Knowledge co-production in protective spaces

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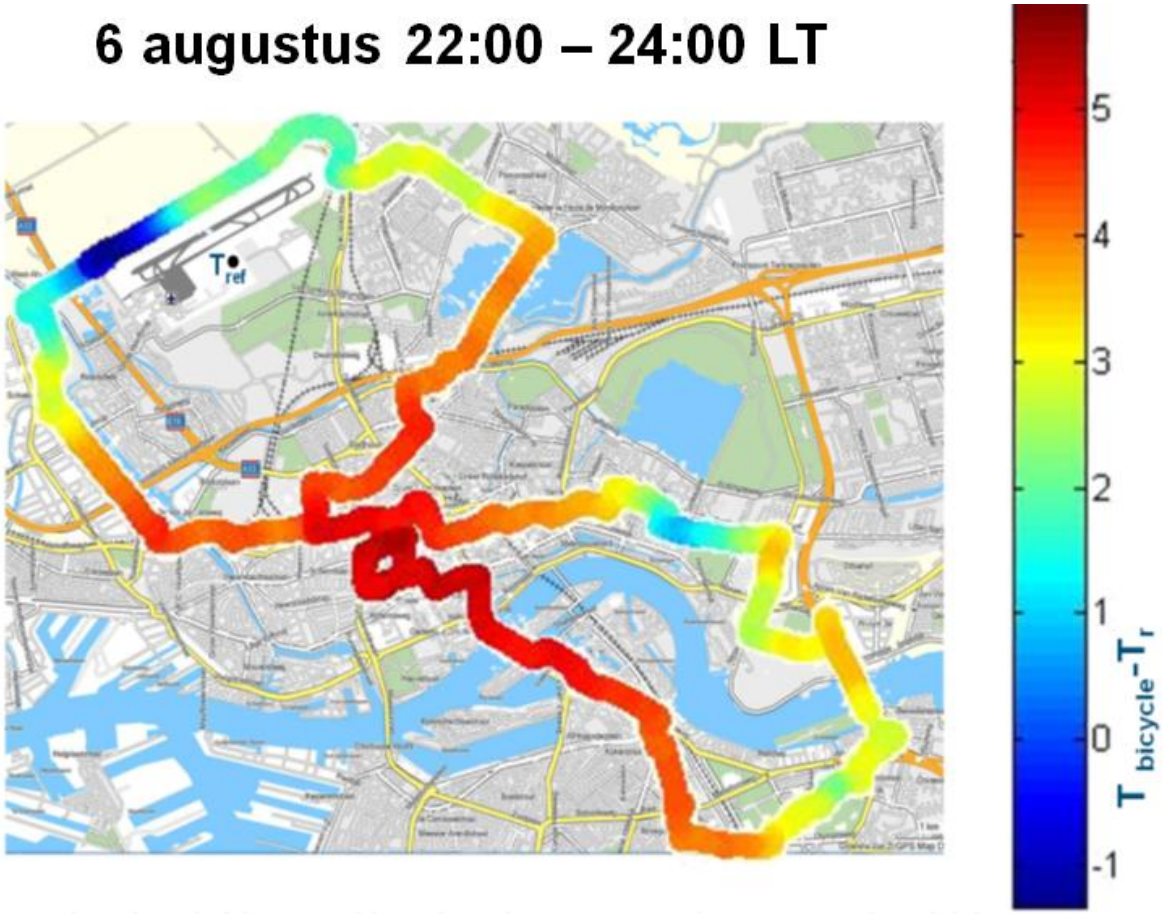
Case: urban heat



Urban heat island?

Health impact?

Innovative measures?

Heusinkveld et al. (2011)

Out of their comfort zone…

- Scientific knowledge production with strong societal interest, contextualised local knowledge base

- Team of (knowledge) producers and users
  - 3 university groups, 3 research institutes, 2 consultancy companies, 2 municipalities, 2 other govern. organizations

