



BONDING BY DOING

THE DYNAMICS OF SELF-ORGANIZING GROUPS OF CITIZENS
TAKING CHARGE OF THEIR LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Rosalie I. van Dam



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This research was conducted under the auspices of
the Graduate School Wageningen School of Social Sciences

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Thesis

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of doctor
at Wageningen University
by the authority of the Rector Magnificus,
Prof. Dr A.P.J. Mol,
in the presence of the
Thesis Committee appointed by the Academic Board
to be defended in public
on Wednesday 14 September 2016
at 11 a.m. in the Aula

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Bonding by doing: The dynamics of self-organizing groups of citizens taking charge of their living environment, 194 pages.

PhD thesis, Wageningen University, Wageningen, NL (2016)
With references, with summary in English

ISBN 978-94-6257-897-5

DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.18174/388005>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the process of this PhD, I received support from many. As there are just too many to mention: Thank you all for inspiring me, helping me, collaborating with me, giving advice, just being there and providing me with the necessary distractions. I feel grateful for being part of your working and private lives.

Still I would like to thank a few persons in particular. First of all, my supervisors Katrien Termeer and André van der Zande. They have had to put up with my sometimes erratic writing schedule and the fact that I gave precedence to other activities from time to time. However, they have always given a lot of support and stimulated me wholeheartedly to finish the job. Thank you for sharing your experience, I have learned a lot from you.

Many thanks should go to my co-authors with whom I collaborated intensely and with great joy. Particularly, thank you Roel for inspiring and encouraging me, also to do this PhD and Irini, for thinking 'with' me and helping me to get the best out of things. Also, great thanks to many other colleagues at Alterra, PAP and other parts of the WUR, for your collaboration in many projects, but also for relaxing and informal chats. And thank you for the opportunities provided by the WUR itself for writing and publishing this PhD.

Moreover, I would like to thank the people involved in the case studies. Without you this thesis would not have been possible and I want to thank you for sharing your time, insights and personal records.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their support and interest during the writing of this thesis and providing the necessary distraction. I owe a lot to my parents and my brother Dimitri, who have always had an unconditional faith in me and supported me in very helpful and practical ways. Also, a special thank you to Marije, who is a dear friend and did a great job designing this PhD. And lastly, I want to thank Leonard, who I feel lucky to be my 'everything' since a great many years and of course Jelte and Silvijn who are my pride and joy.

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1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 SETTING THE SCENE

Natuurlijk Grasweggebied [Natural Area Grasweggebied]

In 2007 a few residents of the Grasweg in the municipality of Hellevoetsluis took the initiative to develop and manage an ecological corridor. The citizens' initiative was triggered by the municipality's plans to develop an ecological corridor, partially financing its construction by building housing. The residents of the Grasweg, for whom this 7 hectare area is almost literally their backyard, got together and came up with a plan for constructing an ecological corridor without building houses. Their plan focussed maximally on water, even providing for water storage. The motivations of the initiators were a combination of self-interest and interest in ecology and wildlife conservation. The initiators were so successful in involving many people and organizations in this project that civil servants were a bit stunned by their accomplishments and professionalism. Besides fund-raising and establishing good public relations, the main strategy was to cooperate with institutional partners. The initiators found that working together with institutions was highly beneficial and educational, and in this case also both necessary and challenging for the parties involved. In just a few years, the area was transformed into an ecological corridor complete with bunkers for bats, fish ponds, breeding islands, sanctuaries, a meadow for sheep, walking paths and viewpoints. Inspired by this experience, one of the main initiators is now a co-initiator of a new citizens' initiative in Hellevoetsluis, a centre for local history and nature called History Land. Covering 9 hectares, History Land consists largely of an educational permaculture garden. Permaculture is a design discipline based on the basic ecological principles at work in nature, and is about growing food with respect for people, animals and the earth. The objective at History Land is to create an edible garden where local residents come to grow their vegetables.

Squatter community Fort Pannerden

Fort Pannerden is located in the municipality of Lingewaard and was built between 1869 and 1872. After a failed restoration and a fatal accident in the late 1960s, the fort was sealed off in the early 1970s for several decades. In 2001 the fort was occupied by a group of 15 squatters. No sooner had they occupied the fort and had their action pronounced legal than the squatters announced in their first press release that they would hold an open house at the fort every first Sunday of the month. Besides making the fort accessible to the public, the squatters also made it fit for habitation. To paint a picture of what they were up against: there was no running water, no electricity, no floors, no windows, no toilets or showers, etc. The squatters had their own ideas about what they wanted the

place to be: a cultural haven, a social centre and a refuge for people looking for a way of life different to what is widely perceived as 'normal'. This attracted many travellers and an estimated 150 people stayed at the fort during the squatters' occupancy. At the end of 2004 Lingewaard municipality increased the pressure on the squatters and on 7 November 2006 the municipality had the squatters forcibly removed from the fort by the army and the Military Police (ME), using heavy equipment such as tanks. It took two days to remove the squatters. Two weeks later the two-man surveillance team was outmanoeuvred and the fort was re-occupied by 80-100 squatters. Due to negative reactions to the excessive use of military force against the squatters from local residents as well as from the media all over the world, the municipality decided not to evict the squatters again, entering into negotiations with them instead. In November 2007 the key of the fort was (symbolically) handed over to the mayor of Lingewaard. Looking back, a self-reinforcing process took place which started with the squatters and their bonding processes with the place and with local people, then evolved as local residents got involved and bonded with the fort themselves, and eventually resulted in the municipality being able to raise the funds to restore the fort and to execute a new plan in which its cultural-historical value has a greater influence.

1.2 CITIZENS TAKING CHARGE OF THEIR LIVING ENVIRONMENT

These are just two examples of groups of people following their ideals and taking action in the public domain and, more specifically, in their living environment. Many other examples can be found in today's society (De Moor, 2013; Wagenaar et al., 2015). A questionnaire was filled in by 811 people, some who entered the Ideal competition run by the Dutch newspaper *Trouw* in 2008 and 2009, and others who applied during the same period to GreenWish, an organization that helps people realise sustainable initiatives. Their answers revealed that people's motives for launching an initiative are strongly related to their vision of a better society (Van Dam and During, 2009). This thesis is based on a study of these citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities. Besides looking in depth at the practice of these groups of people taking action on their immediate living environment, the research focusses on their relational processes which enable these initiatives to develop. More specifically, it examines the internal dynamics within the initiatives and communities, the dynamics between the initiatives or communities and their social, institutional and spatial context, and the implications of these dynamics for governance processes and vice versa.

Fuelled by trends such as globalization which do away with boundaries of time and space, individualization processes which emancipate people, and techno-

logical developments which facilitate information flows and communication, today's society can be characterized as horizontal, informed, emancipated and networked (Castells, 2000, 2004; Cilliers, 1998; Friedman, 1999; Frissen, 2011). This societal context enables citizens to take up new roles and responsibilities. People become active for various reasons, but mostly because they want to. Motives such as ideals, dreams, the wish to do good, ownership or a search for meaning are strong drivers (Van der Heijden et al., 2015). What is more, active citizenship is increasingly encouraged by government (Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013; Boonstra, 2015), a trend triggered by the decline of the welfare state, which some believe has reached its normative, practical and financial limits (Feixa et al., 2009; Yerkes and Van der Veen, 2011; Fung, 2004). New governance modes, sometimes viewed as 'neo-liberal', have entered the arena of Western European and Dutch policymaking, and active citizenship has become a key concept in them (Hajer, 2011; Tonkens, 2006; Sørensen and Triantafyllou, 2009; Torfing and Triantafyllou, 2011).

The discourses around active citizenship are relatively young, and although the concept is drawing more and more research interest, there is still much to explore. Some of the research done so far analyses acts of resistance by citizens (Gaynor, 2011; Lowndes and Pratchett, 2011; Verhoeven, 2009). Another substantial body of research highlights citizens' participation, in which governments and other organizations seek to involve citizens (Bevir et al., 2003; Edelenbos, 2005; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Aarts and Leeuwis, 2010; Duineveld et al., 2010; Spies, 2013). There has also been quite extensive research on the perspective from which the government looks at the public, and whether the citizen is seen as its opponent or as a contributor to its objectives, ideas and policies. But although there is increasing scientific interest in the role of the government in relation to self-organization (Van Meerkerk et al., 2013; Nederhand et al., 2016), what is still lacking is an in-depth examination of the views and practices of the citizens who take the initiatives themselves (Van der Ahrend and Behagel, 2011; Dodge, 2010).

1.3 PERSPECTIVE ON CITIZENS' INITIATIVES AND SELF-ORGANIZING COMMUNITIES

In this thesis, a so-called 'micro perspective' is used, which means the focus is on analysing how citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities operate and act 'on the ground'. In other words: How do groups of people realizing their ideas and objectives about their living environment act on the road 'from ideal to realization'? The perspective taken is in line with a practice-based approach which –

as the term suggests – is about people’s actual activity ‘in practice’ (Knorr-Cetina et al., 2001; Arts et al., 2012). This thesis addresses both citizens’ initiatives and self-organizing communities. Broadly speaking, citizens’ initiative means a group of people taking the initiative to address an issue concerning their living environment – not necessary in the immediate vicinity of their homes but often a place nearby. The self-organizing communities discussed in this thesis are citizens who have organized themselves in communities that see to the governance of their residential area. In these cases, the community consists of all the people living in the residential area. The term ‘citizens’ initiative’, on the other hand, refers only to those people who are actively involved. However, both the citizens’ initiatives and the self-organizing communities addressed in this thesis are groups of people who organize themselves, are active in the public domain, create public values, and organize and manage their social, cultural and green living environment (Salverda and Van Dam, 2008; Van Dam et al., 2010, 2013). They decide what they commit themselves to, how they do this and who to involve. Initiators often take up issues that affect their everyday lives, and the initiatives are usually a combination of self-interest and public interest. These groups of people tend to be diverse, depending partly on the focus. A citizens’ initiative might for example address heritage, education, health care or a combination of any of these. ‘The living environment’ refers to the areas where people live, work or spend a substantial amount of time. So we are talking about these citizens’ local environment, areas they generally feel connected to, so strongly even that they are willing to take charge of them. Both the citizens’ initiatives’ and self-organizing communities are undertakings which manifest themselves spatially, and are green, cultural and social heritage-oriented (e.g. landscape, nature, cultural heritage). I am interested in their actual practices, strategies, activities, perspectives, views and interactions.

Specifically, I focus on citizens’ initiatives and self-organizing communities from a relational perspective. The ‘relational turn’ in social sciences represents a theoretical orientation in which actors and the dynamic processes of change and development engendered by their relations are central units of analysis (Boggs and Rantisi, 2003; Donati, 2010; Fløysand and Jakobsen, 2010; Quick, 2014). The relational turn, and the focus of many scholars on contingency also reflects a shift from the macro level (i.e. institutions and frameworks) to the above-mentioned micro level (i.e. agents and their interrelations) (Boggs and Rantisi, 2003). Although autonomy can be very important to self-organizing communities and citizens’ initiatives, groups of people taking charge of their living environment do not act in isolation. Who do they interact and bond with and why? And how are the interactions related to how they develop and grow? There is interaction between the groups of people taking charge of their living environment and others

around them. This thesis analyses in depth the dynamics of the relations in and surrounding citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities. These include social and institutional relations as well as spatial relations. How do these connections get established and what principles and mechanisms can be identified in the dynamics?

Besides the need to balance the more salient formal government perspective with an awareness of the practices of citizens, a more in-depth understanding of these mostly informal practices is also interesting because much of the work of transmission happens at the boundaries between civil society and the state (Dodge, 2010; Chen, 2009). Citizens taking up new roles and responsibilities cross and also possibly break down existing social structures and formats (Termeer et al., 2013). Because citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities complement the institutional frameworks of the welfare state, sometimes come up with new strategies, concepts, ideas and services that meet current social needs, and may eventually lead to new social and/or societal structures, they can also be viewed as forms of social innovation (Cahil, 2010; Murray et al., 2010; Knudsen et al., 2014).

What with current perceptions of the boundaries of the welfare state and the co-existence of fundamentally different views on the characteristics, organization and demands of today's society, the role of government in our society is under pressure. People are critical of the functioning of representative democracy and no longer see government as the sole actor in the public domain and in the creation of public values (Bourgon, 2009; 2011; Avelino and Wittmayer, 2015; Van der Steen et al., 2014; Salverda et al., 2014). Although it is important to realize that government production of public value and civil production of public value are different entities which operate from a different interpretation of values, logics and mechanisms, in practice they are almost always intertwined. They not only interact but also influence each other. Scientifically, it is interesting to learn how this new way of organizing the creation of public value functions, and what it requires from both governmental organizations and citizens, and their relationship. So in this thesis, I will also take a thorough look at the relations between citizens' initiatives and government institutions, unravelling mechanisms and principles at work in the dynamics of their interaction.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This thesis is about citizens following their ideals and taking charge of their living environment. The concepts of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communi-

ties are coming in for scrutiny in both empirical and normative terms. And this sparked an interest in investigating their actual practice: people's reasons for getting involved, the meaning they assign to place, the activities and the strategies, organization, development and relations they entail. Besides investigating how citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities develop and achieve things, the research concerns the implications for governance processes and the position and approach of citizens and government organizations in these processes.

The practice of groups of citizens taking charge of their living environment is approached here from a relational perspective, focussing on questions around bonding processes and interaction and the dynamics that come with them. My first research question reads:

- 1 *How do the dynamics in and between groups of people taking charge of their living environment and their surroundings manifest themselves?*

This research question is linked to a second research question which focuses on how the practice of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities affects the organization and steering of society and vice versa:

- 2 *How do groups of people taking charge of their living environment affect governance processes and vice versa?*

The above questions are designed to provide insight into the developmental and relational processes involved when groups of citizens take charge of their living environment, and into how these processes affect governance processes related to the living environment and the role of citizens and governmental organizations, and vice versa.

1.5 THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

Practice and strategies of citizens taking charge of their living environment

Practice theorists, such as Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault and Anthony Giddens aim to respect both the efforts of individual actors and the workings of the social (Bourdieu, 1998; Foucault, 1994; Giddens, 1991). In practice theory, actors are not atomistic individuals, but are essentially parts of the social (Whittington, 2006). Moreover, social reality is conceived as constituted by activity. It is about people's actual activity 'in practice', but it also addresses what guides their activ-

ity and behaviour (Arts et al., 2012; Spaargaren, 2011; Shove et al., 2012). It is important that practices are not explained as an aggregation of separate elements, but rather as the entwinements of all these elements in the field of practice (Behagel, 2012). Practice implies that the social can be viewed as exhibiting patterns and regularities that lead to certain logics of practice and that in turn can be described as principles for action (Bourdieu, 1990). Society itself is produced by just this action (Giddens, 1984).

In line with practice theory, citizens' strategies are understood as something people do rather than something people have (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). Furthermore, actors do not act in isolation but draw upon conventional, socially defined modes of acting (Balogun et al., 2007; Wilson and Jarzabkowski, 2004; Whittington, 1993). Seidl (2005) and Luhmann (1995; 2008) presuppose a process of self-transformation in which images of the social context are produced in an internal discourse and where an individual citizen's identity (self-image) and strategies are adapted to the group's shared assumptions about what is important in the relevant social context. Understood in this way, strategies become highly contingent and an action can be seen as a reaction to a previous one, creating path dependency in the course of events (Seidl, 2005; Van Assche et al., 2011). The organizing process in citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities can be understood as one of institutionalizing modes of internal and external cooperation. Here organization is understood as a continual process of becoming in which practices repeatedly reconstruct the organization while at the same time providing the grounds for its modification (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Weick 1979). Citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities often operate in both an informal context (e.g. with fellow residents) and a formal one (e.g. the policy context, institutional actors), therefore engaging in both formal and informal organizational practices (Salverda, 2009; 2012; Van Assche et al., 2012). In this thesis, I focus on the practice of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities and specifically on their actions and relations.

Relational strategies

Theory on relational strategies is relevant to a study of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities as contingent and related to the outside world (Donati, 2010; Van Assche et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2008). Putnam (2000) sees the relational processes as activities concerning social capital, emphasizing the connections with different actors. He identifies two forms: bonding social capital refers to trusting co-operative relations between members of a network with a similar social identity, while bridging social capital refers to connections between those who are unlike each other, but are 'more or less equal in terms of their

status and power'. Szreter and Woolcock (2004) expand on this distinction by adding a third form which covers the interaction between individuals and networks that are unequal in terms of power and influence, such as the relationship between government and citizens. This linking social capital connects individuals and groups in different social strata in a hierarchy where power, social status and wealth are accessed to different degrees by different groups (Cote and Healy, 2001:42).

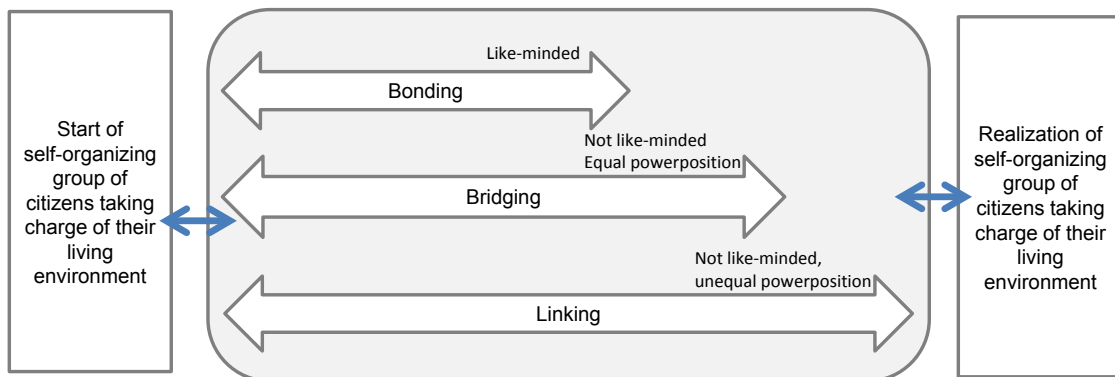


Figure 1: Relational strategies in realization group of people taking charge of their living environment.

Because the citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities who take charge of their living environment manifest themselves spatially, this thesis also examines relationships with place and the social-spatial dynamics involved. In this thesis, conceptions of place are seen as socially constructed, resulting in differing conceptions of what a place is for and how it should be used (Harvey, 1996; Giddens, 1984; Van der Zande and During, 2009). In this I follow Jorgensen and Stedman (2006) in their view that relations to place can be cognitive (beliefs about the relationship between self and place), affective (feelings towards a place) and conative (behaviour in relation to a place).

Governance processes

The concept of governance is understood in many different ways across the various disciplines (Pierre and Peters, 2000; Rhodes, 1997; Kjaer, 2004). Some say it functions as a container concept to allow scholars and practitioners to discuss the increasingly important role of non-state actors, the increasing complexity and changes in the composition of society as a whole and the new norms and techniques with regard to how society should be governed (Behagel, 2012:6).

According to Rhodes (1996: 652-653), governance signifies 'a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed.' The concept of governance suggests that not only the state but also market and civil society actors have prominent roles in the governing of modern societies from local to international levels (Kooiman et al., 2008). The concept of governance is used to analyse the sites at which societal and political processes take place, where multiple actors shape and are shaped by these processes, and where multiple rules, norms and beliefs operate in these interactions (Arts et al., 2012). With this perspective in mind, a focus on dynamic processes of interaction seems more logical than a focus on, for example, a linear model of policymaking. Following Foucault and many governance scholars, then, this thesis takes a dynamic view of forms of governance (Avelino and Rotmans, 2009; Flyvbjerg, Landman, and Schram, 2012; Pellizzoni, 2001; Rose and Miller, 1992). This implies that no central role of the state is assumed. Instead, importance is attributed to a plurality of discourses of, within and beyond the state (Bevir, 2004; Foucault, 1979, 1994; Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). Agency, power and transformative potential is attributed to all kinds of actors and is seen as something that is exercised, not as something one possesses (Foucault, 1998). According to Foucault (1991) 'power is everywhere'. Power is diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them' (Gaventa, 2003:1). Power and knowledge shape each other; power conflicts imply or give rise to conflicting versions of reality and vice versa (Flyvbjerg, 1998). Generating, sharing and using information for example, is also a way of generating, sharing and using power.

Another key term, subpolitics, covers the social action that goes on outside the representative institutions of the political hierarchy and yet is politically significant because of its influence in society (Beck, 1993, 1997; Beck et al., 1994). Taking Beck's ideas further, Holzer and Sørensen (2003) emphasize that these sources of societal influence are largely independent and distinct from the political system. Their social action is seen by these writers as unique and their plurality as something that should be valued. In their view, it is precisely their non-political character that gives 'subpolitical' actors their significance in today's society.

Besides addressing the mechanism of self-transformation (Foucault, 1982; Butler, 1997), this thesis will also discuss the process of subjectification (French: subjectivation) as a performative effect of the dialectical relationship between governmental organizations and citizens' initiatives. Studying subjectification

means examining the ways in which people transform themselves into subjects (Foucault, 1994). The focus of the concept of subjectification is on the process of 'becoming' in the dynamics between citizens and governmental organizations.

The socialization of the organization of society manifests itself in creating public value such as the green living environment and heritage through various 'production models': through the government, the market and the community, and through collaborations between them (Evers and Laville, 2004; Van der Steen et al., 2013; Salverda et al., 2014; Avelino and Wittmayer, 2015). So public value is not only created by the government (public policy results), but also through co-production with players from the public, the market and government at work (civic results) (Bourgon, 2009, 2011; ROB, 2012). As a consequence, in this thesis, citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are seen as being active in the public domain, and as creating public values.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research approach

This thesis is about the practices of groups of people realizing their ideas and objectives about their living environment. As the practices, strategies and interactions of citizens' initiatives are not always planned and may evolve in an uncontrolled manner, I did not think a one-dimensional research approach suitable for our purpose and opted for an iterative research approach valued by several interpretive policy researchers (Yanow, 2007; Maxwell 2005; Glynos and Howarth, 2007).

An interpretive approach seeks to understand the way in which people, or groups of people, give meaning to specific events and practices (Yanow, 1999; Yanow and Schwartz-Shea eds., 2006). Interpretivists believe that reality is multiple and relative. It assumes that actors can interpret situations and actions in multiple ways. As such, there is no objective, true data. Moreover, the contextuality of interpretive research implies that meaning cannot be studied in isolation and must always be seen as part of a broader field. Importantly, particularly in this study about people's approaches and activities, this approach views the social as constructed in the intertwinement of action and meaning (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006; Bevir 2010b; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Moreover, this approach values various ways in which meaning arises, including informal and less rational approaches and values. This is particularly appropriate when studying citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities, as informal approaches are an im-

portant part of their practice (Salverda et al., 2009, 2012). The meanings can be articulated in discourses, but can also concern the patterns, principles and mechanisms of a practice.

In consonance with our interpretive research approach, the research in this thesis is conducted using a qualitative method. Qualitative research enables the researcher to explore issues in depth and from the perspectives of different participants (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Tellis, 1997). It gives us a deeper understanding of day-to-day practices, relations and interactions, which is important in this study about the development and dynamics surrounding citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities.

A case study method was used for the research. According to Thomas (2015:11) 'Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods.' Since the case study is conducted in a natural setting with the intention of comprehending the nature of ongoing processes, it allows the researcher to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 1998; Eisenhardt, 1989). A case study is a combination of what Thomas calls a 'practical historical unity', the subject of the case study, and an analytical or theoretical frame that is the object of the case study (Thomas, 2011). As the empirical subject and the analytical object of the case study are intertwined, both the empirical delineation of a case study and the analytical object are decided on and identified in the course of the research. So cases are not pre-established units or categories, they are defined by the researcher by comparing data with theory (Lincoln and Cannella, 2009).

