultuurhistorisch landschap in perspectief. Verkenning naar de mogelijkheden voor behoud door ontwikkeling van cultuurhistorie in het landschap van Stolwijkersluis. Rapport Academic Master Cluster, Wageningen Universiteit)

Top right: city silhouette of Gouda, H+N+S landschapsarchitecten, 2001

Bottom left: the hilly landscape of Heuvelland, photo by J. Thomissen, 28-08-2010, Flickr

Bottom right: fragment of newspaper article "Zuid-limburg op weg naar de catwalk" (De Limburger, 26 January 2008, P. Kamps).

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Fig.3.1, fig.4.1, fig.5.1, fig.5.2, by Adrie van 't Veer

Fig.3.2, fig.4.2, fig.7.1, fig.7.2, by Luc Dinnissen (studio ds, communicatie en ontwerp)

About the author

Hetty van der Stoep (1978) studied Spatial Planning and Communication Science at Wageningen University where she wrote a thesis on voluntary rural land readjustment and a thesis on the performance of a multi stakeholder platform in Ayacucho, Peru. At the Land Use Planning Group of Wageningen University she first worked as junior researcher on projects with various topics like the integration of heritage and spatial planning and future perspectives for agriculture. From 2006 to 2010 she worked as a PhD researcher at the same chair group. This included teaching activities and cooperation with Telos and the University of Tilburg in the Transform research project "Vital Coalitions". From 2011 to 2013 she worked as a teacher and postdoc researcher at the department Geography, Planning and Environment (Radboud University Nijmegen). The research concerned innovative governance and finance arrangements for transit oriented development in the urban region Arnhem-Nijmegen (NWO/Nicis project "Urban Regions in the Delta - Delta Oost") and the applicability of urban land readjustment in the Netherlands. She is currently working as study adviser for the bachelor and master programme Landscape Architecture and Planning. Her field of research is the interaction between civic initiatives and formal planning- and decision making processes in the context of regional development.

Abstract

This thesis aims to understand the phenomenon of self-organizing civic initiatives, how they engage in and connect to planning practices aimed at the improvement of the quality of places and why these connections lead to alteration or transformation of governmental planning agendas or not. By providing greater understanding about these processes the thesis aims to contribute to debates about how planners can improve connections with civil society initiatives and how a more responsive and adaptive attitude towards a dynamically changing society can be achieved.

Conclusions were drawn from two in-depth case-studies of civic initiatives in two Dutch regions: 1) initiatives of business entrepreneurs and experts to develop New Markets which support the cultural landscape of the region Heuvelland, and 2) initiatives of citizens for the protection and development of landscape values in the urban-rural fringe Gouda-Krimpenerwaard. Building on agenda-setting and framing theory the analysis focused on how initiatives self-organized and connected to other stakeholders and how outcomes of their efforts in terms of their ambitions and government agendas could be understood.

The research results point to the crucial role of storytelling and the day-to-day interactions in which stories emerge and become 'sticky'. Sticky stories are strong 'attractors' that mobilize attention and support. The stickiness of a story was enhanced through discursive processes in which the story was connected to the self-referential frames of targeted supporters. Thus, sticky stories could not emerge without empathic listening, timing and patience. Three interplaying conditions were critical in the process of a story becoming sticky or fading away: 1) formal and informal 'catalytic' conversations as the medium of storytelling; 2) storytelling by people who perform as connectors and enable the travelling of stories through a wider network, and 3) signalling and incorporating focusing events into evolving stories in ways considered meaningful and relevant by targeted supporters. This results in a model that offers a way to understand dynamical change of policy and planning agendas by focusing on the interactive construction, connection, and subtle alteration of stories in day-to-day conversations, by the right people, at the right moments.

Colophon

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