- ‘Home organizations’ of team members value knowledge products differently

… with something to win…

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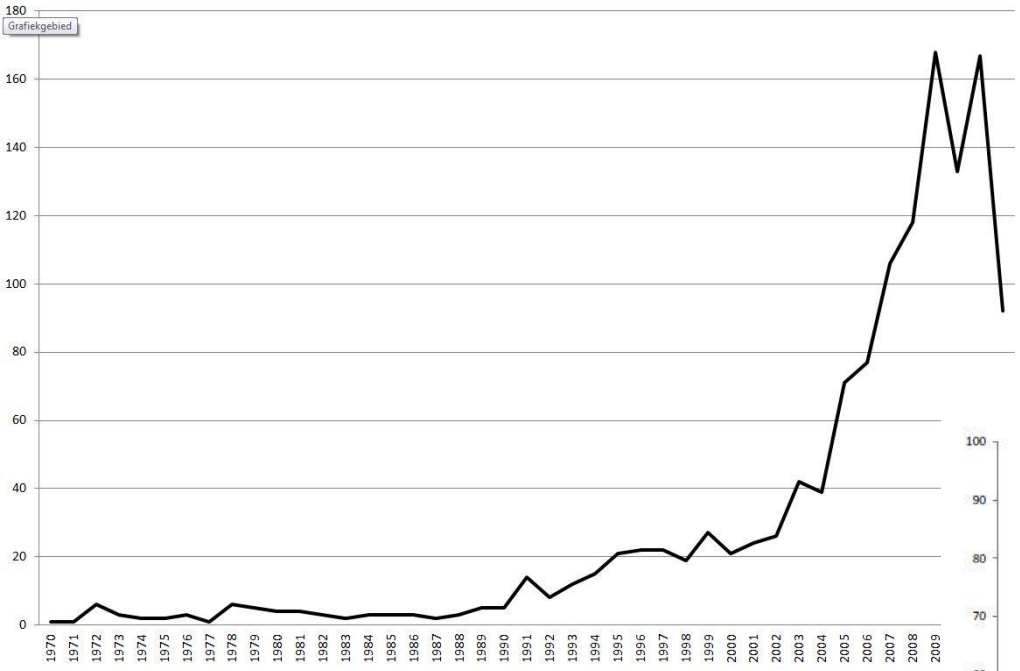
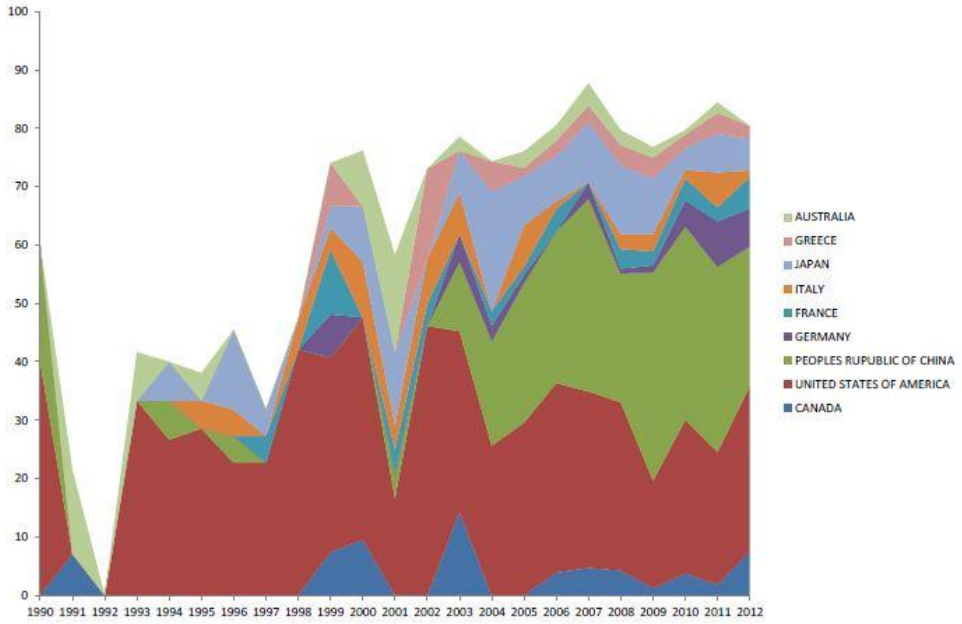




Search in Web of Science

… in a new comforting zone

- Important but vulnerable: protection needed
- Large-scale research programme creates safe haven
- Contributions:
  - Protection has been perceived as a given fact and underconceptualized (Smith and Raven, 2012)
  - Extend niche concept from technological development to knowledge production