There are various types of case study designs, including descriptive case studies, explanatory case studies, theory testing case studies, theory building case studies, single case or multiple case, diachronic and retrospective case studies (Lijphart, 1971; Eckstein, 1975; George and Bennett, 2005). Interpretive researchers treat a case study 'as part of a broader methodology that emphasises human meaning and reflexivity. These scholars more often engage in single-site research aimed at detailing the lived experiences of persons in that setting' (Yanow et al., 2008:2). Although multiple case studies are studied in this thesis, it is not my primary aim to compare them. I aim at offering the reader valuable insights into groups of people taking charge of their living environment and their motivations, their approaches, their development and their interactions. The emphasis is on analyses that use theory to cast light on practice. As case study research is seen as a methodological principle, rather than a technique, the case studies were refined and further delimited in the processes of data collection and data analy-

sis, taking into account the interplay between the empirics and the theory, and applying principles such as openness and heterogeneity (Cannella and Lincoln, 2007; Behagel, 2012).

Case studies

In the research for this thesis I have opted for heterogeneity in the case study approach. There is variation in the seventeen cases studied, with one case studied in great depth and at various points in time, another seven in moderate depth and nine cases studied at a broader, more illustrative and exploratory level. In a study with multiple cases with groups of people who are active in their living environment as the starting point, the key selection criteria were variation and the interplay between the subject and the object:

- Variation in residents and the way they organized themselves and related to their surroundings (Golfresidence Dronten and Squatter community ADM) which lends them interest in reflecting on the transition in the relationship between citizens and government in new residential arrangements and special spatial environments created by communities of private citizens
- Variation in context and approach to involving others (Collective Farmers of Essen and Aa's; Natural area Grasweg) which lends them interest in terms of the consequences for their strategies;
- Variation in how they 'fit into public policy' (Lingewaard Natural; Border Experience Enschede; Residents' association and action committee Horstermeerpolder) which lends them interest in terms of the interaction between the initiatives and governmental organizations
- Variation in objectives, approach and types of groups, derived from a typology of 45 examples of green urban initiatives (Sustainable Soester quarter; Caetshage City Farm; Emma's Court; Power of Utrecht; Beautiful Wageningen; EcoPeace; As We Speak; Canal Park Leiden; Harderwijk Steiner School Natural Playground) lending them interest in terms of exploring the role of information in groups of people taking charge of their living environment.

Below follow a short description of the cases analysed and an overview of the cases in a map:

		<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Where</i>
1	The Amsterdamse Doe-het-Zelf Maatschappij [The Amsterdam Do-it-yourself Society – ADM]	Squatter community of artists and craftspeople	Living and working at ADM and determining for themselves both the use of space on the site they occupy and the daily activities that take place	Western harbour area Amsterdam
2	The Golfresidentie Dronten [Golfresidentie Dronten]	Private residential estate community	Residents own their individual houses, but also jointly own the entire estate, including the golf course. The residents have formed an Owners' Association (the Vereniging van Eigenaren, or VvE), and have laid down statutes with usage rules, thereby wielding considerable influence over their immediate environment	Dronten
3	Squatter community at Fort Pannerden	A group of squatters	Occupying and living at Fort Pannerden for about 7 years, organized all kinds of activities, including tours, and tried to restore and manage the natural and cultural heritage site	Fort Pannerden Lingewaard
4	Natuurlijk Grasweggebied [Natural Area Grasweg – NAG]	A group of residents of Hellevoetsluis	Taking the initiative to develop and to manage an 7 hectares of ecological corridor	Hellevoetsluis
5	Boermarke Essen en Aa's [Collective Farmers of Essen and Aa's - CFEA]	Residents	Restoring and managing cultural heritage in the surrounding landscape	Wessinghuizen, Hôfte and Veele, three hamlets in the east of province Groningen
6	Lingewaard Natuurlijk [Lingewaard Natural]	Residents of Lingewaard	Organizing activities concerning education, landscape management and nature conservation	Lingewaard
7	Grensbeleving Enschede [Border Experience Enschede]	Some members of Historical society Enschede-Lonneker Foundation	Restoring an old border patrol path so people can re-experience the border	Near city Enschede
8	Bewonersvereniging en actiecomité Horstermeerpolder [Residents' association and action committee Horstermeerpolder]	Residents of Horstermeer	Aiming to represent the interests of the residents of the Horstermeer by developing their own alternative to the policy plans to raise the water level in their polder	Horstermeer

		<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Where</i>
9	Duurzaam Soesterkwartier [Sustainable Soester Quarter]	Residents of the Soesterkwartier neighbourhood	Activities concerning energy conservation, renewable energy and sustainable construction	Amersfoort
10	Stadsboerderij Caetshage [Caetshage City Farm]	Caetshage Foundation	Organic food production, development of biodiversity, nature and the landscape, and care farm	Culemborg
11	Emma's Hof [Emma's Court]	Residents of the Regentesse neighbourhood	Development and maintenance of city garden and organizing all kinds of activities	The Hague
12	Kracht van Utrecht [Power of Utrecht]	Residents of Utrecht	Making integrated proposals for accessibility, economic development and environmental quality in the city of Utrecht	Utrecht
13	Mooi Wageningen [Beautiful Wageningen]	Residents of Wageningen	Vigilant about threats to nature and the landscape, and undertaking a range of activities related to the local landscape	Wageningen
14	Ecovrede [EcoPeace] also called EVS, or 'ecologisch vernieuwende samenleving' [ecologically innovative society]	EcoVrede Foundation	New concept for ecologically innovative society/connections between people and nature. The aim is to involve people in ecological projects, so that they experience and connect with nature	Arnhem
15	As We Speak	Young residents of Arnhem	Digital platform that highlights innovative and sustainable project and initiatives in the city of Arnhem going on 'as we speak'	Arnhem
16	Singelpark Leiden [Canal Park Leiden]	Friends of Singelpark Foundation	Aiming to transform the banks of the six-kilometre-long canal around Leiden into a continuous park	Leiden
17	Groen Speelplein Vrije School Harderwijk [Harderwijk Steiner School Nature Playground]	Parents of children who attend the Steiner School	Transforming a paved playground into a 'green play and learning landscape' and maintaining the playground	Harderwijk

Table 1: Overview of cases studied.



Figure 2: Geographical overview of cases.

Some of the research in this thesis is part of contract research. Contract research allowed me to do extensive research, as my subject was and still is considered topical and relevant to policy. It also provided me with contextual information, as I was part of several relevant adjacent studies on this subject which are not presented in this thesis.

Data collection

The data collection in this study involved multiple sources and several different methods, the main one being interviews. Interviews are seen as a valuable

source of data because they allow the researcher and respondent to move back and forth in time, to reconstruct the past and to interpret the present (Patton, 1980; Warren, 2002). They are useful in discovering what people think and in putting the varying perceptions into a larger context (Erlandson et al., 1993). Typically, general orienting interviews were conducted first, and then the focus shifted towards interviewing respondents who were involved in the cases themselves in various ways. In total 80 semi-structured interviews were carried out with an average duration of one and a half hours. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. In addition, about 30 more casual conversations took place, often with people I met on or near the area concerned when I spent some time there looking around and observing. In a short conversation, these people were asked casually how they felt about a certain initiative or community, if they had any contact with it, what they knew about it, etc.

Observations are seen as another important source of data in qualitative social science (Erlandson et al., 1993). During the research, I generally choose to be an observer, spending quite some time at several places at different times and in different phases over a longer period. In some cases I was also a participant, joining in festivities for example, or staying at a place for a longer period and joining in regular activities there. In the field, attention was paid to what was happening, watching and listening carefully. As a researcher, I observed the setting (i.e. the physical environment and context), the participants (e.g. their role, what brings them together, who is in, who is out and why), the activities and interaction (e.g. trying to understand what was going on, how people and activities were related and so on), and subtle factors (e.g. informal or unplanned activities/interaction, and non-verbal communication) (Merriam, 1988). Also, several network meetings were held in which interaction took place with respondents and other initiators of citizens' initiatives, and results were discussed. Finally, an analysis was made of secondary material such as scientific documents, policy reports, websites, local media coverage, radio and TV documentaries, and social media such as youtube, facebook and twitter.

In short, in this study there was openness and heterogeneity in collecting data. The data was collected by means of a combination of interviews, casual conversations, participatory observation, non-participatory observation and learning network meetings, as well as an analysis of secondary material.

Data analysis

During this study the collection and analysis of the data obtained have gone hand in hand as themes emerged (Erlandson et al., 1993). So the analysis of qualitative

data can be seen as an ongoing process, something that develops and progresses. It started out with a general interest in the development of groups of people taking charge of their living environment. Based on this interest, I started out with a conceptual framework, comprising sensitising concepts. This helped me to signal important issues and themes and to make sense of the empirical data. Then I sought additional theory so as to understand and address what I was observing better. This is what is called an iterative process (Whiteley and Whiteley, 2006). The process stopped when a convincing and empirically grounded logic of arguments could be constructed which was intelligible not only to us, but also to others (e.g. actors in the field, peers) without the need for full closure (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2011).

Broadly speaking, a few phases can be distinguished in this research. The first phase of data analysis started out with a general interest in the organization and development of groups of people taking charge of their living environment and in the spatial aspect of a specific type of self-organizing community and citizens' initiative, namely the type concerned with a certain place. That led to the observation that these groups develop themselves by forging connections with others. In view of this prominence of relationships in the groups' development, I gave added emphasis to the relational perspective in the second phase. I looked in greater depth at the principles and mechanisms at work in the dynamics – meaning the relationships and interactions – between the groups of people taking charge of their living environment and governmental institutions such as a municipality. This also provided an insight into the roles and positions adopted by both citizens and governmental organizations. The analysis of the dynamics between citizens and governmental organizations showed that the fact that citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are separate entities from governmental organizations is quite decisive in their roles, attitudes, strategies etc. It therefore seemed relevant in the third phase to explore further the logics, values and other kinds of capital of groups of people taking charge of their living environment. More specifically, the research looked into the role of information in citizens' initiatives as it was felt that, like social and human capital, this less studied form of capital actually defines the development and realization of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities and their position.

Several theories emphasize the social construction of meaning and show that people's behaviour is shaped by the social structures they are part of (Herrnstein-Smith, 2005; Latour, 1996; 2004; Barnes and Duncan, 1992). The studies that are presented in this thesis are grounded in these valuable insights into human understanding and human behaviour. Interpretive and discursive techniques were used to show the social construction of 'facts' and their subjective inter-

pretations, and to describe and explain the mechanisms underlying social phenomena (Fischer, 2003; Yanow, 1996; Latour, 2004). In short, the analysis can be characterized by an iterative process, focusing on the micro perspective – people and their practices – and analysing how they develop and the dynamics of their interaction with others.

Implications of the research approach in this thesis

Taking an interpretive approach means distancing oneself from positivist research approaches and their criteria of objectivity, validity, reliability, replicability and generalizability (Yanow, 1999; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2002; Popkewitz, 2004; Weinstein, 2004). As meaning emerges from action and vice versa, too strict a focus on and interpretation of constructivist-inspired criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability should be watched out for as well (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The interpretive approach is concerned with philosophy and the value and quality of the research lies primarily in the logic of the arguments it comes up with: whether that logic can explain the pattern that the researcher distinguishes in the field, based on an open and heterogeneous account of the practice (Bevir, 2010; Lincoln and Cannella, 2004).

These principles of openness and heterogeneity were already briefly mentioned in the previous sections about the selection of case studies, data collection and analysis. Here they are summarized by means of an illustration of how the principles of openness and heterogeneity are applied in the research in this thesis.

An open account means a transparent account of the research process which is open and clear about the choices made, in for example the data collection and analysis. The analysis and interpretations are shown using data in the text. The analyses are as rich and thick as the word limits for papers in journals allows (Warren, 2002). It is left to the reader to judge whether the analyses can be applied to other contexts. Secondly, openness means that methods and cases are not strictly defined beforehand; cases are not pre-established units or categories, they are defined by the researcher by comparing data with theory (Lincoln and Cannella, 2009; Van Bommel, 2008). In this study, taping and transcribing all the interviews and interactions made it possible to check preliminary findings and interpretations against archived raw data. These transcriptions were also used as the basis for the analysis. A third implication of openness is that researchers are open to discussion and suggestions about the logic of their arguments. In these studies this entailed peer review, both internally in the project and supervising teams, and externally through presentations at conferences and the blind peer review process of the journal in which the results are published, taking the sug-

gestions made by reviewers seriously. A further way of seeking dialogue was by engaging with respondents.

In this thesis, a heterogeneous account entails for example making variation a factor in the selection of the cases, and is also ensured by the sheer number and variety of cases. Moreover, the data collection and data analysis are plural too, using multiple sources and theories. The total number of respondents interviewed was ample, but more importantly, the respondents were diverse, representing a range of different perspectives. As in interpretive research, the norm of inclusion does not necessarily refer to the representativeness of samples, but to ensuring that a variety of voices are heard, especially all the relevant ones (Howe, 2004). And although the cases are studied from a variety of perspectives and interpretations, the analysis remains the interpretation of the authors, and it is up to reader to accept or reject those interpretations. In this thesis triangulation was ensured by using a variety of theories and methods to create a thick description, adding complexity, richness and depth to the research (Silverman, 1993; Warren, 2002). The interaction of the multiple sources of data not only enriched them all but also provided a basis for analysis that would have been impossible with only one source (Erlandson et al., 1993).

As mentioned above, a study based on the principles of openness and heterogeneity should generate arguments whose logic is clear. The empirical subject and the analytical object of the case study are intertwined, and both the empirical delineation of a case study and the analytical object it exemplifies or criticizes are identified in the course of the research. This thesis does not try to develop theory or a universal method but aims at offering valuable insights to the reader with regard to people acting on their ideals and implications for governance processes. The hope is that readers can match the insights to their own experience, and will discuss with us and others their perspective on and experience of the development and dynamics of groups of people taking charge of their living environment, and the implications for governance processes.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

This thesis comprises five articles, four of which have been published separately in various journals, all dealing with self-organizing communities and citizens' initiatives in which people take charge of their living environment. The articles present several empirical studies of the development of groups of people taking charge of their living environment, and of the principles and mechanisms in the dynamics between these groups of people and both governmental institu-

tions and various forms of capital. I decided to include as well an article that was previously published as a book chapter. Although less recent, this publication is relevant since it marks the beginning of my exploration of self-organization and its potential, and of the position of citizens in societal and governance processes. Here follows an overview of the chapters of this thesis:

Chapter two describes a study in which the transition of societal organization from a heavy reliance on the state to self-organization is examined by analysing two very different self-organizing communities: The Golfresidence Dronten and the ADM Squatter community.

Chapter three presents an analysis of the social and spatial bonding processes affecting a squatter community who lived at Fort Pannerden in the Netherlands for about seven years. Besides describing the relation between the squatters and the fort, the chapter analyses the influence of the squatters' actions on the development of the fort and on the local community and local governmental organizations in terms of social and spatial bonding processes.

Chapter four analyses the citizens' initiatives Natural Area Grasweg and Collective Farmers of Essen and Aa's in terms of their evolution, their organization and the strategies adopted. Strategies are viewed here as the contingent product of a self-transforming organization, and a way of relating its internal process to the outside world. The chapter analyses the ability of citizens' initiatives to change and take a wide range of forms.

Chapter five focusses on the mutually activated process of subjectification in citizens' initiatives. Analysing the citizens' initiatives Lingewaard Natural, Border Experience Enschede and Residents' association and action committee Horstermeerpolder, it is argued that the discourses produced by governmental organizations on what it entails to be an active citizen have a performative effect on citizens' initiatives, which adapt themselves, anticipate what is expected of them and act strategically towards these discourses.

Chapter six presents an exploratory study of the citizens' initiatives Sustainable Soester Quarter, Caetshage City Farm, Emma's Court, Power of Utrecht, Beautiful Wageningen, EcoPeace, As We Speak, Canal Park Leiden and Harderwijk Steiner School Nature Playground, which shows how the participatory society and information society come together at community level. From a relational and contingent perspective on how citizens' initiatives operate and develop, we look into the role of various forms of capital, including informational capital, in their interactions with other people, organizations and institutions.

Finally, chapter seven concludes the thesis by discussing its findings and research questions, revisiting the methods and theory, and reflecting on future research and practice.



2

TRANSITION STARTS WITH PEOPLE

Self-organizing communities ADM and
Golf Residence Dronten

ABSTRACT

In this chapter we explore the transition of societal organization from heavy reliance on the state towards self-organization by citizens (in communities). We explore how this transition manifests itself by analyzing two cases of self-organizing communities in the Netherlands. The case studies of the ADM squatter community in Amsterdam and Golf Residence in Dronten show how these communities of self-organizing citizens created their own residential arrangements and took the initiative in developing a unique spatial environment. By looking closely at these two forms of self-organizing communities, we can enhance our knowledge about transitions and public management.

Published as: van Dam, R.I.; Eshuis, J. and M.N.C. Aarts (2009) Transition starts with people: Self-organising communities ADM and Golf Residence Dronten. In: Poppe, K.J., Termeer, K. and M. Slingerland (Eds.) Transitions towards sustainable agriculture, food chains and peri-urban areas. Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publishers, 81-93.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Self-organizing communities in the Netherlands

The ‘Amsterdamse Doe-het-zelf Maatschappij’ [Amsterdam Do-it-yourself Company], is located in the western dock area of Amsterdam Harbour. The ADM property, which used to be a large dry dock, was occupied by squatters in 1997. Since then, the ADM has grown to be a vibrant community of people who live an alternative lifestyle and organize their own residential arrangements. The resident population is about 100 – with about 60 of them living in trailers and houseboats moored at the site. The rest live and work in the old offices. As a self-organizing community, the ADM has created a unique residential environment and built up a reputation for art, craftsmanship and cultural activities. It is an example of a community of people organizing their own social and spatial environment, relying less on governmental activities.

At a more rural site in the Netherlands, another self-organizing community can be found: the privately managed residential development called ‘Golf Residence Dronten’. This community is located at the southern edge of the municipality of Dronten. The Golf Residence consists of 360 detached villas, 90 apartments and a golf course on 86 acres. Together, the 450 households own and take care of the area, including things such as infrastructure, common grounds and even the streetlights (which are normally maintained by the local council). Through self-organization, the community has created its own residential environment, characterised by a high quality golf facility in a well groomed park with a lot of greenery. This development concept allows for an unusual and distinctive residential design, and a higher standard of facilities than in normal neighbourhoods.

These two very different examples of self-organizing communities reflect a transition in the relationship between citizens and government. Although the notion of the state has changed from the state being ‘the interventionist’ to the state being ‘one of the interventionists’, transition and transition management are often related to state interventions. The examples of the self-organizing communities mentioned above, show us that changes might also originate from the general public. In this chapter, the transition, related to the changing role and position of government and citizens is discussed by focusing on the phenomenon of self-organizing communities. Preserving a certain amount of autonomy in social and spatial organization, self-organizing communities can be seen as an alternative practice in relation to housing and residential environments. Members of the public are taking responsibility for the direction of their own lives and

residential arrangements, by organizing certain (public) matters for themselves. The examples of ADM and Golf Residence show us how the transition in the relationship between citizens and government manifests itself in new residential arrangements and special spatial environments that are created by communities of private citizens.

Because this chapter addresses a transition in the way people organize themselves socially and spatially – preserving a certain amount of autonomy – we will introduce some theoretical notions concerning changes in the roles played and positions held by government and private citizens. After discussing the changes from government to governance, we add another dimension to the idea of private citizens taking charge of their own destiny, by exploring Becks' sub-politics and Giddens' life politics (section 2.2). Private citizens mostly do not take the initiative alone but organize themselves into groups or communities. This is the reason why theoretical notions about self-organizing communities are discussed. Then we take a closer look at the above mentioned examples of self-organization, the squatter community ADM (section 2.3) and residential community Golf Residence Dronten (section 2.4). We analyse both cases by comparing the organization and forms of self-organization (section 2.5). In the following section (section 2.6), the cases are related to the notion of governmental and social transition. In the last section (section 2.7), the contribution of a self-organization perspective to the knowledge about transitions and public management will be discussed.

2.2 THEORETICAL NOTES ON GOVERNANCE, SELF-ORGANIZATION AND TRANSITIONS

Changes in relations between government and citizens

The term 'government' mostly refers to the formal institutions of the state and their monopoly of legitimate coercive power. The notion of government points to the state's ability to make decisions and to enforce them. Using the term 'governance' signifies 'a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed' (Rhodes, 1996: 652-3). Although often interpreted differently, there is general agreement that governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred. The changes in the position of governmental organizations can be seen as a transition, often referred to as the development from government to governance (Kooiman and Van Vliet, 1993; Rhodes, 1996).

This transition is characterized by the diminishing importance of the national government as the centre of society. The development takes place on roughly two dimensions. On the vertical dimension, one can see changes in power and policy leading both to regional and local government and towards trans-national governments such as the European Union. As for the horizontal dimension, the shift is one from public to private actors, varying from private organizations to individual citizens.

The transition from government to governance manifests itself in a search for ways to involve citizens in policy processes and a search to determine which responsibilities should be public and which responsibilities should be private. This changing relation between government and citizens puts the latter in a position in which they are expected to organize certain (public) matters for themselves. In other words, private citizens are increasingly expected to take responsibility for the direction of their own lives.

In this study, we look at the idea that governance involves societal management which is not only executed by the central government, but also from a variety of other centres. We see self-organizing communities as centres that are initiating and carrying out spatial and social developments and transitions.

Citizens taking charge

In relation to societal dynamics, Beck (1994) mentions the term 'sub-politics' to denote societal activities and developments outside traditional political institutions which are politically relevant because of their societal influence. According to him, politics takes place where we normally do not look for politics: for example at our work where the relationships between companies and their employees are negotiated; in our private lives where the relationships between the sexes are preserved or changed; or at the supermarket where consumers influence food chains and the environment. The essence of sub-politics is that political developments are realized outside traditional political 'centres of power' such as the national parliament. Elaborating on Beck's ideas, Holzer and Sørensen (2003) emphasize the relevance of social initiatives which influence society, while at the same time being largely independent and distinct from the political system. Sub-political initiatives can be deliberate and active strategies meant to influence 'formal politics'. But it can also include initiatives that are not aiming to influence formal politics, but do so unintentionally as a consequence of their societal influence (passive or unintended sub-political strategies). Recognizing this societal influence, formal politics 'have to' deal with or do something in relation to these initiatives. According to Holzer and Sørensen (2003) it

is exactly the non-political character that gives 'sub-political' phenomena their significance.

Giddens (1991) also notices an increasing need among citizens for self-actualization and for control of their own lives. No longer controlled by traditional institutions of church and state, individuals can, and indeed must, plan their lives. There is a shift in the locus of authority from external structures to individual choice. Giddens calls it 'life politics'. In life politics, political and societal goals are combined with lifestyles oriented towards self-actualization. Political involvement of people is increasingly connected to moral issues and social relationships which focus on self-actualization in emancipated social circumstances and to single issues which have relevance to everyday life. Life politics is not a substitute for classic policy, but complementary to it. Whereas the latter emphasizes universal social rights and the realization of social equality, life politics' concentrates on plurality in the light of social rights and focuses on the particular within the universal.

Politics is increasingly found in networks and within groups of actors that have various forms of autonomy in relation to the state. People organize themselves around subjects and events in daily life. These practices can be understood as sub-politics when they influence interests and power relations in society.

Self-organizing communities

Today's society seems to invite people to organize themselves in order to get things done. Self-organization often goes together with community building; citizens organize themselves into communities to assert their rights and to pursue their shared objectives. A community is characterised by the fact that people within the community believe they have something in common (Mercer, 1956; Sennett, 1971; Willmott, 1986). This may be a shared place (i.e. a 'place community'), or a religious belief, sexual orientation or occupation (i.e. an 'interest community') or a sense of attachment to a place, group or a set of ideas (e.g. 'communion') (Crow and Allan, 1995; Lee and Newby, 1983; Willmott, 1986). Within the fields of sociology and anthropology, communities are traditionally perceived as systems of social relations (Tönnies, 1887 [1955]), usually small groups with dependencies and a similar way of life (Delanty, 2003). Communities were perceived as small units characterised by a feeling of 'belonging together' based on mutual experiences, relationships and sharing the same space. Later on, the idea of people within a community having a shared identity became more important (Castells, 2004; Sennett, 1971). The effects of sharing symbols and rituals were also acknowledged (Anderson, 1983; Cohen,

1985) and it was stressed that a shared identity was reflected in and reproduced through shared symbols; it created insiders and outsiders and enhanced feelings of 'us' and 'them'.

The communities discussed in this chapter are spatially based communities: communities in which people are not only bonded by relational factors or mutual interest, but also by the place where they live, work or spend a substantial amount of time (Van Dam et al., 2005). Self-organization is understood to be the way (groups of) people organize and shape their own environment; the areas where they live and/or work.

2.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY¹

We undertook an empirical study of two cases of community-led governance: the ADM community in Amsterdam and the Golf community in Dronten. The empirical study started out as an interdisciplinary study combining sociological questions about community development with public management questions around governance.

The main criterion for the selection of our cases was the presence of self-organizing communities. The cases were communities (in the sociological sense of a group of people with mutual relationships and a shared feeling of a common identity) which had taken on a central role in the governance of their area, with their own (institutional) arrangements as a part of the governance system. A second criterion was that we looked for communities that gave an insight into the variety of possible ways of implementing community-led governance. We used a maximum variance criterion (Flyvbjerg, 2006) to get information on the significance of sociological issues such as lifestyle, type of community and motivations for joining the community, and of governance issues around institutionalization (degree of formalization and the number of rules).

Our data were collected by means of a combination of interviews, participatory observation and non-participatory observation. In addition, we analyzed secondary material such as websites, documentaries and (scientific) documents. We first conducted some general interviews on the subject of self-organizing communities, and then focused on the two communities. In both cases, but especially in the case of the ADM, access was an issue. Fortunately, an artist who assisted the researchers in this project knew somebody who knew somebody at

¹ This section is an addition to the bookchapter published.

the ADM. This enabled us to establish contact and get an opportunity to explain our research at the ADM's assembly, after which we were allowed to proceed. At the Golf community we obtained access via the chairman of the association. He agreed to the research and put a message about it on the intranet. We made a random selection of residents and phoned them to ask for their cooperation.

We used slightly different research methods in the two cases, partly because we deliberately adjusted our strategy to the community, and partly because we had to be pragmatic and take the opportunities that came up for research in both communities. At the ADM we were able to carry out participant observations when one of the researchers was allowed to live there in a trailer for a few days. The Golf community was observed in a non-participatory way over five half-day visits, besides the pre-arranged interviews. At the Golf community we recorded most of the interviews, whereas at the ADM we did not record any, because many of the squatters did not want to be recorded. We interviewed thirteen people at the ADM, partly in semi-structured and partly in unstructured ways. In addition, we had informal chats with about ten others. At the Golf community we conducted ten semi-structured interviews, and we spoke with eight people more informally. The interviews conducted were with both members of the community (most respondents) and people from the broader context of the community, such as municipal council officials, community police and local residents. During data collection, systematic attention was paid to formal and informal rules as well as to the role of governments.

2.4 SQUATTER COMMUNITY ADM IN AMSTERDAM

The ADM property comprises about 45 acres of land located remote from residential areas in the western harbour area of Amsterdam. The terrain is fenced and has a locked gate. It is currently owned by the family of a property developer called Lüske who bought the ground in 1997. The first ADM squatters entered the property in the same year and occupied the land and its main building. Over the years, the inhabitants of the ADM have formed a community that clearly distinguishes itself from the rest of society. The community is a system of social relations which can be quite strong. People experience a shared identity as being part of the ADM community and they have a definite connection to the place.

ADM can be described as a free cultural haven for alternative lifestyles. The inhabitants are mainly artists and artisans (e.g. mechanics, dancers, photographers, actors). Most of them work and live at the ADM. There are several garages

and workshops, where all kinds of objects are created or restored, varying from works of art, to classical busses, boots, decors and props for theatre productions or baking bread. Most ADM people share a strong criticism of our capitalist society. They view themselves as 'dissidents' and 'freebooters'. For many ADM inhabitants the 'establishment' (read: governmental institutions) is something to be avoided as much as possible. Another characteristic of the ADM community is its own micro-economy. As a result of their anti-capitalist views, ADM inhabitants try to live and work in an alternative economy, in which labour and material goods are valued differently than in the mainstream economy 'outside the fence'. People charge different prices for material goods, there are several exchange mechanisms and people have different ideas concerning owning material things. Although everybody has to pay a contribution; the collection of this money is very flexible: people pay when it suits them.

ADM's relationship with the authorities has been difficult, particularly in recent years. The city council is increasingly interested in developing the property according to its own goals and from time to time this leads to tense relations. But in general, state interference is minimal, even counting the recent past. Some of the ADM people experience the relationship with the local government as problematic, others emphasize the challenge and approach the relationship as a game or dance.²

2.5 RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY GOLF RESIDENCE DRONTEN

The Golf Residence Dronten is a privately managed residential development. The integrated golf course and the private ownership and management of the terrain is characteristic for this neighbourhood. The residents have a certain amount of private property around each villa, and the rest is communally owned private land. The total area is surrounded partly by a watercourse and partly by a fence. Golf Residence is a 'residential area with access restricted in such a way that normally public spaces have been privatized' (Blakely and Snyder, 1997). Because a relatively large number of residents have had tertiary education (university), one can classify the neighbourhood as upper middle class.

2 External threats, such as the risk of eviction by the local authorities, brought about a sense of unity for the inhabitants (Elias & Scotson, 1965 [1994]) and resulted in what Castells calls resistance identities (Castells, 2004). Resistance identities are produced by groups of people who feel discriminated against or excluded by oppressors. Resistance identity leads to the formation of groups or communities whose objective is to oppose circumstances they find untenable. Such an identity helps people to survive based on other (sometimes opposite) principles than principles inherent to the dominant institutions in society. With the threat of eviction, the government is seen a mutual enemy and this strengthens the resistance identity of the ADM community.

Although relationships between members are not always very close, Golf Residence can certainly be classed as a community. There are several binding elements that create a community feeling. The residents feel common attachment to the place, and many of them relate to the place in the same way and refer to it as 'our park'. Despite the fact that a large number of residents doesn't play golf, golfing is still considered to be the main symbol for the Golf Residence. An intrinsic feeling of community is stimulated because the inhabitants look after each other to some degree, and they share responsibility for the property. Many inhabitants see themselves as living amongst 'their kind of people' and value this like-mindedness.

A private developer initiated the plan in the early 1990's. As more residents moved in they gradually took over responsibility for the residence. Nowadays the maintenance of the common property within the Residence, including the infrastructure, clubhouse and greenery, is organized through a homeowners association. Membership of the homeowners association is obligatory for all residents. When buying a house in the Residence, one signs a contract with the association and thus agrees to abide by the statutory rules of the association and the private bylaws that apply to the property.

As it is a private residential development where the residents themselves are in charge, the residents have a high degree of freedom to shape both their spatial and organizational environment. But this also involves tasks and obligations, including financial obligations. Not only do they have to pay local taxes but they also have to pay a contribution to the homeowners association. Golf Residence has private bylaws instead of public ones as is the case in ordinary neighbourhoods. This brings with it extra responsibilities. There are extra community tasks to be done and, although taking part in activities at Golf Residence is voluntary, there always seem to be enough people who are willing to take part in the organizing committees. The residents realize that they have to work together and also solve problems together. They therefore recognise that it is important that the mutual relationships are positive and healthy.

2.6 SELF-ORGANIZATION IN THE ADM AND AT GOLF RESIDENCE

In each case, self-organization plays a different role. The differences in both these forms of self-organization have to do with (1) how they were established, (2) the role self-organization has in the inhabitants' motivation, (3) the physical appearance of both communities, (4) the demands the inhabitants place on their residential arrangements and (5) the organizational structure of the communities.

Regarding the establishment of the self-organization, the squatters themselves took initiative to start a self-organizing community at the ADM property. They appropriated the property and they themselves are the driving force behind the ADM in its current form and organization. In policy terms, one would call it a bottom-up initiative. At Golf Residence, the property developer was the driving force in realizing the community. It was the property developer and his interpretation of the future residents' desires concerning the residential arrangements that led to the concept of Golf Residence. It was not a group of people who initiated the Golf Residence. The self-organization started *after* the planning phase when the inhabitants became involved. Nowadays, the inhabitants organize their residential environment themselves. The guidelines for the design and appearance of the property originally came from the architect but, as time went by, they have been taken over or modified by the residents.

For the squatters at the ADM, self-organization is a deliberate choice and this choice is related to their identity and way of life. Self-organization is connected to other important motivations that drive ADM's inhabitants, such as freedom and autonomy. ADM's physical environment and the way ADM inhabitants organize themselves, provides more freedom and autonomy than elsewhere in society. Inhabitants have, literally and figuratively, the space to create their own residential environment. The prevailing critical attitude towards society is an important reason why people want to live at the ADM. Many ADM inhabitants cannot identify with the values present in the rest of society and feel less at home there. The financial side is also important. Life at the ADM is much cheaper than outside. The inhabitants of Golf Residence have other reasons for choosing the Golf Residence, such as quality of life, golfing and its central location in the Netherlands. But social cohesion and safety are also part of the reason for living there. Self-organization is seen as part of the deal, a necessity if one wants a certain type of living environment. For the greater part, self-organization is seen as a more of a means of achieving a certain quality of life than as an end in itself. One could say that self-organization is not a deliberate choice of the inhabitants. At one point, the residents even tried to convince the local town council to take over the maintenance of their park. But, in the main, it must be said that most people are very pleased with how the neighbourhood looks and is organized. For most, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages of living at Golf Residence.

The way each community organizes itself is vastly different. At the ADM they have far less formal rules than elsewhere in society, whereas at Golf Residence they have more formal rules. At Golf Residence, most of the rules concern the management and appearance of the park. There are many committees and the residents value clear guidelines particularly bearing in mind the forming of possible

precedents. The rules and norms manifest themselves in constitutional articles made by the homeowners association, relating to the infrastructure, domestic maintenance issues and about the golf course. These articles are signed by all inhabitants. Each member is allowed to present proposals to alter the constitution at the Annual General Meeting. The organizational structure of the ADM is typified by a minimum of formal rules, certainly in comparison to other communities. Informal rules evolve in informal exchange and can change or differ per person and situation. Individual freedom and the tailor-made rules that take into account the differences between inhabitants and situations is more important than the notion of equality of treatment. The most important rule is to not hinder others. Another important factor in the organization of the ADM is voluntariness: ADM community members fulfil tasks and roles that are related to their own special talents on a voluntary basis. Collectivity is also emphasized: you need to want something as a group. Moreover, neither formal hierarchy nor central leadership exists at the ADM. The organization is based on direct interaction. Some people have more influence than others, often based on how long one has lived on the ADM. The community as a whole determines to some extent who is allowed to live at the ADM and who is not, without a 100% guarantee of control. Unwritten rules, manifested as social norms, are essential for the organization at the ADM.

In relation to the organization of self organizing communities, the size of the community is also an important factor. Evolutionary psychologists Aiello and Dunbar (1993) argue that the maximum size of a well functioning group of people is about 150 members. According to these authors, this has to do with the brain capacity of people. In a group of 150 people, all people can know each other and it is clear who has what position in the group. When it exceeds 150 members, the organization needs formalization to keep things going. The organizational forms represented by the ADM and Golf Residence seem to corroborate this theory: The ADM community never exceeds 150 inhabitants and the organization is quite informal, whereas Golf Residence has about 1500 inhabitants and has a very formal structure.

The physical appearance of both self-organizing communities varies a lot. Looking at the premises itself, ADM inhabitants let nature take its own course, and as a result the former dock area has evolved into a unique ecological environment. The Golf Residence inhabitants on the other hand, have clear directions and committees for maintaining the shared grounds. As a result the communal grounds look very well groomed. When looking at the residential arrangements, the ADM inhabitants' material lifestyle ambitions seem to be considerably less demanding than those of the Golf Residence residents. ADM inhabitants live in trailers, caravans, old boats or in the old offices at the main building. ADM looks

typically messy and nature has been left to take its course in the grounds. Most of the people living at Golf Residence inhabit luxurious villas and the properties look well groomed. Besides differences in residential preferences, the difference in status is an important factor. In the case of ADM, the housing and surroundings look temporary partly because the future is anything but certain. There is no guarantee that the ADM will continue to be tolerated by the authorities. The uncertainty manifests itself in ADM's appearance, but also in a sometimes problematic and ambiguous relationship between different governmental authorities and the ADM. In the next section, we will further address the relations between government and self-organizing communities.

2.7 SELF-ORGANIZATION AS GOVERNMENTAL AND SOCIAL TRANSITION

In this chapter self-organization is seen as a transition in societal organization, particularly in the relationship between private citizen and government. We have explored how this transition manifests itself in two communities that have created their own residential arrangements and have taken the initiative to develop their own spatial environment according to their wishes. By creating these unique residential arrangements, new relations with the state have been formed.

Taking a closer look at this government-citizen relationship in self-organization, it is interesting to analyze how both parties perceive each other. In both case studies it is obvious that neither community is brimming over with enthusiasm about the government. But the reasons seem to differ. In case of Golf Residence, the inhabitants perceive little added value from their local government. The Golf Residence inhabitants pay, for example, a contribution to the homeowners association and taxes to the government, but they can only directly see the effects of their contribution to the homeowners association in the maintenance of their park. The ADM community feels a large degree of mistrust towards their local government. This is because their organization is not 'recognized' but only tolerated by the authorities, and there have been several attempts in the past to have the community dismantled.

Looking at the governmental organizations' perception of the self-organizing communities, one can determine that local authorities didn't stand in the way of the Golf Residence development, in fact, the self-organization might even have been inadvertently stimulated by them. The authorities withdrew from active intervention and in this manner left the door open for the self-organization. The Amsterdam authorities' relationship with the ADM has been ambiguous. On the

one hand, they value the existence of this sub-culture with its creative arts. On the other hand, they dislike the squatting aspect and do not want to allow criminal activities on the ADM property. In this case, they have pursued policy of 'toleration' which offers no security for the long term. 'Toleration' is a policy that can change at a (political) whim. This promotes a wary attitude towards politicians and civil servants and a more open attitude towards others, manifesting itself in an internet manifesto and media attention in times of supposed threat.

As said previously, self organizing communities can be seen as an alternative practice in relation to housing and residential environments. The self-organization initiatives of ADM and Golf Residence are expressions of how groups of people take the lead in determining and maintaining their own residential environment. This can be labeled as a bottom-up transition. Although the ADM and Golf residence are two very different manifestations of modern residential arrangements they have a certain degree of autonomy in common. Both residential arrangements are the result of experimenting with new types of relations between the citizens involved and between these citizens and governmental authorities. The differences in the residential arrangements, both socially and spatially, addresses the differences in citizens' needs concerning residential arrangements in society in general. There is a need for the creation of more diverse forms of housing. Because citizens have developed different demands with regard to architecture, spatial design, facilities, etc, a differentiated demand for housing and housing concepts has arisen. Both ADM and the Golf residence reflect this need for variety in housing concepts. These self-organizing communities fit the transition model with regard to residential and housing concepts and the housing market in general.

2.8 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Beck's theory of 'sub-politics' (Beck et al., 1994) and Giddens' notion of 'life politics' (Giddens, 1991) can be related to the self-organizing communities of ADM and Golf Residence. Furthermore, these theories indicate a new direction for breaking the institutional and societal deadlocks surrounding transitions, one of the biggest issues of our time. Beck propounds a normative perspective: sub-politics are not considered a problem, but instead are seen to be part of the solution. Beck pleads for a 'non-institutional renaissance of the political' (Beck et al., 1994). According to him, traditional politics does react positively to sub-political developments but still attempts to steer or manage. It would be better to value the intangible non-institutional politics and to create openings for these kinds of initiatives.

Looking at our cases of self-organization in relation to public management and transitions, two closing remarks can be made. The first concerns the value of and need for heterogeneity. Today's society is multicultural and pluriform. Furthermore, citizens are taking the initiative in various forms of self-organizing communities. Taking into account the number and variety of these private citizens' initiatives, a change of paradigm is needed. The Dutch policy analyst Van Gunsteren (2006), reveals a vision about democracy and self-government in which diversity, confrontation and indirect management prevails over top-down variations. Based on the principle of 'the wisdom of crowds', meaning that 'under the right circumstances, groups are remarkably intelligent and are often smarter than the smartest people in them' (Surowiecki, 2005), Van Gunsteren defends democracy. He mentions several principles of self-organization and applies them to democracy. Following in the footsteps of Van Gunsteren, Frissen (2007) advocates the value of heterogeneity as well. He sketches a world which is inevitably characterized by differences and he is a fervent proponent of taking this reality seriously in government and politics. According to Frissen, the Dutch preference for equality has had a strong influence on the welfare state which aimed at decreasing or compensating for differences. The Council for Social Development (Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, 2006) also agrees that the time has come for a paradigm change: private responsibility has gained in importance and as a result the government has to modify its own attitude into one which allows and, indeed, embraces differences and heterogeneity. In the previous section, remarks have been made about heterogeneity in relation to residential and housings concepts. In this framework, transition should be seen as a *pluriform change*. Transitions often aim for a common goal, a uniform change. This chapter shows that in practice, situations are varied and as a consequence so should (the contexts of) transition.

A second and final remark concerns the socialization of public management and transition management. Citizens are increasingly taking charge of their own lives and as a result, public management and transition management are no longer a purely governmental matter. Policy making increasingly involves a multitude of different coalitions and arrangements as shown in governance literature (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003; Pierre and Peters, 2000; Van Tatenhove et al., 2000). The notion of public management and transition management would be enhanced by analyzing private initiatives and self-organization as they take place in society. It draws attention as to how and why actors, other than governmental actors, act in relation to governance and as such gives insight in how governance takes form in reality.



3

A SQUATTER COMMUNITY AS THE KEEPER OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Interaction between spatial and social
bonding processes

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, an analysis is made of the social and spatial bonding processes affecting a squatter community who lived at Fort Pannerden in the Netherlands for about seven years. Besides describing the relation between the squatters and the fort, the chapter analyses the influence of the squatters' actions on the development of the fort and on the local community and local governmental organizations, in terms of social and spatial bonding processes. It is shown how a non-institutional actor such as a squatter community was able to bring a national monument which had been disused for several decades back to life, reconnecting a cultural heritage site to society and vice versa.

Published as: van Dam, R.I., Termeer, C.J.A.M. and A.N. van der Zande (2013) A squatter community as the keeper of cultural heritage: Interaction between spatial and social bonding processes. *Heritage and Society*, 6(1), 89-109.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Current thinking about heritage has moved away from a technical focus on the conservation of material towards a perspective which pays attention to the social meanings and benefits of heritage (Lowenthal, 1985, 1998; Ashworth et al., 2007; Zouain, 2003). This perspective is encapsulated in the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (the Faro Convention), which recognizes that objects and places are not, in themselves, what is important about cultural heritage. Such objects or places are important because of the meanings and uses that people attach to them and the values they represent. In this light, heritage is no longer the preserve of experts but a concern for a broader public.

This new approach ties in with a more general trend in the current social and governance context, namely to assign an increasingly important role to individual responsibility and active citizenship (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000; Woods et al., 2007). The shift of emphasis from government to governance implies new roles for citizens in policy processes, and leads to efforts to determine which responsibilities should be public and which should be private. Self-organization by groups of people is widely seen as the key to solving many societal problems, including a lack of social cohesion (Cruickshank, 1999; Tonkens, 2006). This chapter focusses on the phenomenon of citizens taking the initiative to preserve, restore and/or manage heritage.

As a review of the scientific literature from both human geography and rural and urban sociology reveals, two theoretical concepts are particularly relevant to an understanding of active citizenship in the context of cultural heritage: spatial bonding and social bonding. Spatial bonding refers to the idea that the meaning of a place is closely bound up with people's identities and actions and that people's identities and actions are closely bound up with place (Hague and Jenkins, 2005; Jorgensen and Stedman, 2006). Social bonding refers to an individual's relationships with other people and with institutions (Putnam, 2000; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004). Much is known about both these concepts; much less is known about the interaction between them. This is therefore the chief focus of this chapter. We assume that an analysis of the interaction between social and spatial bonding processes can help us to understand the processes involved when citizens take action in relation to a particular place with heritage values.

This chapter reflects on an example of self-organization by a group of squatters who took the initiative to organize their own living environment by restoring and managing heritage, in this case Fort Pannerden. This fort, which has been a na-

tional monument since 1969, fell into disuse after a failed restoration in the early 1970s. Then, in 2001, the fort was occupied by a community of squatters who lived there until 2008. While they lived there, they tried to restore and manage the natural and cultural heritage site. A self-organizing community of this kind that chooses to occupy a heritage site is an interesting case for examining the interplay of social and spatial bonding mechanisms.



Figure 3: Aerial photograph of Fort Pannerden [Source: Heijmans].

In this chapter the following questions will be addressed:

What did the fort mean for the squatters and what did the squatters mean for the fort? How did their actions influence the local community and local governmental organizations in terms of social and spatial bonding processes, and the development of the fort? And how can the interaction between social and spatial bonding processes be described?

In what follows, we first present the main theoretical concepts: a squatter community taking charge of heritage, spatial bonding and social bonding. Then we briefly describe our research methods before presenting our case study in two stages. First we describe the history of the squatter community and Fort Pannerden and then we analyze the process in terms of social and spatial bonding and the interplay between them. We conclude by reflecting on our findings and the answers to our questions which they suggest.

3.2 THEORY

A squatter community taking charge of heritage

Rebellious, anti-capitalist, work-shy youth with dreadlocks – this is the sort of image conjured up in many minds by the word ‘squatters’. But even though squatters themselves will refer to ‘the squatting scene’ as if it were one homogeneous whole, it actually includes several very different kinds of movement. Pruijt (2004) identifies five motives for squatting: (1) Squatting springing from deprivation: these people squat because they are poor and it is the only way to get a roof over their heads. (2) Squatting as an alternative lifestyle: these squatters are driven not so much by need as by a wish to get closer to their ideal way of life. Two key features of this ideal are self-organization and freedom from government interference. (3) Entrepreneurial squatting: these squatters seize the opportunity to start up some sort of enterprise – a restaurant, bakery or party venue, for example – with basic resources and no bureaucracy. (4) Conservationist squatting: this is squatting as a strategy for saving certain buildings, cityscapes or rural landscapes. Finally, there is (5) political squatting, an expression of protest against the dominant social order.

In seeking to understand the spatial tactics of squatters, we can learn from those of homeless people (Valado, 2006). While homeless people use numerous tactics to create their own conceptions of space and combine them in many different ways, they all share the same basic strategy: they constantly strategize to find or make private, safe, functional, comfortable, functional and supportive places for themselves in a landscape designed to exclude them. They transform seemingly barren spaces into meaningful personal spaces. Numerous scholars have emphasized that people who live out of doors continually seek to make home for themselves in public space (Evans, 2001; Rosenthal, 1994). Homeless people create their own landscape, and in doing so, they challenge dominant conceptions about the appropriate use of space (Valado, 2006).

As we are interested in the relation between the squatters and the fort, we should look at the concept of spatial bonding processes more closely.