Research questions

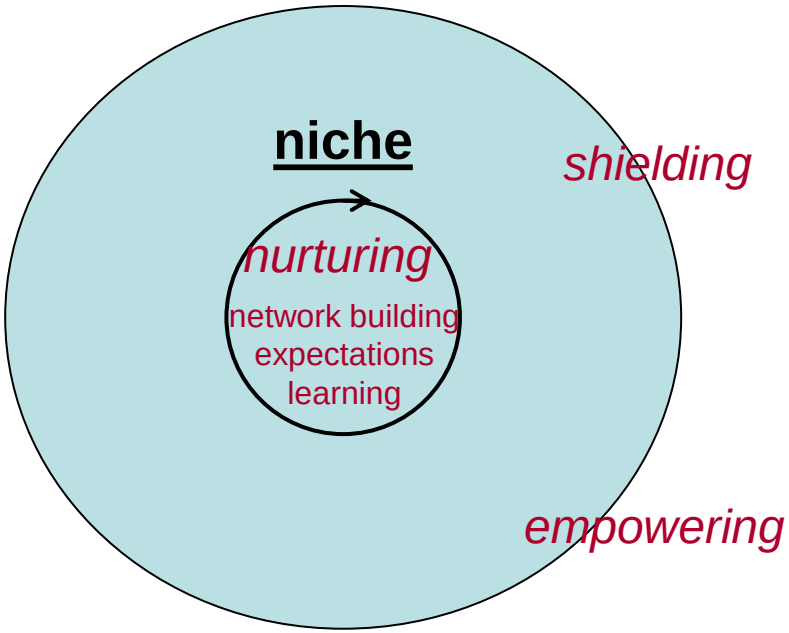
- Questions:
  1. Protection: what is the role of users in creating and maintaining niche boundaries?
  2. Aggregation: how do niche products relate to other user locales, practices and situations?

Methodology

- Operationalization of (sub)concepts
- 17 projects
- In-depth interviews
- Document analysis
- Analysis in progress: in-depth results of 1 case presented here

1. Set-up of niche boundaries?

- Key processes in niche protection (Smith & Raven, 2012)