Spatial bonding processes

Conceptions of space are socially constructed, resulting in differing conceptions of how space is intended and should be used (Cloke et al., 2000; Harvey, 1996; Giddens, 1984). As Valado (2006: 33) puts it: ‘For any given space, there may be a variety of meanings imparted upon it by different groups.’ Moreover, when

talking about heritage, it is important to note that places come to be assigned meanings over time (Basso, 1996) in processes of spatial bonding. Key concepts used in analyzing these processes in people's relationship with places are *place identity*, *place attachment*, and *place dependence*' (Relph, 1976; Buttimer and Seamon, 1980; Jorgensen and Stedman, 2006). These concepts are interpreted in different ways from different perspectives on the relation between space and the human body – phenomenological (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977), sociological (Gustafson, 2001), or psychological (Sixsmith, 1986).

The sense in which they are used in this chapter is as follows: *Place identity* involves 'those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment' (Proshansky, 1978, p. 155). As a cognitive structure, place identity is a substructure of a more global self-identification in the same way as applies to gender identity and role identity (Proshansky et al., 1983). *Place attachment* is described as a positive bond that develops between groups or individuals and their environment (Riley, 1992; Altman & Low, 1992; Williams et al., 1992). It explicitly encompasses emotional content. Attachment 'involves an interplay between affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviors and actions in reference to a place' (Altman & Low, 1992, p. 5). *Place dependence* is defined by Stokols and Shumaker (1981, p. 457) as an 'occupant's perceived strength of association between him- or herself and specific places.' Place dependence concerns how well a setting serves a particular purpose.

There is some variation in the definitions of the same place concepts, but Jorgensen and Stedman (2001, 2002) noted that these concepts can be organized in cognitive, affective and conative responses to spatial settings. In this view, concepts such as place identity (Proshansky et al., 1983), place attachment (Riley, 1992; Altman & Low, 1992) and place dependence (Stokols and Shumaker, 1981) can be viewed, respectively, as primarily cognitive (beliefs about the relationship between self and place), affective (feelings towards the place) and conative/behavioral variables (behavior exclusive to the place) (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2006).

In the account of the spatial bonding processes at Fort Pannerden in this chapter, the emphasis will be on how the squatter community's spatial bonding with Fort Pannerden evolved as the squatters took an increasingly central role in 'running' the fort and influencing the way it was perceived. We shall also look at the variation and evolvment of the spatial bonding processes of the local residents and

the municipality. And as we are also interested in the consequences of the activities of the squatters for social bonding processes, we will first elaborate on what we mean by social bonding processes.

Social bonding processes

Social bonding can be described as individuals' relationships with other people and with institutions. There are various different theories about social bonding. Putnam (2000), for example, speaks about bonding in relation to social capital. He speaks of two main components of the concept: *Bonding* social capital refers to trusting and co-operative relations between members of a network who are similar in terms of social identity, while *bridging* social capital refers to connections between those who are unlike each other yet are 'more or less equal in terms of their status and power'. The concepts of both bonding and bridging relate to the organization of civil society. Szreter and Woolcock (2004) expand on this distinction by adding a third form which covers the interaction between individuals and networks that are unequal in terms of power and influence, such as the relationship between government and citizen. This *linking* social capital connects individuals and groups in different social strata in a hierarchy where power, social status and wealth are accessed by different groups (Cote and Healy, 2001:42). Woolcock (2001) extends this to include the capacity to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community.

We see these social bonding processes at work in the squatters' relationships within their own group (bonding), with other actors such as close neighbors and other local residents (bridging), and with the municipality of Lingewaard (linking). What interests us particularly is the interaction between social and spatial bonding. What did the fort mean for the squatters as a group, how did they evolve as a group and what did the squatters mean for the fort? And how did this influence the local community and local governmental organizations in terms of social and spatial bonding processes, and in terms of the development of the fort?

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, we investigate the interaction between social bonding and spatial bonding processes by analyzing a community of squatters living at and taking care of cultural heritage. An interpretive approach, which seeks to understand the way in which people, or groups of people, give meaning to specific events and practices, is a logical choice of research approach (Yanow 2000; Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Van Bommel, 2008). The study was conducted using a qualitative

method because this enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of day-to-day practices and relationships. We see our case and analysis as a powerful example of an in-depth scale frame study from which we can extrapolate to understand the interrelations between social and spatial bonding processes in other contexts too (see Flyvbjerg 2006).

Information gathering was conducted openly and flexible and, most importantly, over a period of several years. Several visits were paid to the fort during the period when the squatters were there, as well as in the period after the squatters left and when residents of Lingewaard were running tours of the fort on a voluntary basis. During my visits to Fort Pannerden, informal conversations were held with squatters and later with volunteers, both in groups and individually. In-depth interviews (10), using semi-structured interview guides, were held with squatters, local residents and volunteers at Fort Pannerden, an alderman, and a civil servant at the municipality of Lingewaard. We also had contact with several journalists (from newspapers, radio and TV) who covered developments at the fort, mostly during the period when the squatters were living there and were under pressure to leave the fort. And we analyzed secondary material such as websites, all local media coverage during period that squatters lived at the fort, several YouTube videos, three radio documentaries and three TV documentaries.

This research drew on multiple sources through different means and made use of a systematically executed analysis, precise documentation of the analysis and interpretations and triangulation both of information sources (actors, documents, real life practices) and methods (interviews, document analysis, observations) (Yin, 1994; Yanow, 2000; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bevir et al., 2003; Bevir and Rhodes, 2005).

The emphasis in this study is on the perspective and actions of the squatters. Yet the perspectives and actions of surrounding actors are included when relevant for the questions about the interaction between social and spatial bonding processes. Some quotations from interviews are used in the analysis in this chapter to illustrate the meanings and relationships observed as they were expressed by those concerned.

3.4 THE HISTORY OF FORT PANNERDEN AND THE SQUATTER COMMUNITY

Fort Pannerden was designed for General Kraijenhoff in 1819 by Captain J.C. Nibaber as part of the general's plan for the eastern Dutch frontier, defending the

bifurcations of the Rhine. Built between 1869 and 1872, Fort Pannerden is located in the Netherlands, in the municipality of Lingewaard, north east of Nijmegen. More specifically, the fort is located on the tongue of land where the River Rhine splits into the River Waal and the Pannerden canal. It is a polygonal barrier fort designed to be self-sufficient and defensible in all directions. The fort's job was to prevent the enemy from damming the Rhine, causing the Dutch Water Line to dry up and enabling the enemy to invade. Other purposes served by the fort were to control shipping on the Rhine and the Waal and to accommodate troops. Fort Pannerden is a vast structure with 126 underground chambers, walls that reach up to 2.60 meters in width and ceilings in the main building that are at least 80 cm thick, consisting of three layers of bricks. The size of this colossal historical bulwark reflects its strategic importance at the time it was built. A few years after Fort Pannerden was completed, it became apparent that the introduction of a new type of grenade meant the design was already outdated. As a consequence, the Fort was remodeled between 1885 and 1890. (Figure 4, see next page)

The fort was manned during World War I but there was no fighting, since the Dutch remained neutral. After 1920 the fort lost its military function and a sergeant lived with this family near the fort to administer it. At the beginning of World War II, Fort Pannerden could not offer serious resistance to the Germans, although it was the last part of the Netherlands to surrender. After the war the fort was a source of materials before falling into disrepair and becoming a playground for children. A fatal accident in 1968 led to the fort being bricked up. In 1969 Fort Pannerden was given protected status as a national monument. After a failed attempt to renovate the fort in the early 1970's, the municipality left the fort undisturbed for a long time. In 1988 the fort was turned over to the State Forest Service, *Staatsbosbeheer*³ became the owner, after which a few unsuccessful efforts were made to restore the fort.

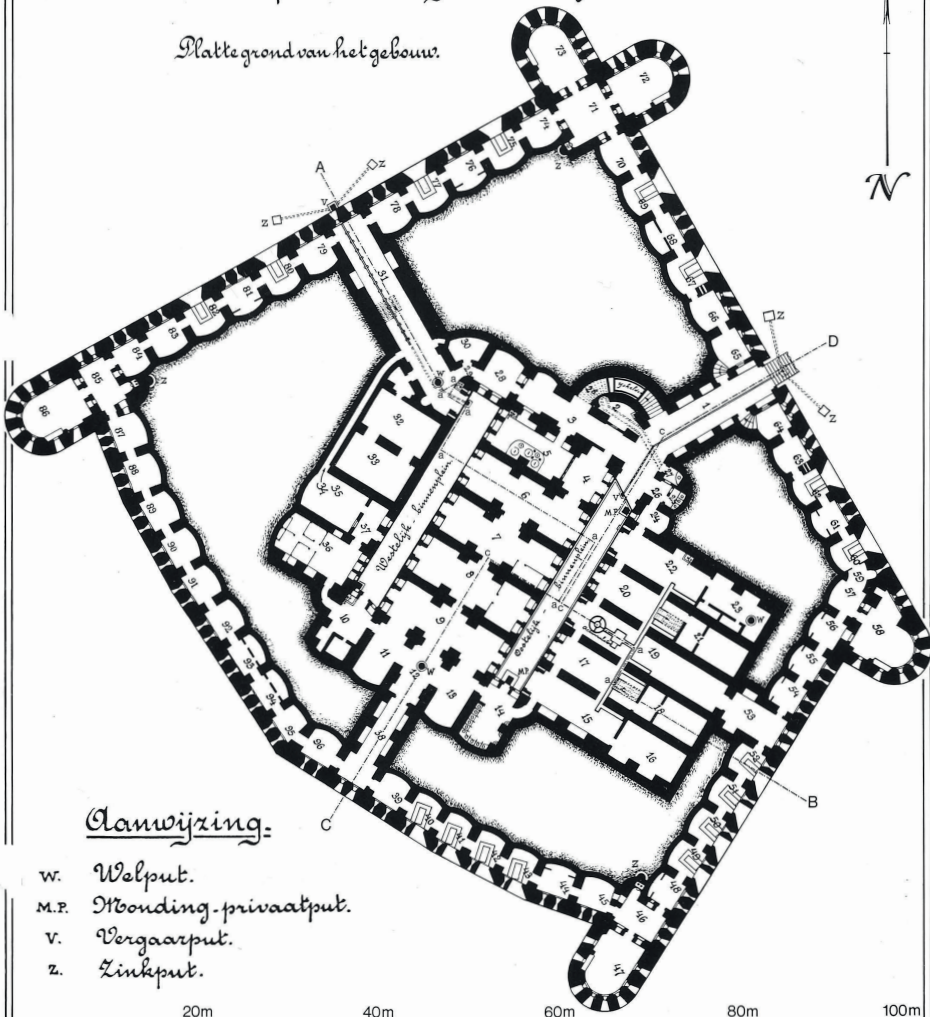
June 2000: Squatting Fort Pannerden

On 12 June 2000, a group of squatters moved into the old fort. They first went to the fort to explore its potential as a venue for a party, but they came to the conclusion that the fort was 'too beautiful to use just to have a party'. They decided to occupy the fort. They spent three months preparing and looked up all the information they could find about the fort in order to have some idea what sort of adventure lay ahead. There were 30 to 40 squatters in the group squat, six of whom lived at the fort from the start.

3 The State Forest Service, *Staatsbosbeheer* is commissioned by the Dutch government to manage a many of the nature reserves in the Netherlands.

Fort op den Hoofddam bij Pannerden.

Plattegrond van het gebouw.



Clanwijzing:

- w. Welput.
- M.P. Bonding-privaatput.
- v. Vergaarput.
- z. Zinkput.

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Hoofdingang | 14. Soldatenprivaat | 22. Manschappen- | 31. Gang |
| 2. Bergplaats | 15. Onderofficiers- | verblijf | 32,33. Buskruit- |
| 3. Gang | verblijf | 23. Magazijn | magazijn |
| 4. Tisanerie | 16. Magazijn | 24. Telegraafkantoer | 34. Gang |
| 5. Keuken | 17. Manschappen- | 25. Onderofficiers- | 35. Munitiemagazijn |
| 6, 7. Ziekenverblijven | verblijf | privaat | 36. Officiersverblijf |
| 8. Onderofficiers- | 18. Projectielen- | 26. Portaal | 37. Portaal |
| verblijf | magazijn | 27. Officiersprivaat | 38. Gang |
| 9. Manschappen- | 19. Wachtlokaal | 28. Commandants- | 39-96. Kazematten en |
| verblijf | 20. Manschappen- | verblijf | verbindingsgangen |
| 10. Bakkerij | verblijf | 29. Portaal | |
| 11,12,13. Manschappen- | 21. Projectielen- | 30. Projectielen- | |
| verblijven | magazijn | magazijn | |

Figure 4: Ground plan of Fort Pannerden [Source: Vrienden van Fort Pannerden].

At the time the fort was squatted, squatting was still legal in the Netherlands. In line with the required procedure, after entering the fort the squatters called the police, who officially established that the building was empty and the squat peaceful. A few factors were important for the decision to allow the squatters to stay at the fort: the fort was not fit for human habitation, so the officials had no confidence in the squatters staying longer than two weeks. Life would just be too hard without floors or windows. Moreover, at the time the municipality staff's attention was taken up by an ongoing merger with two other municipalities.

2001- End of 2004: Life at Fort Pannerden

No sooner had they occupied the fort and had their action pronounced legal than the squatters announced in their first press release that they would hold an 'open house' at the fort every first Sunday of the month. Besides making the fort accessible to the public, the squatters also made it fit for habitation. The squatters had their own ideas about what they wanted the place to be: a cultural haven, a social center, and a refuge for people looking for a way of life different to what is widely perceived in society as 'normal'. Many travelers, an estimated 150, stayed at Fort Pannerden during the squatters' occupancy of the site.

End 2004-2006: Pressure on squatters resulting in temporary eviction

In 2004 Lingewaard municipality increased the pressure on the squatters. The merger of the municipalities was complete and officials now turned their attention to the fort once again. The municipality had drawn up a plan for the fort: they wanted to turn into a hotel. The squatters did not agree with these plans to make the fort a tourist attraction. In the meanwhile, on the basis of historical research, the fort was, after all, added to the New Dutch Waterline in 2005. In 2000 the area around the fort was pronounced part of Natura2000, a decision which was registered in a revision of the municipal zoning plan in 2005. Time passed and the plans were adjusted, some of the money needed for restoration was raised and the municipality wanted the squatters out of the fort. The squatters were sent a letter by the municipality, saying that by living at the fort they were in violation of the zoning plan and of fire safety regulations. On 7 November 2006, the municipality took action to enforce compliance, having the squatters forcibly removed from the fort by the army and the Military Police (ME), using heavy equipment such as tanks.

It took two days to remove the squatters. Two weeks later, on 25 November, the two-man surveillance team was outmaneuvered and the fort was re-occupied by

between 80 and 100 squatters. They formed a blockade of trailers and mobile homes at the public access road and drew up the bridge to avoid a second clearance. Due to negative reactions to the excessive use of military force against the squatters by media from all over the world, as well as by local residents, the municipality decided not to evict the squatters again, and entered into negotiations with them instead.



Figure 5: Re-squatting Fort Pannerden [Source: Marcel van den Bergh].

December 2007-2008: Agreement about Fort Pannerden and current relationships

Mid-December 2006, it was announced that the squatters had signed an agreement with the Fort Pannerden foundation, which was approved by the municipality and Staatsbosbeheer. Under this agreement, the squatters became the official keepers of the fort, at which they were officially no longer allowed to live anymore. Provision was made, however, for the permanent presence of representatives of the squatters, so as to provide for the management of the fort, including maintenance and the conducting of tours. On 11 December 2007, a new use for the fort was announced, which laid more emphasis on its heritage value. The squatters agreed to this plan and promised to leave the fort when restoration started in 2008. On 14 November 2008 the key of the fort was handed over to

the mayor of Lingewaard. Currently the fort is in the second phase of restoration, and in the tradition established by the squatters, volunteers give tours of the fort every first Sunday of the month.



Figure 6: Handing over the key to the mayor of Lingewaard
[Source: Vrienden van Fort Pannerden].

3.5 SPATIAL BONDING PROCESSES

Squatters

As soon as they saw it, the squatters were impressed by the fort, and this influenced their plans and behavior:

'We then secretly climbed inside, onto the roof and we explored the lot. Then we thought, so much space and in such good condition; it has been empty for such a long time, but it is not that damp and dirty. It is simply a beautiful place. I think we can just live here. Then: Stop, no party, because then we will be kicked out. We will simply live there with the prospect of having a wonderful time together, organizing and doing things' (squatter).

The squatters recognized the possibilities the fort offered them. Things were possible at the fort that were not possible elsewhere because of rules and regulations, social pressure or lack of space. The fort was a place of refuge, a temporary alternative to the outside world. Not only because the squatters did not want to get caught up in the 'rat race' in force in the outside world, but also because some of the squatters were temporarily without identity papers, in trouble with judiciary organizations, on the run from stalking ex-boyfriends or experiencing psychological problems. Fort Pannerden also literally offered people the space to develop and expand. It offered a space which was 'different to the rest of society', and was somewhat remote, providing scope for the self-reliance of the squatters. And their preference for recycling found expression in their use of old, abandoned places which no one else had any immediate use for. The fort also influenced people at an individual level. One of the squatters, for example, chose to pursue a degree in nature conservation because of her experience of the natural environment of the fort, which is a protected area.

Besides experiencing plenty of space 'to be, and to be themselves' at an individual level, the squatters experienced a strong sense of community at the fort thanks to two powerful bonding factors: their way of life, characterized by autonomy, self-sufficiency, and difficult and uncomfortable conditions, and the fort's location.

The squatters took the initiative to live at the fort in order, in their own words, 'to preserve the fort'. They were well aware of the monumental status of the fort and used the slogan '*Behoud door bewoning*' [preservation by inhabitation], echoing the Dutch Belvedere policy slogan '*Behoud door ontwikkeling*' [preservation by development]. There are divergent views of their efforts to preserve the Fort. On the one hand, both squatters and outsiders argue that the squatters genuinely cared about the fort and its cultural heritage meaning, while on the other hand both parties also point out that they used the maintenance and restoration of the fort strategically, to legitimize their takeover of the fort.

'Our involvement in monuments means deferred maintenance. That's what we can 'sell' as squatters. Deferred maintenance: we care for it, we maintain it, and we legitimize our squat a bit with this. We repair it or we maintain it and the fact that it is a monument gave us an extra reason: that's why we are here. So it is a means and an ideal and maybe a bit more of a means than an ideal' (squatter).

In practice, the squatters always took good care of the fort and the natural area in which it is located, within the limits of their means. They always bore in mind the original state of the fort. That meant for example that they did not use nails or drill holes in the walls, but used wooden clamps in order to not damage the

fort. They rebuilt the original latrines instead of installing modern toilets, and took traditional nature conservation measures.

A few of the squatters had lived in a monument before. At least one of them had fought for cultural heritage before too:

'That derives a bit from the time when I was living at a farm. That was a monument too. I appealed to a higher court to preserve that place. That was cultural heritage, too' (squatter).

Although they were impressed with the fort at first sight, and once they had decided to occupy it instead of just using it for a party, their emotional bond with the fort only grew stronger. They also had very strong feelings about being removed from 'their' place. They were prepared to fight for their place, hence the re-squatting, resulting in remarks such as 'we are home again'. At the official handing over of the keys, some of the squatters were moved to tears.

'They were shedding tears during the official transfer of the key. Those people genuinely loved the place they had lived at till then. Not so crazy, if you think about the fact that many of them had worked themselves into the ground to make the ruin fit for habitation' (journalist).

The squatters also say that it hurts them to see how the fort is being restored. Out of concern for the fort and its surroundings, one of the squatters sat on an advisory commission for the restoration of the fort and another squatter was involved in the actual restoration. Looking back, the squatters find the period they spent at the fort of great importance in their lives, and feel that the fort was part of their identity. Almost all the squatters refer to their time at the fort as the most special time in their life. They saw it as 'their' place, and some still see it this way. Their connection to the fort was noticeable in their behavior towards the fort during their time there: taking good care of the fort, preserving it from a destiny as a hotel, which they did not feel would do justice to its heritage value.

In short, the squatters' place identity (ideas and beliefs), place attachment (emotions) and place dependence (behavior) towards the fort suggest a strong connection, which only grew stronger as time went by.

Local residents

Many of the local residents played at the fort as children. Later on, the fort was sealed off after a fatal accident and was then inaccessible for a long time, even to residents of the municipality of Lingewaard. Several of the local residents have lived next door to the fort for 25 years but had never been inside it until

the squat. So, thanks to the squatters, many local residents got in touch (or back in touch) with the fort. Hitherto, many of these residents had seen the fort as a blot on the landscape, but through the squatters it came to life for them. Besides guided tours, the squatters conducted many other activities for the local community. Examples were school visits, ghost tours and occasional children's parties.

Nowadays about 35 local residents are actively involved and work as volunteers at the fort, where they conduct tours. Some of them are also members of the Fort Panterden foundation. Far from being a blot on the landscape, for them the fort is now a valuable piece of cultural heritage which should be taken care of and which belongs to Lingewaard.

'That is what I find beautiful now. A lot of the volunteers, 35 volunteers played at the fort as a child and as a community, they have come back to the fort' (civil servant).

The presence of the squatters enabled the local residents to rebuild a connection with the fort. Accessing the fort, seeing how the squatters dealt with the fort, influenced the place identity (ideas and beliefs) and place dependence (behavior, particularly the future behavior) of the local residents and helped to revive their attachment to the place (emotional connection) to the fort.

Lingewaard Municipality

Earlier efforts made by the municipality to restore the fort were a failure. Since then the fort was left undisturbed for a long time. The alderman for spatial development always dreamt of making a tourist attraction of the fort, and tried for several years to raise the funds to restore it. But he was never able to get enough money to restart the restoration. It was not easy to convince other financiers that it was actually a fort of historical value, because from a distance they only saw a 'weird lump in the landscape'. After the squatters took over the fort, both they and the fort came in for a lot of media attention, which made the fort better known to the public and also to institutions able to finance the restoration. After military force was used against the squatters, this attention grew to a crescendo. It was partly this that enabled the municipality to convince institutions of the importance of the fort and raise the money to restore it.

Even before the occupation by the squatters, the Municipality of Lingewaard had tried to restore the fort, mainly for recreational purposes. The squatter period influenced their place identity (ideas and beliefs) and place dependence (behavior): they altered their plans to place more emphasis on the cultural heritage

elements of the fort. There is no knowing, however, whether or not they would have changed their plans without the influence of the squatters.

3.6 SOCIAL BONDING PROCESSES

Squatters

Life at the fort wasn't easy, especially at the start and during the winter months. Nearly every aspect of daily life required action. If the squatters wanted to have a bedroom, they had to build one; if they wanted a toilet, they had to build one; if they wanted a shower, they had to build one; if they wanted warmth and hot water, they had to make a fire, and so on. These hardships strengthened the ties between the squatters forged in the process of making the fort their own place and altering it to meet their needs.

The squatters also shared a lifestyle: one that was characterized by self-reliance, living in the present, not planning, and going along with whatever comes on your path. Squatters generally do not care about new things or material things, preferring re-use and sustainability. These principles were reflected in the Fort Pannerden squatters' attitude to food. They cooked vegetarian food and many squatters engaged in an activity known as 'dumpster-diving' or 'containering', which involves salvaging food past its sell-by date from the big waste bins outside supermarkets, and eating it. The motives are not just to save money but also to make a statement against 'overconsumption' and shameful levels of food wastage.

Although the squatters emphasize that they did not have rules, they certainly had principles and customs, such as not doing anything that would damage the fort, earning your own money and not being on welfare, keeping to a vegetarian diet and eating together, at least most of the time. Moreover, the squatters paid a small sum of money for food and drinks and as a squatter you were allowed to pay whenever you could.

'I always thought that was very funny, because there was some kind of agreement at the fort that there wouldn't be actual rules. The only condition was that no one at the fort would live on welfare. A disability allowance is one thing – that depends on the person – but you weren't supposed to rely on governmental support for food and stuff. Because we would figure that out together, if someone had no job for a while. But secretly you find out after a couple of months that there all kinds of little rules and I found that amusing. If you have time to pick this up slowly, you

get the hang of it very well. At the end I noticed that it took more effort because people were often coming for short-term stays and then you don't have the same time to take in these unwritten rules. That leads to more frequent discussions, I think' (squatter).

The squatters succeeded in realizing many of their plans. As for the fort's function as a refuge and cultural haven, the squatters had many guests from countries including Belgium, Spain, Poland, Germany, America, England, and New Zealand.

'Yes, and those of us who were located there were doing things our own way. Another thing that appealed to people was: 'Hey, it is open, we are allowed to go there. And there's a bed, we may sleep there and it is all open.' And people could come there because we provided that possibility and we enjoyed it. Also many, many foreigners, many travelers came along. In the beginning we also went for those people. Those remarkable crazies who pack up a little pack and go off into the world: those people are allowed to stay with us, they don't have to pay for an expensive hotel, they can stay with us. Those are the weirdoes we want to see. And yes, a lot of those came to the fort' (squatter).

People from Amsterdam came to the fort too, to live life at a slower pace for a while and enjoy the outdoor life and the self-sufficiency that was necessary there. The fort also drew people who were looking for their place in life, who couldn't cope in 'normal' society, or who had psychological problems. Although there were usually a maximum of 9 to 10 people there, for a while, according to squatters who lived at the fort for several years, there were about 150 people in residence for varying lengths of time.

Art students from the German *Fachhochschule* took their *Intensivkurse* at the fort two years in a row, and there were others who used the place for their studies, for theatre, etc.

'Yes, people who passed through camped on the roof. Either artists, or people making a report, or people who came to take a look for a historical study or for photographs, or people using the place for a performance. And there were people meeting each other and starting projects independent of the fort. But somehow they are connected to the place. The fort as a place where people meet and do stuff, you know' (squatter).

When the local government started to put more pressure on the squatters, the cohesion of the group stayed strong or grew even stronger. The squatters made good use of each individual's specific competencies, which made them strong as a group:

'And some people were good at writing letters, others were good at giving simple tours or approaching local residents. All in our own way. Some by nature, like M. She tried to emphasize a lot of things concerning nature, showing that it was important to maintain the fort because of the rare plants and rare animals. We all did it in our own way. That makes it so strong, alone you cannot do that' (squatter).

On the other hand, there were also individuals who had other ideas about how to deal with the situation. In general, the squatters who didn't agree with the chosen path left.

In short, the processes of bonding were strong: the squatters had a strong social bond with each other. They were a group with certain shared customs and a way of life. In many ways they were open, as illustrated by the monthly tours and the many short-term visitors who stayed a while or did some kind of activity at the fort. To this day, the 'core' group of squatters are still friends and meet regularly, depending where they are. They still commemorate the occupation of the fort every year, with a group of squatters meeting up on the day.

Local residents

No sooner had they occupied the fort than the squatters won over many local residents by announcing an 'open house' every first Sunday of the month. Before the fort was squatted, the area around the fort was a place used for dealing drugs and other shady activities which caused the local residents considerable inconvenience. Once the squatters took over the fort, the local residents knew the people living at the fort and were rarely inconvenienced, except by the occasional parties held by the squatters. The squatters and the local residents helped each other: the squatters ran small errands and fixed things at the houses of the local residents. And in return, the residents provided the squatters with food and drinks and the occasional shower.

'They had a lot of sympathy, particularly from the Sterreschans [the neighborhood closest to the fort]. The squatters also developed ties with the people from the village. They occasionally used their shower, for example. Or ran little errands. This took place back and forth. They developed a connection' (civil servant).

Although the local residents did not take a very positive view of squatters in general, in the end they talked about the squatters at the fort as 'their' squatters and saw them as the keepers of the fort. Bridging processes took place between the squatters and the local residents. When the squatters were forcibly evicted from the fort, they were warned by local residents about the action planned for the

following day. Moreover, a manifesto was published in which the local residents stated their support for the squatters and their residence at the fort, and some squatters were provided with accommodation by the local residents after they had been evicted. So a 'bridge' had been created between the squatters and the local residents.

Lingewaard Municipality

The relationship between the squatters and the municipality was always one of distrust. At first the municipality didn't take action when the squatters occupied the fort, because they were too busy in an institutional merging process. When this process was completed, the municipality tried to get rid of the squatters by putting them under increasing pressure in several ways over a long period of time. Finally, heavy equipment and military force was used to chase off the squatters. Two weeks later, the fort was re-occupied by the squatters. Due to the negative response by both global media and local residents to the excessive use of military force against the squatters, the municipality decided not to evict the squatters again, and entered into communication with them instead. This new approach also had something to do with a change of mayor.

Looking back on that period, the municipality sees the squatter period as an interesting and important time in the history of the fort, which should be preserved:

'I think it is good that we, the municipality, respect that period. That period is an important part of the history of the fort. It should not be erased. Nor should it be erased from the fort in its future function. [...] Relics from the period of the squatters such as the mosaic: those should be preserved. And we should respect that. I really do respect that' (civil servant).

The interaction between the squatters and the municipality of Lingewaard was fraught with difficulty from the early stages. Nevertheless, relations improved somewhat towards the end of the period, when the squatters – commissioned by the municipality – 'managed' the fort for some time.

3.7 INTERACTION BETWEEN SPATIAL AND SOCIAL BONDING PROCESSES

In the case of Fort Pannerden, both spatial bonding processes and social bonding processes can be seen at work among the squatters, the local residents and the municipality. Moreover, the spatial bonding processes and the social bonding processes are intertwined: they interact and influence one another.

The squatters experienced the combination of the place and the people as powerful.

'It is, I think, a combination of all sorts of things that made it so strong. The group of people... Although if you put the same group of people in another building, you would get a totally different atmosphere. It's both the building and the location, and the group of people – it is everything. Not just one thing, that is just not possible. But it was the building as well – that brought a lot of possibilities' (squatter).

The interaction between the place and the people manifested itself in simple things such as a djembe jam session at the fort, in which participants experienced the building's acoustics as a group – something they think they will never experience again. Moreover, the squatters invested their own money and time in the restoration of the fort. They were restoring and maintaining heritage as a group, which in return gave them a feeling of belonging both to the fort and to the group. The squatters constantly strategized, just as homeless people do in order to find or make private, safe, functional and supportive places for themselves (Valado, 2006). The squatters are bound by love for a way of life consisting of the combination of the fort and the squatter community. And so we see that the social and spatial bonding processes were inextricably intertwined, and that they reinforced each other.

More than one take is possible on the degree to which the squatters developed affection for the fort specifically as a place of heritage. On the one hand, they admit to making strategic use of the monumental status of the fort to legitimize their living there. On the other hand, the squatters did a lot of research on the fort. They investigated what had happened there and when, and who was involved. They used this information as preparation for the squat, but then continued to do research and to talk to people to gain information. They even started a museum and gave tours during which they taught others about the fort and how life at the fort used to be. Moreover, they urged the municipality to increase the historical cultural elements in their plans for renovation. As a consequence, one could also argue that the squatters did develop a genuine affection for the fort as cultural heritage and not only because it was an interesting and functional place for them. With reference to the categories drawn up by Pruijt (2004), the squatters' motivation was a combination of 'squatting as an alternative living strategy' and 'conservationist squatting'.

It is also significant that the squatters enabled the residents to enter the fort after it had been bricked up for more than 25 years. As a consequence, the squatters and the local residents forged a mutual connection, while the local residents developed and deepened their attachment to the fort. And because of this op-

portunity, some of them now work as volunteers at the fort. The local residents overcame their prejudices against squatters and eventually came to see them as the keepers of the fort. As a consequence, the local residents were aggravated by the attitude of the municipality. In the ensuing conflict, the squatters and the local residents became allies, as most of the residents chose to side with the squatters. This illustrates how linking processes and spatial bonding processes can be intertwined and also reinforce each other.

The period with the squatters was also important for the municipality and the municipality's renewed attention to the fort. In the light of the protest by the squatters and the local residents, the municipality made new plans for the fort with an added emphasis on historical cultural elements and value. And, whereas the municipality had previously been unable to raise the funding to restore the fort due to lack of interest in it, the squat – and the forced removal of the squatters – aroused new levels of interest and concern about the fort. The difficult relations between the municipality and the squatters influenced the spatial bonding processes (beliefs, emotions and behavior) of both actors and the present situation at the fort, which is undergoing restoration. Although it is speculation, some respondents – squatters, local residents and civil servants alike – wonder whether the fort would have been restored as thoroughly as it has been now, if it hadn't been for the squat. They think the squatters were of vital importance in the history of the fort. One reason for this is their role in the mechanism by which the local residents and the municipality came to bond with the fort, resulting in concern for its cultural historical value. A second reason lies in the mechanism of media attention, which was an important factor in successful fundraising for the restoration.

3.8 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Let us return to our research questions with the above-mentioned observations in mind. What did the fort mean for the squatters and what did the squatters mean for the fort? How did their actions influence the local community and local governmental organizations in terms of social and spatial bonding processes, and the development of the fort? And how can the interaction between social and spatial bonding processes be described?

One could say that the squatters were restoring and maintaining heritage as a group, which in turn gave them a feeling of belonging both to the fort and to the group. Moreover, they started a process that was of vital importance to the heritage site itself. There was a self-reinforcing process, driven by the squatter community and characterized by the combination of spatial and social bonding

processes and the interaction between them. This started with the squatters and their bonding processes with the fort, it then evolved into the local residents developing spatial bonding with and involvement in the fort, resulting in the municipality eventually being able to raise the funds to restore the fort and to execute a new plan in which the cultural historical value has a greater influence. With the limited means, the squatters were 'only' able to maintain the fort. The municipality now has the resources to take this a stage further and upgrade the physical state of the fort.

In case this is starting to sound like a fairy tale come true, it should be emphasized that a substantial part of the process described here can be characterized as grim: for the local residents, for the municipality and particularly for the squatter community. The absolute nadir was the harsh removal of the squatters by the army and military police.



Figure 7: Forcibly removal of the squatters from the fort [Source: Marcel van den Bergh].

It should also be pointed out that not all parties are pleased with the current outcome. Although – according to the squatters - the plans with respect to the fort were improved, they regret having to leave the fort. They also take a very different view from that of the municipality of Lingewaard on the restoration and what the fort should be.

We can learn from this case that citizens – in this case a community of squatters – are able to bring a cultural heritage site ‘back to life’ again after it has been forgotten for several decades. They succeeded in reconnecting cultural heritage with society where institutional actors such as the municipality and the Fort Pannerden foundation had failed. In the light of the Faro Convention and the broader heritage agenda, this study shows that the squatters made Fort Pannerden meaningful to society once more, illustrating that heritage is not always best left to the ‘experts’.

For a description of the relation between social and spatial bonding processes around the squatter community at Fort Pannerden, the image of a double helix, two connected DNA-strings twisted around each other, makes a powerful metaphor: The spatial and social bonding processes are inextricably intertwined. Sometimes the social bonding processes come to the fore, and sometimes the spatial bonding processes are more in evidence. Each type of social relation has its own geography, and the geography of a place brings its own social relations with it. As this study illustrates, following both these strands together is more fruitful than considering them as separate processes, as is common practice. Cross fertilization of the concepts of social bonding processes and spatial bonding processes could, therefore, usefully be intensified.



4

STRATEGIES OF CITIZENS' INITIATIVES IN THE NETHERLANDS

Connecting people and institutions

ABSTRACT

Research on active citizenship tends to focus on the government perspective on initiatives from the public. In this chapter we seek to redress the balance by focusing on the practice of citizens' initiatives. Two citizens' initiatives in the Netherlands are analyzed in terms of their evolution, their organization and the strategies adopted. Strategies are viewed here as the contingent product of a self-transforming organization, and a way of relating its internal process to the outside world. There is a mechanism at work in this interaction which enables initiators to connect with others successfully. Such interactions can therefore be seen as bonding processes, fueled by a process of self-transformation. Their ability to adapt and to mobilize people and institutions makes citizens' initiatives plural in their manifestations and challenging for governance and steering.

Published as: van Dam, R.I., R. During and I.E. Salverda (2014) Strategies of citizens' initiatives in the Netherlands: Connecting people and institutions. *Critical Policy Studies*, Routledge, 8(3), 323-339.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the current social and governance context, more and more weight is given to the role of individual responsibility and active citizenship. Many western governments, including the Dutch government, are increasingly eager to stimulate active citizenship (Tonkens and Duyvendak 2006, Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009, Tonkens and Verhoeven 2010, Hajer 2011). The notion of active citizenship comprises on the one hand the established trend toward citizens' participation in which governments and other organizations seek to involve citizens in 'their' work (Bevir et al., 2003; Irvin and Stansbury 2004; Edelenbos 2005). And on the other hand there is a clearly discernible rise in the number of citizens' initiatives, in which assertive citizens proactively go into concerted action in a range of fields within the public domain (Humphrey 2001, Bovaird 2007, Van Assche 2008). Governments encourage this trend toward citizens' initiatives, because it is believed to make society stronger by getting more people working together and putting more power and responsibility into the hands of families, groups, networks, neighborhoods and locally based communities. There are, however, examples of politicians and public administrations finding it difficult to engage with citizens' initiatives adequately. When citizens start putting their ideas and ideals into practice, they organize things in their own way, which may conflict with policy. But most important, the wide variety in citizens' initiatives and their ability to transform make them plural in their manifestations and challenging for adequate governance responses.

Although the subject of citizens' initiatives has come in for a lot of attention in recent years, both in practice and in policy circles, much is still unclear. In research on government–citizen relations, attention tends to be focused on the perspective from which government looks at the public. Consequently, the activities of small and often rather informally organized civil society actors where much of the work of transmission happens around the boundaries between civil society and the state are often overlooked in research (Dodge 2010, Van der Arend and Behagel 2011). Where the activities of civil society actors such as citizens are discussed at all, it is often only in passing (Newman 2001, 2005, Barnes et al., 2007). In this chapter, we focus on the strategies used in citizens' initiatives, addressing the following question: *How can strategies of citizens' initiatives be interpreted in terms of the interactions and relations between the initiative and its context?* Findings on the use of strategies will be interpreted in terms of bonding processes, with the aim of contributing to greater understanding between governmental organizations and citizens' initiatives. The meaning of our research findings for theory and practice of governance will be reflected upon, particularly concerning the plurality of citizens' initiatives and the need for differentiated and de-standardized governance responses.

Two citizens' initiatives in the Netherlands were investigated for this study: Natural Area Grasweg⁴ (NAG), and the Collective Farmers of Essen and Aa's⁵ (CFEA). The residents of NAG took the initiative to develop and to manage an ecological corridor. CFEA aims to involve and activate the residents of three hamlets in restoring and managing cultural heritage in the surrounding landscape.

The following section of this chapter will present the theoretical basis of our study of the bottom-up perspective on citizens' initiatives, outlining the relevant theories on the changing relations between government and citizens, organization and cooperation and bonding processes, as well as practice-based theory on strategies and their transformative implications. Then, in section 4.3 the research methodology will be accounted for and in section 4.4 the practice of the citizens' initiatives will be described. The case descriptions offer an analysis of how the two initiatives have evolved over the course of time, and how the interaction with others influences the identity of the citizens' initiatives and vice versa, something which becomes apparent in the strategies they use. In section 4.5, the empirical results will be linked to the theoretical framework, focusing on strategies, organization and cooperation, bonding processes and the process of self-transformation. Finally, in section 4.6 we will draw our conclusions on the practices and more particularly the strategies of citizens' initiatives, bringing our findings to a reflection on the meaning of our research findings for theory and practice of governance.

4.2 CITIZENS' INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIES

Changing relations between government and citizens

The changing relations between government and citizens can be seen as a transition, often referred to as the shift from government to governance (Kooiman and van Vliet 1993, Rhodes 1996). Although this shift has been described in various ways, most accounts emphasize the diminishing importance of the government as the center of society (Ansell 2000, Salamon 2001, Büchs 2009). According to Beck (1994) decision-making about societal developments is no longer largely in the hands of representative democracy, but also in those of companies, scientists, the media, new social movements and individual citizens. Subpolitics is a term that covers the social action that goes on outside the representative institutions of the political hierarchy and yet is politically significant because of

4 Original Dutch name: Natuurlijk Grasweggebied.

5 Original Dutch name: Boermarke Essen en Aa's.

its influence in society. Taking Beck's ideas further, Holzer and Sørensen (2003) emphasize that these sources of societal influence are largely independent and distinct from the political system. Their social action is seen by these writers as unique and their plurality as something that should be valued. In their view, it is precisely their non-political character that gives 'subpolitical' actors their significance for reflexive modernization. The idea of subpolitics stresses the significance of sources of power outside the political system in a differentiated modern society. Teubner (2011) follows this line of reasoning and argues that in a modern society, no social sub-system, not even politics, can represent the whole society. The transition to governance manifests itself in changing roles of citizens within policy processes and efforts to determine which responsibilities should be public and which should be private. The changing relationship between government and citizens puts the latter in a position in which they are expected to organize certain (public) matters for themselves (Herbert-Cheshire 2000; Woods et al., 2007).

Following Holzer and Sørensen (2003) in valuing the uniqueness and plurality of citizens' initiatives, general public participation theories may fail to account for the pluralism resulting from strategies and organizational dynamics. It is now commonplace to talk about the deliberative turn in democratic theory (Dryzek 2000, Fung 2003). Deliberative democratic theory claims to be a more just and indeed democratic way of dealing with pluralism than aggregative or realist models of democracy. It is generally seen as an expansion of the representative democracy and focuses on the communicative processes of opinion and will-formation. Next to consent and voting, accountability is understood in terms of 'giving an account' of something that is publicly articulating, explaining and most importantly justifying public policy (Chambers 2003). Deliberative capacity can be sought in non-traditional institutional forms and can be made up of a variety of public and private actors (Sørensen and Torfing 2006). Sometimes they are purely informal, sometimes their role is validated by governments or inter-governmental organizations (Dryzek 2009). As deliberation invokes a 'talk-centric' aspect of democracy (Chambers 2003), it provides a different view on addressing and approaching citizens' initiatives and moves away from predetermined ways.

Citizens' initiatives and their organization, cooperation and bonding processes

In this chapter, the citizens' initiatives at stake are groups of citizens organizing and managing their social and green living environment. They depend on self-organization, often span diverse domains such as education and sustainability and take various forms. The motives of the people involved in citizens' initiatives can be understood with reference to the concept of 'life politics' (Giddens 1991).

Life politics refers to people linking political and social aims with the 'project of their own lives' and the lifestyle that goes with them. Personal choices are interwoven with ethical goals and global themes. Social and political engagement no longer necessarily takes the form of membership of large political emancipation movements, but also expresses itself in commitment to ethical principles and social relationships, with a strong focus on self-realization and on single issues which are highly relevant in everyday life. As citizens' initiatives develop and realize their objectives, they connect with others in a wide range of ways (Salverda and Van Dam 2008; Van Dam et al., 2010).

The organizing process in citizens' initiatives can be understood as one of institutionalizing modes of internal and external cooperation. Here organization is understood as a continual process of becoming in which practices reconstruct the organization on a recurring basis while at the same time providing the grounds for its modification (Weick 1979, Jarzabkowski 1994). Citizens' initiatives often operate in both an informal context (e.g. with fellow residents) and a formal one (e.g. the policy context, institutional actors), therefore engaging in both formal and informal organizational practices. Borgen and Hegrenes (2005) distinguish four coordination mechanisms within organizations: Handshake, Handbook, Invisible Hand and Visible Hand. For the purpose of our study, the coordination mechanisms 'Handshake' and 'Handbook' are most relevant. 'Handshake' refers to processes relying on informal codes of conduct based on common values and norms, trust and reciprocity. This mechanism is often applied in non-hierarchical organizations with highly motivated people where there is a strong sense of mission, esprit de corps or ideology (cf. Douma and Schreuder 2002, p. 42). Putnam (1993) talks in this context about the concept of 'generalized reciprocity', which refers to a continuing relationship of exchange that is out of balance at any given time but in which there are mutual expectations that a benefit granted now should be repaid in the future. The 'Handbook' mechanism entails formal rules and procedures and is based on an instrumental motive (driven by the rational self-interest of individuals). This mechanism is characterized by rules, agreements and (detailed) contracts, which can be seen as expressions of distrust (Salverda et al. 2009). Putnam refers in this context to the concept of 'balanced reciprocity': a simultaneous exchange of items of equivalent value (according to pre-established rules).

Drawing on notions of anti-essentialism (Fuchs 2001), one can see citizens' initiatives as fluid, without clear inside–outside boundaries and potentially surrounded by a bigger group of people that sympathize with the initiative and are willing to become part of it at certain points. A citizens' initiative is generally geared to getting more people actively involved, and this is where theory on bonding pro-

cesses becomes relevant. Putnam (2000) sees bonding in terms of social capital. He identifies two main components of the concept: Bonding social capital refers to trusting co-operative relations between members of a network who are similar in terms of social identity, while bridging social capital refers to connections between those who are unlike each other yet are 'more or less equal in terms of their status and power'. The concepts of both bonding and bridging relate to 'the organization of civil society'. Woolcock and Szepter (2004) expand on this distinction by adding a third form which covers the interaction between individuals and networks that are unequal in terms of power and influence, such as the relationship between government and citizen. This linking social capital connects individuals and groups in different social strata in a hierarchy where power, social status and wealth are accessed by different groups (Cote and Healy 2001, p. 42). Woolcock (2001) extends this to include the capacity to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community. Applied to the practice of citizens' initiatives, the process of bonding refers to the interaction between the initiators and their fellow residents; the process of bridging refers to the interaction between the initiators and other local groups with different interests or orientation such as farmers, entrepreneurs, local residents who go back generations and more recent arrivals; and the process of linking refers to the interaction between initiators and institutional actors.

Strategies and self-transformation

Strategies are conceptualized in various ways, depending on the focus (e.g. intentionality, behavior patterns, shared cognitive schemes, process) and perspective (e.g. rational, action, interpretative or classical, evolutionary, processual and systemic) (Whittington 1993, Hendry 2000). For example, Mintzberg and Waters (1985) see strategy formation as a change process rather than a choice process, conceptualizing strategy as a conjunction of intended strategy and emergent strategy. Generally speaking, there has been a shift in strategy research toward practice-based theorizing. Strategy, it is argued, may be understood as something people *do* rather than something organizations and firms *have* (Jarzabkowski and Seidl 2008). These micro-phenomena need to be understood within their social context. Actors do not act in isolation but draw upon conventional, socially defined modes of acting, which make their actions and interactions comprehensible to others (Wilson and Jarzabkowski 2004, Whittington 2006, Balogun et al. 2007). It is therefore important to look at the social structures and discourses through which microactions are made possible and are constructed (Giddens 1984).

This chapter uses the ideas of Luhmann (1995, 2008) and the related ideas of Seidl (2005) to analyze strategies as the contingent product of a self-transforming

organization which relates its internal process to the outside world. The concept of self-transformation describes situations in which a system changes its identity (self-image), choosing to change its self-description. Social groups capable of performing self-transformation can be said to possess transformability (Etzioni 1968, Seidl 2005). Information from the outside world is interpreted using the conceptual framework that is shared within a group and is used in day-to-day communication (Luhmann 1990). With Seidl (2005) and Luhmann (1995, 2008), we presuppose a process to be at work in which images of the social context are produced in an internal discourse and where the identity (self-image) and strategies of a citizens' initiative are adapted to the group's shared assumptions about what is considered important in the relevant social context. Understood in this way, strategies become highly contingent and an action can be seen primarily as a reaction to the previous one, creating path dependency in the course of events (Seidl 2005, Van Assche 2008, Van Assche et al. 2011).