1. Set-up of niche boundaries?

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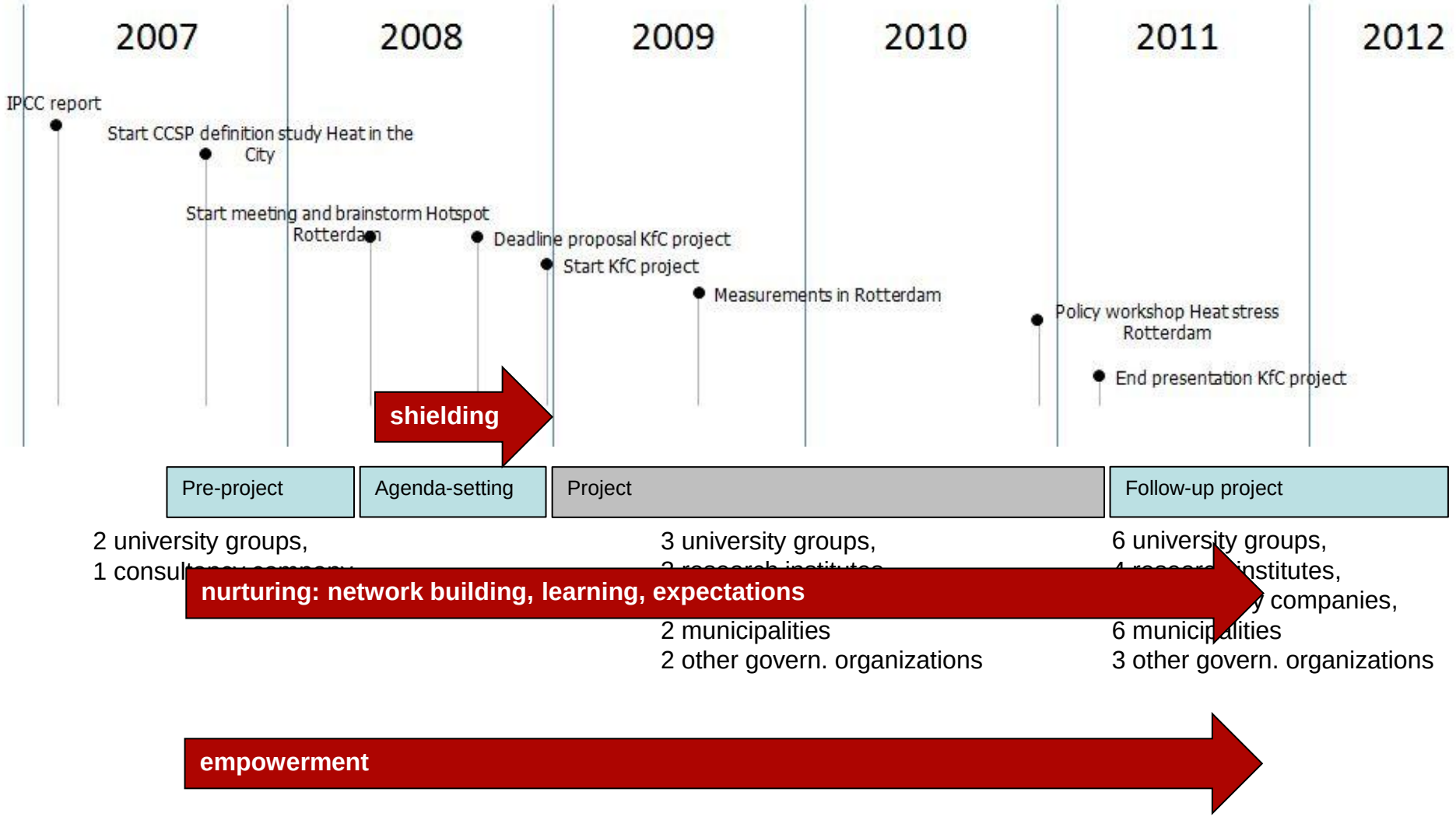
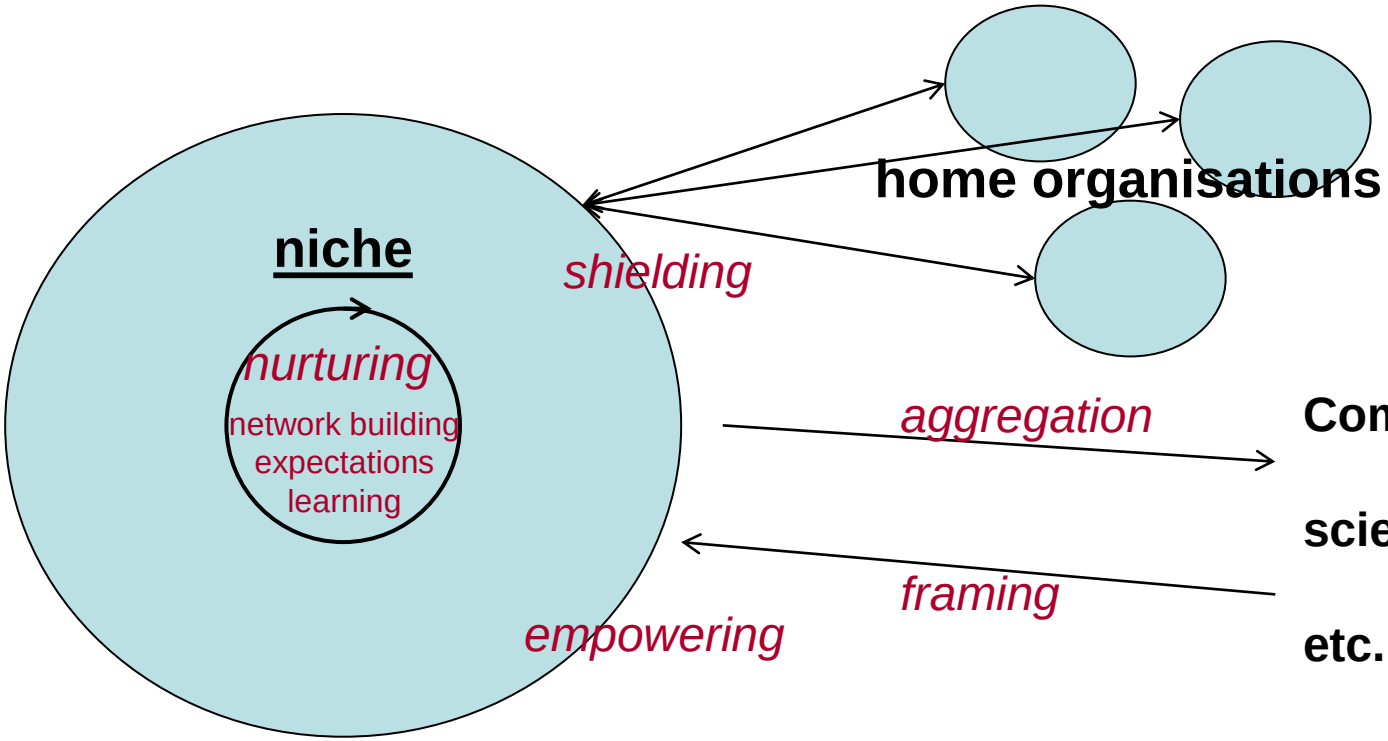