This theoretical account provides the tools with which to study the practice of citizens' initiatives: their organizational development and the shaping of their strategies in the interactions between the initiative and its context, resulting in bonding processes.

4.3 METHODOLOGY

In this study we are interested in the practices of a group of people realizing their ideas and objectives about their living environment. It is therefore these practices, as defined by the people involved in the citizens' initiatives, which set the boundaries of investigation. As the practices, strategies and interactions of the citizens' initiatives are not always planned and may evolve in an uncontrolled manner, we did not think a one-dimensional research approach suitable for our purpose and we opted for an iterative research approach, valued by several interpretive policy researchers (Maxwell 2005, Glynos and Howarth 2007, Yanow 2007).

The study was conducted using a qualitative method because this gave us a deeper understanding of social practices and relations. We used a case study approach, opting for two cases, both of groups striving for self-organization and autonomy in a policy domain, but with focus on a different context and a different approach to involving others, which lends them added interest in terms of the consequences for their strategies. In order to be able to analyze the development of an initiative and the strategies employed, we selected cases that are somewhat 'mature'. As this research was part of a contract-research project

of the landscape and nature department of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, the cases are related to the domain of green environment, nature and landscape. NAG is an initiative which mainly aims to involve institutional partners, located in the municipality of Hellevoetsluis in the southwest of the Netherlands, and the CFEA mainly aims to involve fellow local residents and is located in the municipality of Stadskanaal in the northeast of the Netherlands. To be able to address the mechanisms concerning the strategies of citizens' thoroughly, we made the choice to analyze two citizens' initiatives in-depth. Investigating more cases and other variations in cases, for example concerning different domains or in successfulness might shed different light on the strategies which would be an interesting question for future research.

Information gathering was conducted openly and flexibly, using semi-structured interviews. Twenty-five respondents were interviewed and several casual conversations took place as well. Respondents were not directly asked which 'strategies' they used, but were stimulated to talk about their daily activities, their interactions, their emotional involvement and their experiences and perceptions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed word for word. To get an idea of the daily activities, the researchers also spent time at various places and attended meetings relevant to the initiative, notably a presentation of a book about the Geselberg [Scourge Hill] hosted on the hill by the CFEA, and a tour of the Grasweg area. Secondary materials were also studied, such as websites, (policy) documents and scientific reports.

Because this study involves strategies used in citizens' initiatives, the emphasis is on the perspective and actions of the initiators and other people involved. Yet, some of the perspectives and actions of peripheral actors are also included when relevant to the conduct of the initiators and the strategic choices they made. As the interviews focused on everyday meaning and everyday relationships expressed in ordinary language, some quotes are used in the analysis for illustration.

4.4 TWO DUTCH CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

Natural Area Grasweg (NAG)

In 2007, a few residents of the Grasweg in Hellevoetsluis took the initiative to develop and to manage an ecological corridor. The planned ecological area will be 7–8 hectares and will connect two small forests. The area is located on the eastern edge of Hellevoetsluis, a town in the southwest of the Netherlands. For the residents of the Grasweg, this area is almost literally their backyard.

The initiative and the course of events

The NAG initiative is actuated by the municipalities' decision to explore the costs of an ecological corridor as outlined in their structural plan. In the municipalities' proposed variant, building new houses would partially finance the construction of the ecological corridor.

'One of the things discussed was the financing of the ecological corridor with housing. This shook the residents. Green, yes, but we do not want it financed by building new houses; there must be another way (...) NAG said, we can fix that without housing' (respondent from the municipality of Hellevoetsluis).

The residents of the Grasweg, for whom this area is almost literally their backyard, got together and came up with a draft plan for their own variant. In this variant, housing is left out. The residents chose a variant with maximum emphasis on water, to raise its ecological value. In this plan, the area would simultaneously provide water storage. The reasons mentioned for their initiative resulting in this own variant are a combination of self-interest and interest in ecology and wildlife conservation.

The residents of the Grasweg subsequently spoke to an alderman of the municipality. Although enthusiastic, he thought their plan needed to be worked out further. To this end, the initiative received financial support from the municipality to enable the group to professionalize their variant with the help of a landscape advisory organization. In the meantime, the residents decided to develop a website, to register with the chamber of commerce and to start a foundation. The report with the worked out and professionalized variant was then handed to the alderman. He agreed with the fifth variant developed by the initiative on the condition that (a) the municipality remained the owner of the ground; (b) the area had added value for all the citizens of Hellevoetsluis and was public and accessible; (c) continuity could be guaranteed. If the group behind the initiative was for some reason no longer able to manage the area, someone else should take over.

At this point the residents of Grasweg asked for support and cooperation from the State Forest Service.⁶ This attempt at cooperation failed because the State Forest Service can only get actively involved in an area they own. Then the initiators went to the Landscape Foundation South Holland⁷ with the same request. This cooperation did get off the ground. They also contacted the Dutch Delta Water Board,⁸ whose cooperation was needed to implement the waterlogging in their plan. In the end a cooperation agreement was signed by four parties: the municipality of Hellevoetsluis, the Dutch Delta Water Board, Landscape Founda-

tion South Holland and the NAG initiative. Digging had already started just before the signing of the agreement. The initiative is now at the stage that the plans have been implemented and the area is largely developed. The residents will take responsibility for the organization and vegetation of the area, and a large proportion of the future maintenance.

Strategies

In the initial phase of the initiative, in which the initiators had to convince the municipality of their fifth variant, they lobbied strongly. They attended information and participation evenings, they gave presentations at meetings of several political parties, they contacted councilors individually, etc. In relation to the various stakeholders at the municipality, the initiators were very tenacious. That also meant they bypassed the civil servants when they felt they were an inhibiting factor, and went straight to the alderman, which is not the officially sanctioned way of approaching the municipality.

The initiators also tried to involve local residents. They organized various information and consultation evenings with local residents, and also sent out newsletters. When talking about their fellow residents, the initiators said: 'Everyone here is green-minded and it is fun if something extra-ordinary is developed, something that we can enjoy.' The green-mindedness of their fellow residents and the lack of housing were interpreted by the initiators as reasons to agree with the ideas of the initiators. Yet, the levels of effort put in by the other residents, and the feedback they give, are in shrill contrast with the effort put in by the initiators.

An important strategy was the initiators' choice to establish relationships and cooperation with 'large and robust parties'. Each partner provided for one of the conditions for realizing the ecological corridor. Without the cooperation of these parties, it would have been difficult – impossible in fact – to create the ecological corridor as envisaged by the initiators. The municipality is the owner of the area, so its permission was crucial. In addition, the cooperation of the Water Board was particularly important because of the initiators' preference for the maximum wet variant, which – after consultations with the Water Board – found expression in a water storage plan. The cooperation with the Landscape Foundation fulfilled the condition set by the municipality that continuity should be ensured, in case at some point in the future NAG could no longer manage the area (if for example

6 Original Dutch name: Staatsbosbeheer. This organization is commissioned by the Dutch government and manages a large part of the nature reserves in the Netherlands.

7 Original Dutch name: Stichting Zuid-Hollands Landschap.

8 Original Dutch name: Waterschap Hollandse Delta.

the foundation was dissolved or key local residents moved away, etc.). The Landscape Foundation entered into a long-term lease contract with the municipality of Hellevoetsluis.

Other key strategies were professionalization and fund-raising. The formalization of the organization of the initiative – by establishing a foundation in March 2007 – was considered an important signal to the outside world and a good move toward professionalization. Further professionalization activities included hiring an accountant. Fundraising for the ecological corridor was done through successful applications for various grants, both for the foundation and for other organizations involved. The initiators have also participated in various competitions and make active use of sponsorship. Companies can sponsor all sorts of things: the tools, a bench, a certain spot in the area.

The initiators of NAG are very aware of the value of good public relations (PR). They have ‘actively selected and contacted’ media such as the national Sunday morning radio program ‘Vroege Vogels’ [Early Birds],⁹ and certain newspapers. It turned out that if you get a national radio program interested in your initiative, it is easier to get the alderman on board. Other PR initiatives included sending newsletters, creating and maintaining a fairly extensive website and giving presentations. The group also thinks up informal forms of PR: they made a publicity display for a presentation for the council committee and left it at the city hall after the event. For months, this information board was standing right by the entrance of the city hall for everyone to see. The group also has a mascot and a logo.

Implications of the interaction with the context for the initiative’s identity, organization and strategy

The initiators of the NAG, two people whose partners are actively involved as well, work together informally. As they are a small group and close neighbors, it is not necessary or logical to approach each other in a formal way. The division of tasks is largely based on the skills and knowledge each person has. The related parties in the area recognize that within the initiative each person has own responsibilities, corresponding to what they do best:

‘D. [Chair NAG] is more a person who works the alderman, and who gives a presentation about their plans to the whole council, who is more focused on lobbying, collecting money and making sure things are formally

9 Vroege Vogels [Early Birds] is a moderately famous radio program on Dutch national radio. It has been broadcast for 30 years on Sunday morning and deals with nature, landscape and environmental themes and outings.

arranged. And S. [Secretary NAG] is more focused on keeping people together, making sure things happen and boosting activities and relations' (respondent Water Board).

The initiators also established a foundation. The initiators find it useful to present themselves as a legal entity, expecting to be taken more seriously as a result. For some purposes, such as applying for grants, this is even a necessary condition. The initiators have also tried to involve local residents in their citizens' initiative. But because cooperation with institutional partners was the main strategy, the initiators put more effort into relations with the institutional partners. Another reason was that they received little response from their direct neighbors, which of course also reflects the level of priority they gave to organizing local support.

The cooperation between NAG and the three institutional partners was established in a contract. Apart from this formal element, the level of formality in their interaction varied. They had very informal contact with the person from the water board, who came by their house several times and who was and still is actively involved, also putting in a lot of 'personal time'. The person from the Water Board had a lot of trust in the initiators and this was mutual. The contact with the municipality, however, was far more formal and consisted of formal meetings, presentations and project plans. Both the civil servants and the initiators mentioned that they didn't always trust each other. In particular, the civil servants felt they would have liked to be better and more often informed, whereas the initiators said they felt the civil servants were impatient and meddlesome, and they choose to keep them at a distance. The relation with the Landscape Foundation was formal too, but since their role was purely as a back-up in case the initiative falters, the relationship with them was naturally less substantial. It is worth noting in passing, however, that the decision to involve the Landscape Foundation 'as a back-up' is also interesting in terms of trust.

In short, NAG has created its own alternative for the ecological corridor. In developing this natural area, the initiators have cooperated with several robust institutional partners and raised funding. They have taken a formal approach, forging links with institutional partners, which has resulted in a contract. Besides their formal relations, their contact with the person from the Water Board has also been also more informal.

Collective farmers of Essen and Aa's (CFEA)

In 2006, residents of Wessinghuizen, Høfte and Veele, three hamlets in the culturalhistorically valuable area of the northeast of Holland (East Groningen), initi-

ated CFEA. Their objective is to have more influence on the policy and management of the landscape in their immediate vicinity and to restore and manage the cultural heritage values in the surrounding landscape themselves.

The initiative and the course of events

In 2003, two residents of Wessinghuizen started holding conversations at the kitchen table to collect the ideas and wishes of residents concerning the surrounding landscape, in response to government plans for the realization of an ecological corridor which would be placed 'in their backyard' but in which the residents were not involved. Following these kitchen table conversations, in 2005 the initiators developed a 'Markeplan', *containing ideas based on history, on what the residents feel is beautiful and important, on requests from visitors and tourists, and on the walking needs of residents and recreationists* (Markeplan, p.5). According to the residents, the landscape should be rehabilitated as much as possible, instead of only emphasizing the ecological values in the area.

When the initiators presented the Markeplan to their fellow residents, they invited the district head of the State Forest Service too, so he could experience the enthusiasm and active attitude of the residents. He endorsed the plan and facilitated the residents in several ways. In July 2005, the Markeplan was offered to the mayors of several relevant municipalities and to a member of the Executive of the Province of Groningen. They responded positively, as did the press. In 2006, seven residents from the three hamlets established a foundation. This foundation aims *to enhance the living environment and sense of community of the residents (...), and to rehabilitate the old cultural landscape with respect for nature, landscape, environment and historical cultural heritage* (regulations of the foundation CFEA).

At the heart of the plan was the idea that the residents would maintain the area themselves, creating a stronger sense of cohesion between groups of residents. Under the auspices of the CFEA, the residents have succeeded in restoring old lanes, rebuilding an old hay bridge,¹⁰ realizing a work of art/meeting place, clearing historical elements and creating new footpaths in the landscape. With the support of several organizations such as a landscape organization, a bank and governmental organizations, the residents extended their ambitions, resulting in new ideas such as facilities for communal sustainable energy. The communal activities and the results that were achieved fueled the enthusiasm and solidarity of the residents. The initiative has grown to involve a group of 30 active families in the three hamlets. According to the initiators the limit has been reached in terms of the number of involved residents and the size of the area:

'Otherwise the safe and trustworthy environment disappears. The group shouldn't be too big, otherwise people do not dare to speak freely and it will result in the same people always being on their feet' (respondent CFEA).

Strategies

In this initiative residents explicitly want to execute activities by themselves as a community. The voluntary nature of the enterprise, friendliness and responsibility are of paramount importance to the group. Opportunities are seized to organize festive gatherings and almost all the residents in the three hamlets take part in the joint activities in one way or another. This has created an active and vibrant community; an important goal of the foundation, in addition to improving the living environment. The initiators have generated much support and togetherness with the other residents by communicating extensively and informally and by asking them openly about their wishes and ideas. They made sure that all 'groups' of residents were well represented. As a result the board of the foundation consists of people from the farming community, people who have lived in the hamlets for generations and people who moved there more recently. Togetherness is stimulated by choosing and undertaking only those activities which are felt to be fully supported by the residents. On important or emotionally charged topics, binding votes are taken among the residents to let them co-decide. Delegating certain activities to groups of residents makes them jointly responsible. Residents are asked for specific and concrete contributions that match their skills and affinities. The initiators' commitment and enthusiasm helps to motivate others. Also, successes are celebrated extensively with all residents and many social activities are organized which function as meeting points.

The initiators generated great confidence among residents by coherently formulating activities and presenting them well in the Markeplan. The establishment of a foundation and securing of financial support from governmental and landscape organizations showed residents that the initiative is being handled professionally. Thanks to their confidence in the initiative, the residents of CFEA consciously take a constructive attitude. They position themselves as complementary to governmental organizations, not as reproachful opponents to them. Some members of the foundation have good informal contact with 'strategic' people in local and regional government organizations and landscape organizations. They know the routes to funding, because they are familiar with the government system, either from their current or their previous positions. The two initiators are also known

10 In old Dutch: 'Heubrugge'.

to the authorities for their knowledge of content, their technical skills and their network. Above all, confidence at governmental organizations was boosted by the way the initiators were able to mobilize so many of the residents of the hamlets.

The initiators pay ample attention to communicating and presenting their ideas, activities and achievements to government bodies and other organizations. Results are communicated in the form of attractive publications based on well-organized light-hearted events, such as the opening of the Heubrugge and book presentation at the Geselberg. They also seek out media attention, mostly from local and regional media. The book launch of *In the Shadow of the Geselberg*, for example, was accompanied by a radio appearance, announcements in the local newspaper and a preview of a few stories from the book in a magazine on country life.

Implications of the interaction with the context for the initiative's identity, organization and strategy

Although a foundation has been established, the residents involved in the initiative cooperate and organize themselves mainly in informal ways. The basis for the informal organization is the local community in which the initiative is embedded. The approach is very much aimed at getting more local residents involved in the initiative and expanding the core group of people who feel part of CFEA. Nevertheless, the key figures in the organization are the members of the board. At the first sight, formal structures (the statutes of the foundation) appear to dominate the decision-making. In practice, as a complement to the formal structures and sometimes as a substitute for them, the members of the board can build on existing informal networks and frequent social interactions to pave the way for decisions, and, if necessary, suspend, circumvent or ignore formal rules. These strategies enable them to make decisions more effective, to avoid conflict and to improve the cohesion of the community organization. It is understood that social cohesion is a prerequisite for achieving their goal. In using informal modes to generate togetherness and to avoid and resolve conflict, the members of the board create space for alternative decision-making, where in practice different rules apply for a while, to allow for a return to original principles. Some members of the board even see the formal organization form (the foundation and its statutes) as no more than a back-up strategy for in case problems arise in the informal arena. Informal modes of decision-making are therefore seen as more 'real' than formal ones.

There was a cordial informal understanding with the head of the National State Service, but a relatively difficult relationship with the landscape manager. He

had very strict ideas about maintaining and pruning the landscape, which he felt would be handled best by experts and not by 'amateurs' such as the CFEA residents.

In summary, CFEA focuses on creating a local sense of community and self-activation in order to bring back cultural historical landscape. They take an informal approach to doing this, connecting mostly to residents of the three hamlets. But, they also know how to take more formal routes when necessary.

4.5 STRATEGIES AND SELF-TRANSFORMATION

Both cases show that initiators deploy a combination of strategies, which are not always intentional or planned in advance, but are often intuitive, pragmatic and flexible in seizing unexpected opportunities. For example, the NAG initiators managed to convince a councilman when they happened to give him a lift. The strategies emerge during the process or in interaction with others and result in bonding and connecting processes with people and institutions.

The initiators have needed a great deal of perseverance. In interaction with others, including both other local residents and institutional actors, the initiators are, and have to be, very tenacious. They are the ones who have to raise the alarm, over and over again. The initiative will not get far if the initiators just leave things be. The initiators pursue an ideal and draw on passion, inspiration and youth memories; this personal and emotional commitment enables them to put in so much effort. In practice, they have to walk a thin line, because their tenacity also arouses irritation in the individuals and institutions they deal with. If this irritation exceeds a certain level, their efforts backfire on them. In both cases the interaction has not all been free of annoyances, but in retrospect both the initiators and the other actors understand each other's attitude. The other actors are also aware that the initiators' tenacity is essential for the success of the initiative.

The sometimes difficult process of connecting to other actors can be explained by comparing the identity of the citizens' initiative to the identity of the organization or people they want to connect with. The identity of a citizens' initiative is much more informal than, for example, the identity of a governmental organization, in that the latter has to reckon with formal accountability, control and democratic legitimacy. There are also differences in use of time and focus, with a different balance in terms of decisiveness in the short-term versus public support in the long-term. The divide between the social praxis of the initiators and the in-

stitutionalized environment of the institutional actors, in goals, motivations and way of working, can be crossed with strategies. Salient examples of such connecting strategies are the institutionalization and professionalization of the initiative.

Both the initiatives chose to institutionalize themselves by establishing a foundation. Institutionalizing helps them to be taken more seriously by surrounding actors. What is more, becoming a legal entity is a condition of eligibility for subsidies and grants from institutional actors. Besides institutionalizing, another way to overcome the divide between the initiative's informal world and the institutional world is to develop good (informal) relationships with people who operate in an institutionalized context. Preliminary discussions with policy-makers play an important role in exploring the chances of gaining permission for interventions or the scope within certain policy and legal frameworks. Inviting civil servants to celebrations and their acceptance of such invitations also help to overcome the gap between the different worlds.

Generally, the professionalization of the initiative is seen as an enabling move for taking 'formal routes'. But it can also help to facilitate a smooth internal organization, especially as it becomes more complex. Too much formalization, however, and the initiative ends up getting bogged down in abstract discussions about what needs to be formalized and drifting away from real action.

Both initiatives are a combination of the Handshake and Handbook coordination mechanisms, but with a very different emphasis, mainly because of a difference in the actors they want to connect with. In practice, strategies are ways of connecting and bonding with others (fellow citizens, institutions etc.). In the studied citizens' initiatives, a small number of people are really active: they can be labeled the 'hard core'. Around this 'hard core', there is a group of people who are fairly active and then there is a larger group who are only actively involved from time to time. So people are linked to the initiative to various degrees of intensity and at various times, resulting in fluid layers of connectedness. The citizens' initiatives we studied generally expanded by connecting with others in different ways.

The NAG prioritized fund-raising and cooperation with institutional partners such as the municipality and the Water Board. Here the Handbook coordination mechanism is clearly present, resulting in a contract between the four parties. And although the two initiators work informally together and have a fairly informal relation with the civil servant of the Water Board, they were not particularly successful in involving their fellow residents. The latter did not show much enthusiasm for contributing themselves; they merely consented. So the main objective

was the cooperation with institutional partners. NAG was the key player and became something close to a 'semi-governmental organization', with more emphasis on representation than on participation. In terms of connecting and bonding with others, NAG started with two people who sought an alternative to the plans of the municipality and ended up as primarily a cooperation with formal partners. In the NAG case it is obvious that the most important and successful process was the 'linking process' (Woolcock and Szreter 2004), the interaction between the initiators and relevant institutional actors. The interaction with fellow residents, also referred to as a 'bonding process' (Putnam 2000) was less successful, and resulted in their consent, but not so much in their active involvement. Putnam's 'bridging process' (Putnam 2000) was not much in evidence in this case.

In the CFEA case, by contrast, it is an explicit goal to get local residents involved. They want to stimulate the sense of community and to undertake all kinds of collective activities in order to improve and maintain the cultural historical landscape as a community. The initiators have generated much support, trust and active engagement with local residents through kitchen table conversations and by delegating work to groups of residents. Institutions such as the municipalities and the provincial administration played a less important role, although they were not absent. They supported the initiative with grants. The CFEA formally established a foundation but did not do much with this legal entity in practice. The emphasis in this initiative has been on the Handshake coordination mechanism, focusing on informal codes of conduct which are based on common values and norms, trust and reciprocity. CFEA started small, at the kitchen table, and has developed into a community made up of residents of three hamlets who identify with and feel part of the initiative. In this initiative, participation is far more important than representation. In CFEA, the bonding and bridging processes (Putnam 2000) were particularly strong: the connection with fellow residents from various groups, both those with similar and those with different interests and orientations, was most important and most successful. The linking process (Woolcock and Szreter 2004) did occur, but received far less emphasis. In practice, the initiators only drew in the institutional partners to a limited extent, just to make sure they would consent to the activities of the residents.

When focusing on the process of self-transformation in the cases, one can see a recurrent pattern in which the identity of a citizens' initiative (seen broadly as how they define themselves and how they operate) is influenced by their interpretations of the immediate and relevant outside world, which in turn shapes their strategies. To help it connect up with fellow residents, CFEA has developed an informal identity. In terms of the ideas of Seidl (2005) and Luhmann (1995), interpreted images of the local residents are produced in an internal discourse,

and the identity (self-image) and strategies of the initiators of CFEA are adapted to what they think the local residents find important: being part of an informal and socially oriented initiative. In the citizens' initiative NAG, the initiators are more interested in connecting up with robust institutional partners. Again, the initiators develop their own assumptions about what the relevant local parties consider important. In this case the relevant parties are the municipality and other robust organizations, resulting in a formal identity and matching strategies. Apparently, it is assumed that an informal identity is not very compatible with partners such as a municipality or other institutions, and that by the same token, a formal identity and the use of formal strategies will not go down well with next-door neighbors.

4.6 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter we wanted to shed light on the practice of citizens' initiatives by focusing on their strategies. We looked at their ability to connect to and mobilize others and at the way their strategies are shaped in the interaction between the identity of the citizens' initiative and the outside world – both the social and the policy contexts. To conclude with, we want to extract from our analysis some considerations for the theory and practice of governance, particularly concerning the plurality of citizens' initiatives and the need for differentiated and de-standardized governance reactions.

Our analysis shows that both initiatives are clearly in search of self-organization and that their motivation can be seen in terms of life politics (Giddens 1991). Although both initiatives were aimed at taking over the control of environmental planning, they each went about this in their own unique manner. NAG chose a formal way of organizing their initiative, almost becoming a 'surrogate' governmental institute. Being professional, gaining official recognition and fund-raising were the core of their overall strategy. The organization of the initiative was adjusted to institutional settings (linking processes), and relations with other residents (bonding processes) were far less prominent in their strategy. CFEA took a different route. They chose a path that leads to community embedding in which volunteers were sought and welcomed and in which private action became their symbolic resource. Informal forms of local cooperation were very important to them (bonding and bridging processes), but they also paid attention to their formal institutional setting (linking processes) and sought to relate to their governance environment both formally and informally. Both initiatives have applied a contingent relational strategy that has had consequences for the way their commitment is organized.

The relations and interactions that citizens' initiatives engage in can be seen as the mechanisms of bonding processes. Interactions between citizens' initiatives and the outside world influence the identity of the initiative, leading in turn to new strategies. In this process of self-transformation, citizens' initiatives mobilize a spectrum of connectedness and bonding in realizing their objectives. Both NAG and CFEA excel in self-realization by self-transformation, and their ability to adapt and mobilize makes them a powerful and relevant development in the governance area.

In this chapter, we focused on the activities of civil society actors such as citizens, resulting in a picture of informal, communicative, fluid and contingent citizens' initiatives. Their strategies are not always shaped around a clearly defined plan. In reality, they often emerge in a far more contingent and path-dependent way. The plurality of citizens' initiatives is fed by both the variability (e.g. in objectives, in approach, in organization form) and the changeability of citizens' initiatives. For both citizens and governmental organizations, these initiatives fulfill an important need. Yet, the plurality of citizens' initiatives makes them difficult to interpret and deal with them exclusively in terms of governance and steering. The feasibility of standardization in approaching citizens' may be disputed, not least because citizens' initiatives themselves are far from equal or standard. An awareness of the plurality of citizens' initiatives and their strategic orientation is important for attempts to arrive at an adequate governance response. Contingency necessitates a constant dialog. As a consequence, it seems impossible or anyhow inappropriate to advance citizens' initiatives with a participation framework as is often the case. The plurality of citizens' calls for anti-essentialist approaches in governance. Considering the emphasis on communication, we think the deliberative turn in democratic theory provides an adequate starting point for further analysis, but would recommend further research on pluralism in governance, specifically on differentiating and changing roles of governmental organizations in relation to citizens' initiatives (e.g. practice different roles and change roles per situation) and on avoiding 'essentializing' of citizens' initiatives by turning them into objects of participation (e.g. do not approach citizens' initiatives using a framework of citizens' participation, but approach them as initiators instead).

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DELINEATING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The subjectification of citizens' initiatives

ABSTRACT

Based on three case studies on citizens' initiatives in their local governance contexts, we analyse the process of subjectification as a performative effect of the dialectical relationship between governmental organizations and citizens' initiatives. We argue that discourses produced by governmental organizations on what it entails to be an active citizen have a performative effect on citizens' initiatives, which adapt themselves, anticipate on what is expected from them and act strategically towards these discourses. As a consequence, some people become 'good' citizens meeting the expectations of the governmental discourse. The process of subjectification shows that this not a unilateral act, but mutually activated by both governmental organizations and citizens' initiatives.

Published as: van Dam, R.I., M. Duineveld and R. During (2014) Delineating active citizenship: The subjectification of citizens' initiatives. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, Routledge, 17(2), 163-179.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Western European governments, including the Dutch government, increasingly encourage active citizenship (Sørensen & Triantafillou, 2009). One of the main triggers for this trend is the decline of the welfare state, which has, according to some, reached its normative, practical and financial boundaries (Feixa, Pereira, & Juris, 2009; Yerkes & Van der Veen, 2011). The financial crisis and the related budget cuts in welfare services have further boosted the discourses of active citizenship. New, sometimes viewed as 'neo-liberal', governance modes have entered the arena of Dutch policy-making in which active citizenship and self-organization have become important concepts (Hajer, 2011; Tonkens, 2006; Verhoeven, 2009). For analyses of seemingly similar processes in the UK, see the studies by Lowndes and Pratchett (2011), Scott (2011), Smith (2010).

The call for active citizens and related citizens' initiatives can be found in many of the recently published Dutch policy documents. The Coalition Agreement of the current Dutch cabinet, for example, highlights the benefits of citizens' initiatives for our society (Rutte & Samsom, 29 oktober 2012). In their policy document 'De Doe-democratie' ['The Do-democracy'], the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations states that 'the government has faith in social initiatives and is willing to contribute actively to the transitions to a do-democracy' (2013, p. 3). Other programmes and projects that advocate citizens' initiatives and less governmental involvement have also been launched, such as 'In actie met burgers' ['Into action with citizens'] at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (2008) and 'InitiatiefRijk' ['Enterprising'], a joint programme from the Ministries of Interior, of Infrastructure and of Economic Affairs (2011). Moreover, an interdepartmental expertise centre on active citizenship, the Centrum Publieksparticipatie, has been established.

Several Dutch governmental advisory institutes, such as the Council for Public Administration, believe active citizens will be increasingly important in the future. They proclaim citizens to be trustworthy, inventive and willing to be active and responsive members of society (AWT, 2012; RMO, 2013; Rob, 2012; WRR, 2012). The attention in mass media seems to invoke a further process of mushrooming of citizens' initiatives. Even for a topic like nature management, which was until recently entirely claimed by the State and its conservation institutes, a new policy has been issued that intends 'to bring nature back to where it belongs: in the middle of society, with ownership and citizens' responsibility as important building blocks' (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2013). And on the occasion of accession of the new Dutch King, citizens have been asked to submit their social initiatives to a so-called collection of 'Crown Apples' (www.kroonappels.nl).

Because the active citizenship and citizens' initiatives discourses are relatively young and are still in development, one can only speculate about the (long-term) effects on the Dutch society and that of other Western European countries. These discourses might only produce some temporal excitement to veil the rapid decline of the welfare state (Scott, 2011). One could also argue that in the years to come, fundamental changes can be expected in the power relations between the state and its citizens (RMO, 2013). One could even imagine a do-it yourself society that would hardly need politicians and policies (Teubner, 2011). Despite the uncertainties and the relatively young life of the active citizen discourses, their appearance has already received some academic attention (Gaynor, 2011; Lowndes & Pratchett, 2011; Verhoeven, 2009). A part of this academic work analyses acts of resistance against governmental policies (Amoore, 2005; De Cock Buning, De Brauw, & Van Amstel, 2011; Duineveld & Van Assche, 2011; Roth & Warner, 2007; Watson, 2005). Other studies underscored the increased participation and power of citizens in government projects (Aarts & Leeuwis, 2010; Duineveld, van Dam, During, & Zande, 2010; Ignatieff, 1995; Salverda & Van Dam, 2008; Spies, 2013).

In this chapter we aim to contribute to these studies of active citizenship by focussing on the discursive mechanisms and underlying power techniques at play as well as their consequences for the potential activities of citizens' initiatives. We use the theories of Foucault (1994) and Butler (1997) on the process of subjectification because these enable us to analyse the interdependence of citizens' initiatives and state governance. The process of subjectification is conceptualized as the performative effects of discourses on active citizenship in the dialectical relationship between governmental organizations and citizens' initiatives.

We studied the processes of subjectification in three case studies of citizens' initiatives. The first of which, *Lingewaard Natuurlijk* [Lingewaard Natural], is located between the cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen, where a group of people organized activities concerning education, landscape management and nature conservation. The second is located near the city of Enschede, where the initiators of *Grensbeleving Enschede* [Border Experience Enschede] tried to restore an old border patrol path between Germany and the Netherlands so people can re-experience the border. For our third case, we studied *Bewonersvereniging en actiecomité Horstermeerpolder* [residents' association and action committee Horstermeerpolder] in Horstermeer in the province of North Holland. Their aim was to represent the interests of the residents of the Horstermeer by developing their own alternative for the policy plans to raise the water level in their polder.

Next, we will outline our theoretical framework and related research methodology. Subsequently, we will describe the three citizens' initiatives in their local

governance contexts, and then we will analyse discursive techniques in the process of subjectification. After the main conclusions, we will try to address the governance implications of our findings in the discussion.

5.2 SUBJECTIFICATION

Following Foucault and many other governance scholars, we have a dynamic view on forms of governance and its inherent power technologies (Avelino & Rotmans, 2009; Flyvbjerg, Landman, & Schram, 2012; Pellizzoni, 2001; Rose & Miller, 1992). This implies that we do not assume a central role of the state, but we attribute importance to a plurality of discourses and organizations of within and beyond the state (Bevir, 2004; Foucault, 1979, 1994, 1998; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). Moreover, governance is understood as continuously shifting networks of both governmental and non-governmental agents and the embedded technologies of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1994, 2003). A considerable amount of the literature on power and governance processes and participation is about controlling or side lining power (Aarts & Leeuwis, 2010; Kuindersma, Arts, & Van der Zouwen, 2012). Following Foucault (1998), we see power as contingent and relational, as something that is exercised, not as something one possesses. Power is exercised by the whole of society (not only by governmental organizations) and is constantly shifting in a dynamic environment (Andersen, 2003).

Foucault has applied this broad perspective on power relations in his theory on subjectification. Subjectification (French: *subjectivation*) means examining the ways in which a person transforms him- or herself into a subject (Foucault, 1994). Subjects are constituted within governance and can be considered a result of governance practices. For Foucault, the word subject has two meanings: 'subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscious or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to' (Foucault, 1982, p. 781). In line with Foucault, Butler asserts that:

'Subjectivation'... denotes both the becoming of the subject and the process of subjection – one inhabits the figure of autonomy only by becoming subjected to a power, a subjection, which implies a radical dependency. [...] Subjection is, literally, the making of a subject, the principle of regulation according to which a subject is formulated or produced. Such subjection is a kind of power that not only unilaterally acts on a given individual as a form of domination, but also activates or forms the subject (Butler, 1997, pp. 83–4).

So although the process of subjectification refers to the subject positions that actors move towards (and not so much break free from), the subject is seen as an actor who exercises power. With the concept of subjectification, in which we look at the process of 'becoming', we can see the inter-relational nature of the active citizenship discourse: a process both of delineation and internalization.

Following Foucault and Butler, we think discursive governance practices delineate subjects such as 'citizens', 'active' citizens, 'good' citizens and so on. New roles and concepts for 'citizens' emerge all the time and once created and internalized, they can have an impact on existing governance discourses and practices. To study the process of subjectification of citizens' initiatives in governance practices, we use the concepts of performativity (Van Assche, Beunen, & Duineveld, 2014) and self-transformation (Etzioni, 1968; Luhmann, 1995; Seidl, 2005). Performances refer broadly to events, acts, utterances or narratives produced by people, organizations or institutions. By performativity, we mean the process of making facts, things or subjects appear as true, as real (Beunen, Van Assche, & Duineveld, 2013; Bialasiewicz et al., 2007; Butler, 1997; Hajer, 2006; MacKenzie, Muniesa, & Siu, 2007; Rose, 2002; Turnhout, Van Bommel, & Aarts, 2010). Performativity is an effect of discourse, and every social reality is the result of performativity. This implies that we do not merely choose our identity, but are made to perform it, as much shaped by the views and comments of the people around us as by our own thinking and our thinking about what others are thinking. This, however, is a self-referential process and is related to the process of selftransformation in which images of the social context are produced in an internal discourse. The identity (self-image) and strategies of a citizens' initiative are adapted to the group's shared assumptions about what is considered important in the relevant social context (Luhmann, 1995, 2008; Seidl, 2005; Van Assche et al., 2014; Van Dam, Salverda, & During, 2014). Whether or not a performance becomes performative, has reality effects, produces new subjects, new roles and so on, also depends on the context: location, time, audience and so on. In one context, reports or stories can be interpreted as absolute truths and thus have immediate effects on the behaviour of people, while in another context, they might be considered irrelevant or gain the status of a myth (Bourdieu, 1991).

In short, it is within governance processes that actors are created as subjects. The moment a citizens' initiative internalizes the expectations of the governmental discourse (by considering itself and acting as the image produced by the governmental discourse), the process of subjectification changes relationships. It is within citizens' initiatives that this discursive interaction becomes performative and may have transformative effects.

5.3 METHOD

This study was conducted using a qualitative method to provide a deep understanding of emerging discourses and the related social practices. As the practices, strategies and interactions of the citizens' initiatives are not always planned and may evolve in an uncontrolled manner, a one-dimensional research approach is not suitable, so we opted for an iterative research approach (Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Yanow, 2007).

We used a case study approach, opting for three cases. These cases are all citizens' initiatives, but differ in the way the initiatives 'fit into public policy', which lends them added interest in terms of the interaction between the initiatives and the governmental organizations. The objectives of Lingewaard Natural fit perfectly. Border Experience Enschede's objectives are 'neutral', and the aims and roles of their organization do not positively or negatively affect any policy or government body. The objectives of Residents association and action committee Horstermeerpolder are not in agreement with regional policy. The cases are in the domain of the green environment, nature and landscape since this research was part of contract-research projects of the landscape and nature department of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and WOT Nature and Environment.¹¹

We used semi-structured interviews to gather our information. We interviewed 26 respondents in total; 5–6 in-depth interviews per case and 10 more casual conversations took place as well. For each case, we wanted to get an overview of the situation as a whole, we wanted to see how the citizens' initiatives had developed and we wanted to know what interactions there were between the citizens' initiatives and other parties. As a consequence, we interviewed representatives of all relevant parties per case: citizens heavily involved in the citizens' initiatives and citizens/inhabitants less involved; politicians and civil servants, both on the municipality and the provincial level; people working at relevant nature and landscape organizations; members of the historical society on the German side of the Enschede border; plus entrepreneurs and farmers. We talked about their daily activities, their involvement and their experiences and – depending on the respondent – about their interactions within the initiative and with the governmental or institutional bodies or with the citizens' initiatives. The semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed, for the casual conversations we took notes. To get an idea of the daily activities that went on, the researchers also spent time at the three different case locations. The data collected by the in-

11 WOT Nature and Environment supports the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs in the implementation of rules and regulations on the policy field of nature and environment

depth interviews formed the basis; the data collected through more casual conversations were additional to these interviews or sometimes served to 'check' on the information collected by the in-depth interviews. Secondary materials were studied, such as websites (policy) documents and scientific reports. For more information on the cases, see De Groot, Salverda, Donders, and Van Dam (2012) and Van Dam, Salverda, and During (2010, 2011, 2014).

5.4 THREE CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

Before we analyse the process of subjectification in greater detail, we now will describe three different citizens' initiatives and their governance contexts.

Lingewaard Natural

The initiative Lingewaard Natural came into existence in April 1994 and has since become ever more active. The initiative aims to contribute to 'a beautiful and diverse landscape, where life is good for humans and animals' and they stand for 'management and restoration of the natural beauty, the provision of new planting and anything else directly or indirectly in connection therewith' (www.lingewaardnatuurlijk.nl). Lingewaard Natural started after one of its current members published a small article in a local newspaper in which he expressed his desire to get more actively involved in the field of birds and nature in the Lingewaard area, between the cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen. As he recalls in our interview, his article did not remain unnoticed:

'You write a small story about what you find important and what inspires you, and then several people react. In no time, there were 12–15 people sitting at my kitchen table. That group still exists and everything has expanded from here.'

Over the years, Lingewaard Natural has increasingly broadened its scope and today, it organizes various activities concerning education, landscape management and nature conservation. They organize nature lessons for children at all the primary schools in Lingewaard, educate guides for field courses, organize excursions for adults, replant 1 km of hedges every year, count birds, put up nesting boxes for Screech Owls, etc. According to the initiators, but also to the municipality Lingewaard, their activities match perfectly with the local and regional policy: *'You must have the same idea, the same movement, the same goal, and then you get somewhere. (...) We have an agency [referring to Lingewaard Natural] that can play a beautiful role in realizing our own goals'* (respondent municipality Lingewaard).

The initiative takes place within a larger area where there have been many spatial developments since the late 1990s, such as the development of Park Lingezegen. Park Lingezegen is meant as a green zone in the area between the cities Arnhem and Nijmegen where many new residential areas have been built. Although the initiators feel this makes the processes they are involved in complex and slow, they also perceive this governance context as full of opportunities. As the initiator puts it, they are operating in ‘the administrative violence around the realization of Park Lingezegen’.

The initiative Lingewaard Natural comes across as being well aware of the institutional world around itself. By creating project plans and vision documents, the initiative’s members actively aim to address the formal governmental governance context (like the municipality, the province and park organization Lingezegen) in which they operate. Moreover, they institutionalized themselves as a foundation to make it easier to function in the administrative environment, and to relate to and communicate with the institutional setting in which the foundation operates and tries to get all sorts of things done. Although this initiative institutionalized and professionalized its relations and communications with the wider governance context, the members deliberately choose to keep their own cooperation within the initiative and the contacts with the volunteers as informal as possible. Within the initiative, there is a core group of about 20 persons who do much of the work and there is a larger group of approximately 125–150 people who are occasionally active (Van Dam et al., 2010).

Lingewaard Natural has good relations and cooperates with several parties, and is actively lobbying and networking. The members manifest themselves as active and constructive, and consciously avoid appearing to be a resistance or pressure group, despite the fact they often disagree with the governance context, the decisions made, the opinions expressed and the tardiness of the policy processes. *‘We don’t want to be a protest group. Preferably we seek cooperation. In our eyes, this is working well, although we find the pace in nature development a bit slow’* (respondent Lingewaard Natural). In trying to realize their aims, they are persistent and sometimes exert some pressure.

Instead of protesting, they develop their own alternatives. An example is their recent plan to develop an agricultural nature park (to be a future part of Park Lingezegen). The residents will manage 15 hectares of grassland, with the aim of protecting meadow birds and restoring their numbers. Several institutional parties support the plan, including Lingewaard Municipality, Staatsbosbeheer [the Dutch Forestry Commission], Dienst Landelijk Gebied [the Government Service for Land and Water Management] and park organization Lingezegen. Those in-

stitutions got convinced because of the 'solidness' of the plan: it showed vision but also a good sense of reality, it had a detailed financial chapter etc. Those institutions wanted a separate foundation for the local residents to organize themselves, foundation Doornik Natuurakkers (www.doorniknatuurakkers.nl).

In this Lingewaard case, we see how the group of citizens reiterate traditional interdependencies with the local governments. These citizens looked for confirmation of their plans and manifested themselves as 'cooperative'. And the governmental organizations saw the initiative as a way to realize their policy. They had wishes and conditions; such as formal and detailed project plans and the establishment of a (extra) legal entity. The members of Lingewaard Natural regard these conditions as obligatory steps of cooperation to acquire subsidies and permissions.

Border Experience Enschede

The initiative Border Experience Enschede was constituted as a follow-up of an inventory of border stones by some members of Stichting Historische Sociëteit Enschede–Lonneker [the Historical Society Enschede–Lonneker Foundation]. The members discovered a small part of the old 'Commiezen' path, the path the border police used to patrol until 1995, when the active control of the Dutch-German Borders ceased. The members envisioned this old path to be turned into a trail and they wanted to restore the path so people could experience the national border again, so they could be introduced to the phenomenon of border stones, and walk through beautiful and forgotten nature areas. A secondary advantage would be that the path could then be restored and extended to where it had completely disappeared.

The simplicity of the idea proved to be in stark contrast to the complexity of its realization. It turned out to be very difficult to obtain public access to border stones on private land, which made it necessary to involve all kinds of organizations that somehow had formal power in the area or possible means for the realization of a trail. The members manifested themselves proactively, as initiators with a plan, and used their connections with others parties. As one respondent of the Border Experience Enschede told us: 'You have to try all kinds of things at different points in time and see where you end up.' This has led to a constellation of parties on both sides of the border, each adding their own conditions. Enschede Municipality wanted an international cooperation out of this, so the German cities Ahaus and Gronau were asked to participate. Ahaus highly valued a focus on education, so the plan was adjusted to make it into a children's experience as well. Gronau wanted to involve the Dutch municipality Losser, or at least

to extend the path to the so-called 'three countries border stone', the Drielandensteen. Some years earlier, they had tried to do a project around this 'special' stone, but it had failed, and now they saw a second change.

In the end, under the influence of the limited cooperation of landowners and the conditions of various institutional parties that became involved, an alternative route was developed: a border experience route in the form of a thematic cycle route that meanders across the border, for which you can obtain information and investigative missions through SMS and audio (Van Dam et al., 2011). They decided to develop a longer route, to enable people to visit a fair amount of publically accessible border stones, and to meet the wishes of the institutional partners involved. Evaluating the cooperation with these institutional partners, the initiators say: *'We do have the feeling that some things are out of our hands, but it still is our "baby". Our partners don't do anything behind our back, so that is going well'* (respondent Border Experience Enschede).

This initiative to keep the historic border elements in the social memory of the region ran into regulations and political conditions. Each governmental organization that got involved saw options to realize their own wishes or to tie up loose ends in their policies. The initiators felt they had to honour the conditions; otherwise the idea of a border experience would not be executed.

Residents Association and Action Committee Horstermeerpolder

The Horstermeerpolder is a reclaimed natural lake in the vicinity of Amsterdam. The regional authority, the Province of North Holland, intends to raise the water level and convert large parts of the polder into wetlands. These plans, dating from the 1990s, are supposed to solve the drought problem in the surrounding areas, help nature develop and provide water storage. The residents of the Horstermeerpolder do not believe that these plans are feasible. According to the most recent plan (plan Kienhuizen), the 'middle' of the polder, where most homes and buildings are located, will remain dry. The middle of the polder, however, is also the lowest point of the polder and water generally runs from high to low. The residents fear their homes to be at risk and they also wonder whether the plan will resolve the drought problem in the surrounding areas, since the intention is to leave the lowest point of the polder dry. Moreover, they find converting land into wetlands unacceptable because according to them it does not suit the people living in the polder, the scenery and the buildings nor will it lead to the desired recreation. With the history of the area in mind, they feel obliged to properly maintain the area; and find it morally wrong to let the polder 'deteriorate', when some of their ancestors have even lost their lives reclaiming this land.

The residents' association Horstermeerpolder 'looks after the interests of the citizens of the Horstermeerpolder in the broadest sense possible'. The association has 300 members and has been active since the original plans came to light, at the beginning of the 1990s. The action committee Horstermeerpolder has become active more recently. Both groups are in favour of the protection and development of nature in the area, but not in the form of the wetlands as planned by the regional authority and nature organization. Instead of the proposed wetlands they want to create nature with more possibilities for recreation. Most importantly, they want to make sure the buildings in the polder stay dry. Both groups want an adaptation of the plans of the province of North Holland, but have different strategies to achieve this. The residents' association has been trying to participate in the policy processes; they wanted to be able to influence the plans for their polder through official channels: *'We, the residents' association, are of the opinion that we have to go through the official channels. We believe that we should get people on our side through administrative consultation.'* They developed an alternative plan, called plan WeideMeren, meeting the province's conditions concerning the polder, but this plan was ignored. They presented all kinds of arguments, putting forward 'objective arguments', whereas they had many 'experience' arguments (arguments based on their personal experience with working the land and with the behaviour of the institutions) and 'moral' arguments (arguments based on their view on nature that all nature is man-made and therefore should be maintained and based on the history of their grandparents reclaiming land). But since moral arguments and arguments based on personal experience have the connotation of 'emotional, angry citizens', they do not put these arguments forward and mainly use 'objective' arguments (De Groot et al., 2012). They want to be taken seriously, and try to do that by making a strong case 'content wise': they make use of scientific reports, use the help of other organizations that are experts in the fields and they make use of a scientific icon in the field of water management. Moreover, they try to 'upscale' their argumentation beyond their own local interest, by pointing out that the plans will not be a solution for the drought problems in the surrounding areas (De Groot et al., 2012). For a long time (at least a decade), they tried to participate in the institutional trajectory, but in the end, they felt the institutional partners were just not taking them seriously.