2. Aggregation of niche results



‘Local level’

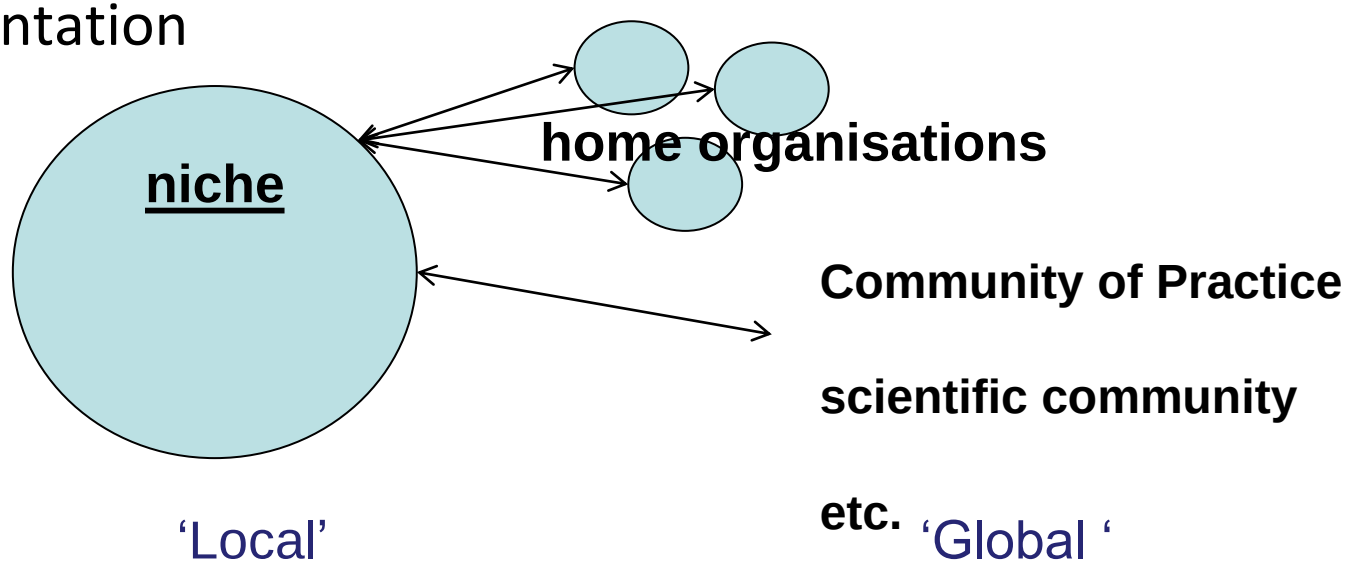
‘Global level’

2. Aggregation of niche results

- Struggle to align with rules of ‘home organizations’; representation
- Link to ‘global’ community but leave room for local interpretations as articulated by users
- Geographical dispersion: choice for skills; knowledge is tacit and ‘unsticky’

Conclusions

- Users co-produce niche boundaries through shielding, nurturing and empowering
- Empowerment: users co-produce narrative (vis-à-vis anti-narratives)
- Protection and aggregation: incentives; transfer; representation



Discussion

- Currently, 15 projects studied in Knowledge for Climate

- Further research: comparison to other projects in which protection is differently organized:
  - other programmes?
  - monodisciplinary projects?
  - other sectors?
  - other kinds of users?

Thank you for your attention!

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