At a certain point, the residents of Horstermeer felt that they were not heard and that the residents' association could not make a difference 'through talking and politics'. Interestingly, in other studies, personal arguments (Aarts & te Molder, 1998; Neuvel & Aarts, 2004) appeared to be more convincing and effective in comparison to objective arguments. And in a certain way, you see this phenomenon with the establishment of an action committee in 2008. This com-

mittee followed a different path and successfully tried to publicize and influence the situation in the Horstermeerpolder by generating media attention. Moreover, the action committee functioned as a way to relieve frustration and anger: 'To let those institutions know how fed up we are, ask them what in god's name they were doing. Enough is enough; we are not to be trifled with. It ends here' (respondent action committee). They declared their own republic, the Republic Horstermeerpolder, wrote their own law and anthem for the Horstermeerpolder, organized marches, etc. They succeeded in getting a lot of media attention and the institutional actors got nervous. It is not clear yet what the future holds for the Horstermeer, although there are signs that the residents will get their way.

Here, we see a residents' association that tries to connect with the governmental organizations, without letting go of their objectives and an action committee that tries to impress through media attention. The involved governmental actors ignore the unwelcome message, and try to marginalize the ideas, plans and activities of both the residents' association and the action committee.

5.5 SUBJECTIFICATION OF CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

In the three case studies presented above, different interactions and dependencies between governmental and non-governmental organizations came to the fore and each of these relations produced different actors and different roles for these actors. We will point out several techniques in the process of subjectification, resulting from the performativity effects of the identification of politically justified objectives, the identification of formalized organizational forms and not in my backyard (NIMBY) qualification and/or argumentation.

Reproducing politically justified objectives

The cases show that governmental actors use the discursive technique of governing politically justified objectives: they prefer to deal with those citizens' initiatives that have objectives that correspond to those in their policies. They only support those initiatives that act according their own governmental policy plans and further their own policy. In the case of Lingewaard Natural, the municipality thinks the initiative is important because they have a mutual interest and the initiative is seen as an agency that realizes policy goals. The initiator uses a technique of anticipation and adaptation: he studies the relevant issues in landscape and nature policy and takes up on that. He is of the opinion that their initiative literally tries to realize the policy objectives.

Also in the case of Border Experience Enschede, the institutional organizations are dominant, by adding various conditions that would make the project more interesting and relevant for political actors. The initiators deploy adaptation as a discursive technique. They adapt to those conditions and objectives, resulting in changes to the original plan: the idea of a walking trail on the former border was replaced by the idea of a longer cycle route, meandering across the border between the Netherlands and Germany. The discourse on politically justified objectives has proven to be performative in this case as well; and as a result, the involved people increasingly became the citizens the local government expected them to be.

In the case of the Horstermeerpolder, however, the citizens' initiatives and the institutional organizations do not have the same opinion about the plans for the area, in other words, they do not share the same objectives and no attempts were taken to adapt their policies and objectives, rhetorically nor in practice. Here we observe that the involved governmental organizations were not enthusiastic about this citizens' initiative, which was not in line with the policy to be implemented. The initiative felt ignored and bullied, which moved them further away from becoming a 'good' citizen.

Formalization for increasing interdependency with the governance context

The second technique in which the dominance of the governmental discourse expresses itself is the formalization of the organization form. Governmental organizations express their preference for those initiatives that operate in an organizational form that feels 'sound' and 'familiar'. Support or permission tends to be given only to well-organized initiatives that, for example, write project plans and that have established legal entities; and not to loosely organized platforms, which often do not have a clear and uniform plan, let alone a written project plan (Van Dam et al., 2014). Citizens' initiatives react with a technique of adaptation: they adapt themselves to the wishes and images of governmental institutions and play along. Citizens' initiatives that want to or have to cooperate with institutional partners institutionalize themselves in foundations or associations. Lingewaard Natural is formally a foundation and operates as a formal institution in its relations to other institutional partners. The initiators of Border Experience Enschede work from the Historical Society Enschede–Lonneker Foundation; and the residents of the Horstermeer that wanted to participate in the policy process also established a legal entity: an association. The action committee in the Horstermeer, whose objective it was to make the institutional actors nervous, did not form a legal entity. Interestingly, we observed the initiatives operating formally when dealing with formal organizations and on the other hand operating informally, when dealing

with fellow residents and volunteers. In all three cases, the cooperation within the initiative, with fellow residents and with people who are occasionally involved is kept informal. As the initiator of Lingewaard Natural puts it:

'I find informal organisations very important. (...) To maintain a positive atmosphere in an organisation is an art in itself. I tend to formalise things, and sometimes you need to, but this can easily result in negative energy. People start discussing what needs to be formalised and what doesn't, and before you know it you're only talking about abstractions and not about the plans you have for children or for planting trees for instance. I always try to think carefully and have many conversations, looking into each other's eyes, not to have too many meetings, writing everything down, taking notes all the time.'

The initiators manifest and frame themselves differently and also act differently when dealing with different actors, and this quote demonstrates the performative power of the organizational discourse: it may even cause dilemmas and potential conflicts within a citizens' initiative (Salverda, Slangen, Kruit, Weijsschede, & Mulder, 2009).

Avoiding the NIMBY label

The third technique revealing the dominance of the governmental discourse is the avoidance of marginalization, whereby citizens' initiatives are counteracted with NIMBY arguments. Although nowadays the initiatives are usually not called NIMBYists openly, the NIMBY-argumentation still lives on in many Dutch administrations (Duineveld et al., 2010). With the Dutch planning system, citizens who disagreed with the governmental decisions were always at risk of being 'accused' of being 'just a civilian', of being 'emotional', of 'only having their personal interest in mind' and of only looking at problems from a local perspective, not seeing the bigger picture (Burningham, 2000; Phil, 2006). Governmental organizations on the contrary, claim to have the rational expertise, to rely on reason, to have the public interest in mind and to rise above the local level (Gibson, 2005; Schively, 2007; Wolsink, 2007).

The longstanding tradition of the formal planning system to frame those who disagree as NIMBYs has a performative effect on the self-representation and presentation of citizens' initiatives. The fear of being seen as NIMBYs and being belittled as such is very present with citizens' initiatives. From our interviews, it became clear that citizens were very much aware that it is not wise to present their actions as being in their own interests, having witnessed the way they can be cast aside as NIMBYs (Van der Arend, 2007). In dealing with this marginaliza-

tion technique, citizens' initiatives have completely mastered the technique of anticipation and of framing themselves constructively: they position themselves as initiators instead of protesters and formulate their activities 'strategically'. What sets out as citizens' protest or as an initiative filling the gap of governmental organizations responsibilities is often converted into an initiative, an alternative or at least as something positive. Many of the activities and strategies of citizens' initiatives have to do with being taken seriously and avoiding the possibility that governmental organizations might call them NIMBYs or use NIMBY-argumentation against them.

Both Lingewaard Natural and Border Experience Enschede deliberately manifest themselves as proactive and 'constructive' instead of reactionary and negative. Being positive became part of their identity and they act likewise. In the Horstermeer, where the ideas of the governmental organizations and residents do not correspond, the residents' association tried hard to stay well away of the NIMBY-corner by anticipating on the possible NIMBY-argumentation: the use of officially recognized experts, they emphasize being rational by using mainly 'objective' argumentation and they bring their argumentation to a scale above their own local interest. One might say that because this residents' association did not adapt their objectives, they were still ignored and bullied. The residents noticed that – despite all their efforts – they were not taken serious. As a consequence, an action committee was established, revolting against the plans of the province by declaring the Republic Horstermeer. Away of protesting that stresses the committee's autonomy and helps to elude the performativity of the NIMBY discourse.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In the three study cases, a process of subjectification is observed in which discursively constituted subjects arise (Butler, 1997; Foucault, 1994). We notice how citizens' initiatives are shaped by the (perceived) expectations, wishes and actions of the governance context. The governmental discourses, with their embedded expectations on the role and functioning of non-state actors like citizens' initiatives, have performative effects on the production of citizens' initiatives and citizens. In the practice of citizens' initiatives, the initiatives are both made subject and subject themselves to Dutch governmental organizations. We see processes of self-referentiality and self-transformation (Luhmann, 1995, 2008; Seidl, 2005) in which citizens' initiatives internalize the assumptions about what is considered important to the relevant governmental organizations. The cases show that this process has implications for the support or disregard of the initiatives.

The three case studies provide us with clear examples of how the citizens' initiatives are constituted as subjects. We have demonstrated this process of subjectification to run along three performative discourses, in which discursive techniques of both governmental organizations and those of citizens take place:

- (1) Identification of politically justified objectives: governmental organizations prefer to collaborate with and support only those citizens' initiatives that have corresponding objectives. Citizens' initiatives tend to incorporate policy objectives in their project in advance, to ensure a positive relationship with those who govern.
- (2) Identification of formalized organization form: governmental organizations prefer to deal with and facilitate those initiatives that operate in an organizational form they recognize as 'sound' and 'familiar'. Certain formalizations of the initiatives, certain ways of organizing can be recognized by the logics of the governmental discourse, and therefore, they can make a difference (Seidl & Becker, 2006), others cannot. Citizens' initiatives appropriate this, but keep their informal organization alive when they are amongst themselves, because this fits with the trust between the initiators and the notion of doing things together.
- (3) NIMBY qualification and/or argumentation: the governmental organizations apply the technique of marginalization, of counteracting citizens' initiatives with NIMBY arguments. In our cases, the 'good' citizen responds to this discourse by stressing their constructive and positive position, and by emphasizing operating rationally and serving the needs of a wider community.

Despite the increasing emphasis given to citizens' initiatives by Dutch governmental organizations in their policies and reports, the legacies of older governmental discourses pertain. The process of subjectification shows us that the 'old' government-thinking is not only present at governmental organizations but is also reproduced within citizens' initiatives (Butler, 1997; Foucault, 1994). We observed new 'teamwork' between citizens' initiatives and governmental organizations in which there is a mutual reproduction of government-thinking. What seems to be an escape from the 'old' governance discourse is paradoxically, reproducing this very same discourse.

The citizens' initiatives can be seen as cases in which good citizenship is delineated (Jones, Pykett, & Whitehead, 2013). The 'good' citizen is proactive, incorporates governmental objectives in his actions, is capable of setting up a reliable organization resembling or at least being suitable to those of the government, relies on reason and formal expert judgement and incorporates the interests of a wider community. With the birth of the 'good' citizen, also the 'bad' citizen

comes to life as a subject: the citizen who sticks to his own objectives, organization form, manifestation and/or inherent argumentation.

Looking at the attitude of citizens' initiatives in the process of subjectification, particularly the 'good' citizens, one can label them as obedient, docile and submissive, but also as cunning and strategic. The latter can be substantiated by realizing that the citizens' initiatives also exercise power and deploy various strategies of internalization at different stages.

Within the context of an emerging 'Do-Democracy', the normative delineation of good citizenship changes. Dutch governmental organizations have a vision of ideal citizens: they develop their own ideas and take initiative, sometimes evolving into social entrepreneurship and social innovation. Also there are notions on dealing with citizens' initiatives adequately: stimulating them, facilitating them and giving them 'space'. On paper this all looks fine, but looking at the techniques applied to the practice of citizens' initiatives, they act quite hierarchically and manipulatively. They fail to cut off the king's head (metaphorically speaking, of course) (Foucault, 2003), resulting in a gap between 'optimistic' rhetoric and everyday practice.

We have shown the difficulties that come with changing ideas of citizenship. A new morality emerges in which the discourse of individual values and norms is being replaced, supplemented or mixed with action-oriented discourse. This discourse requires competences such as being active, social, rational and well-organized. It seems that the citizens of the Do-Democracy have to combine the virtues of a citizen and a civil servant at the same time. In our analysis, we have used the theory of subjectification (Butler, 1997; Foucault, 1994) to analyse the moral dispositions towards citizens' initiatives. Our combination with the theory of self-transformation (Luhmann, 1995; Seidl, 2005) accounts for the self-referential process of translating the citizenship instructions into actions of the citizens' initiatives. The action-oriented discourse and discussion on 'good' citizens' initiatives have performative effects on (the expectations about) 'good' citizenship of individual citizens. Moreover, the distinction between the public and the private domain is blurring and cannot be used un-problematically to distinguish the selfish (bad) from the altruist (good) citizen. This is one of the reasons why this action-oriented approach towards the citizenship discourse requires more scientific work.

The dialectical relationship between the governmental expectations and initiators strategically or pragmatically using these expectations can be interpreted as quite negative, but can also be seen as a – necessary – step in the direction of a

more citizen-driven society (provided we opt for that). In terms of Butler (1997), subjection is neither simply the domination of a subject nor its production, but designates a certain kind of restriction in production. However, if the development towards a more citizen-driven society is to be successful, the individuality of citizens' initiatives, for example, in ideals and objectives, in organization and course of action, should be given more respect and the idea of citizens' initiatives as executing/operational organs for policy must be cast aside. There should be fewer restrictions and more opportunities. The challenge for governmental organizations is to become more open to citizens, even if they do not always behave the way the government expects them to. We believe this could also build the confidence citizens have in the way our democracy is organized, and the bodies operating in this system. Furthermore, we learned that aspects governmental organizations value, such as 'formalization', do not necessarily lead to the aspired objectives. As Mintzberg puts it (1994): 'three decades of experience with strategic planning have taught us about the need to loosen up the process of strategy making rather than trying to seal it off by arbitrary formalisation'.



6

THE ART OF BONDING

Informational capital in Dutch green urban citizens' initiatives

ABSTRACT

Today's Western society is characterized by a transition towards self-organization by citizens in communities. Increasingly, societal problems are addressed by groups of citizens who take action to find concrete solutions. A second feature of Western society is that it is an information society in which information and communication play a key role. In this chapter, we analyse how these two societal trends come together at the community level. Applying a relational and contingent perspective to how green urban citizens' initiatives operate and develop, we look into the role of information in their interactions with other people, organizations and institutions. This leads to the conclusion that informational capital is fundamental to the realization of citizens' initiatives and that informational capital is generated, identified, used and enlarged through the relational strategies of bonding, bridging and linking. It is a process that works both ways and reinforces citizens' initiatives.

Submitted as: van Dam, R.I., Salverda, I.E., Hassink, J., Vaandrager, L. and C. Wentink (sub)
The art of bonding: Informational capital in Dutch green urban citizens' initiatives. Community Development Journal, Oxford Journals.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Modern Western society can be characterized as complex, diffuse, horizontal, informed and emancipated (Cilliers, 1998; Friedman, 1999). The boundaries of public care provision and private initiative are shifting (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2011; Scott, 2011) and the public domain is a shared playing field for societal players, markets and governments (Bourgon, 2011). Numerous examples can be found of citizens taking action to find concrete solutions to societal problems and challenges. These citizens' initiatives depend on self-organization in order for the citizens to take action and realize their objectives in the public domain. People work together in what is sometimes called the 'Do-it-yourself society', 'Participatory society', 'Do-ocracy' or 'WEconomy' (Marinetto, 2003; Chen, 2009; Jonker, 2013). These citizens are not so much consumers as producers, working together on the development of sustainable energy, local food networks, small-scale healthcare concepts, ecological neighbourhoods, education, cultural heritage, landscape, etc. Our current society, this WEconomy, is no longer only about finance and economic capital, but also about other forms of capital, such as social, cultural and human capital. Furthermore, the importance of these other forms of capital is growing, influenced not just by economic crises and budget cuts but also by informed and proactive citizens. The organization of society is changing, supported by coordination mechanisms such as 'exchanging', 'sharing' and 'creating' (Jonker, 2013). The common denominator in these mechanisms is making connections and the art of bonding: knowing how to connect and who to connect to.

It is also widely acknowledged that we live in an information society (Castells, 2011; Webster, 2014). There is a great deal more information than ever before, and information plays a central, strategic role in almost everything we do, from business transactions to leisure pursuits and government activities. The development of new digital information and communication technologies in recent decades has greatly facilitated access to information, and individuals therefore have more resources and opportunities to act and decide autonomously, leading to emancipation and empowerment (Bennett and Segerberg, 2011; Foth et al., 2011). This provides opportunities for dialogue, forming opinions, PR, participations, research, marketing, science, policy, etc. (Shirky, 2008; Van Dijk, 2010). The access to and use of information by citizens leads to a power shift in governance processes, also termed 'informational governance' (Fischer, 2000; Mol, 2006). In this chapter, we want to examine how the do-it-yourself society and the information society come together at the community level. There has been considerable research on active citizenship, focussing mostly on citizens' participation in government policies (Bevir et al., 2003; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004) but increasingly

also on citizens' initiatives (Healey, 2015; Wagenaar and Van der Heijden, 2015; Van Dam et al., 2014a, 2014b). But it is unclear how information plays a role in how citizens' initiatives operate. In this chapter, we examine the practice of self-organizing groups and take a closer look at how citizens take initiatives for achieving societal goals, with a focus on the role of information, showing how information arises in citizens' initiatives. Our research question is: *What role does information play in the realization of citizens' initiatives?*

In our focus on the practice of citizens' initiatives and the role of information, we look at the connections made and the mechanisms whereby information plays a role in how citizens' initiatives operate and develop. For that reason, the theoretical framework will further address the concepts of citizens' initiatives, various forms of capital and the relational strategies which capture the mechanisms whereby they operate and develop. Next, the research methodology is described and nine Dutch green urban citizens' initiatives introduced. The analysis that follows first examines how informational capital is part of citizens' initiatives, then explores the relations and dynamics between social, human and informational capital in how citizens' initiatives operate and the mechanisms linking informational capital to the relational strategies that are vital to the realization of citizens' initiatives. The last section contains the conclusion and discussion.

6.2 THEORY

We share the dynamic view of forms of governance espoused by many governance scholars (Flyvbjerg et al., 2012; Foucault, 1994). The transition to governance manifests itself in the changing roles of citizens and efforts to determine which responsibilities should be public and which should be private. The changing relationship between government and citizens puts the latter in a position in which they organize certain public matters for themselves. In citizens' initiatives, assertive citizens proactively take concerted action in a range of fields within the public domain (Bovaird, 2007; Seyfang et al., 2013). Besides acting in many areas (health care, education, energy, culture, nature and the landscape), they also combine multiple functions and activities: they are integrated (Wagenaar and Van der Heijden, 2015). Initiators are often driven by passion and idealism, such as a wish to contribute in their own way and in their own field to a better world. Generally, citizens' initiatives are a combination of self-interest and public interest. They usually organize themselves informally, are action- and solution-oriented and are characterized by their local, small-scale nature and strong personal commitment (Bang, 2009; Van Dam et al., 2014a).

The citizens' initiatives that are the subject of this chapter involve groups of people who organize themselves, take action in the public domain, create public values and organize and manage their social, cultural and green living environment. Besides financial capital, citizens' initiatives possess and use several other forms of capital, such as social and human capital, which can be seen as 'resources' that 'feed' the initiative and facilitate its success. Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (1995) include in their conceptualization of social capital the actual or potential resources that can be accessed. Social capital refers to social ties, trust, reciprocity and shared norms and values (Putnam, 1995). We distinguish between social capital at the group level and human capital at the individual level. Human capital includes skills and competences such as an enterprising attitude, leadership, networking skills, strategic vision, improvisation talent, empathy and perseverance (Coleman, 1988, Salamon, 1991). Although citizens' initiatives are characterized by the role and importance of the 'main' initiator or initiators, human capital is not restricted to the main initiator but is present in all the individual members. In this chapter we focus particularly on the role of information in the development of citizens' initiatives. Information too can be seen as a 'resource' for citizens' initiatives. We therefore talk about informational capital. The concept of informational capital originates with Bourdieu (1987), who extrapolated it from the concept of cultural capital. Informational capital is generally used in relation to business organizations and to indicate formal forms of information, also expressed as academic capital (Munk, 2003) and intellectual capital (Arvidsson, 2003). In this chapter, we view informational capital as a form of capital alongside human and social capital. These forms of capital reflect a changing social system in which citizens play a vital role in creating public value, and in which other, less tangible, forms of capital and reciprocity gain importance alongside financial capital and generalized reciprocity (Putnam, 1993; Van Dam et al., 2014a). Informational capital is seen as a resource for citizens and can relate to all kinds of data, information, knowledge and expertise that citizens have at their disposal. This includes explicit but also non-formal, tacit kinds. Those resources, that informational capital, can also be gained, used/injected and shared/exchanged. It represents a capability for action based in information. The activity around informational capital can be described as various forms of communication.

We analyse the practice of the citizens' initiatives: their ideals and objectives, their actions and strategies, their organization, and their development and realization. We take the practice-based view of strategies as something people *do* rather than something organizations and firms *have* (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). We also believe citizens' initiatives must be seen within their social context: actors do not act in isolation, but draw on socially defined ways of acting (Whittington 2006). Following the related ideas of Luhmann (1995) and Seidl

(2005), we see the realization and inherent strategies of a citizens' initiative as the contingent product of a self-transforming organization that relates its internal process to the outside world. In the process of self-transformation, interactions between citizens' initiatives and the outside world influence the identity of the initiative, leading in turn to new strategies (Van Dam et al., 2014a). The organization and realization of citizens' initiatives can be understood as a continual process of becoming, in which practices repeatedly reconstruct the organization while at the same time providing the grounds for its modification. Theory on relational processes and strategies is relevant to a study of citizens' initiatives as contingent and related to the outside world. Putnam (2000) sees the relational processes as activities concerning social capital, emphasizing the connections with different actors. He identifies two forms: *bonding* social capital refers to trusting, cooperative relations between members of a network with a similar social identity, while *bridging* social capital refers to connections between members who are unlike one other, but are 'more or less equal in terms of their status and power'. Szreter and Woolcock (2004) expand on this distinction by adding a third form that covers the interaction between individuals and networks that are unequal in terms of power and influence, such as the relationship between government and citizens. This *linking* social capital connects individuals and groups in different social strata in a hierarchy where power, social status and wealth are accessed to different degrees by different groups. Applied to the practice of citizens' initiatives, the relational strategy of bonding refers to the interaction between the initiators and, for example, their fellow residents; the relational strategy of bridging refers to the interaction between the initiative and other local groups with different interests or orientations, such as farmers, entrepreneurs or other initiatives; and the relational strategy of linking refers to the interaction between initiators and institutional actors. In their work on social capital, Granovetter (1973) and Lin (2001) distinguish between 'weak and strong ties', suggesting that the palette of available resources can be extended by including 'weak' ties.

6.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study we are interested in groups of people putting their ideas into practice and achieving their objectives regarding their living environment, with a particular focus on how information arises in the development and implementation of citizens' initiatives. We have opted for an interpretive approach, which seeks to understand the way in which people, give meaning to specific events and practices (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, eds, 2006). An important feature of this approach, given that this study examines people's modes of operation and

activities, is that it views the social as constructed in the intertwinement of action and meaning (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Moreover, this approach places value on a range of ways in which meaning arises, including informal and less rational ways. This makes it suitable for studying citizens' initiatives, as informal methods are an important part of their practice. The meanings can be articulated in discourses, but can also be embedded in the patterns, principles and mechanisms of a practice.

In keeping with our interpretive research approach, a qualitative method was used for the research, enabling a deeper understanding of day-to-day practices, relations and interactions. This is exploratory research, aimed at getting an initial, general overview of the role of information in a wide variety of Dutch green urban initiatives.

Firstly, interviews were held with four experts concerning the role of information in citizens' initiatives. Examples were then collected by searching the Internet, social media networks, and previous related research on citizens' initiatives. This resulted in a typology with forty-five examples of green urban citizens' initiatives. Nine initiatives were then selected using the criterion of variety in the operationalization of objectives, approaches and types of group. An overview of the cases is given in table 2 below.

	<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Where</i>	
1	Duurzaam Soesterkwartier [Sustainable Soester quarter]	Residents of the Soesterkwartier neighbourhood	Activities concerning energy conservation, renewable energy and sustainable construction	Amersfoort
2	Stadsboerderij Caetshage [Caetshage City Farm]	Caetshage Foundation	Organic food production, development of biodiversity, nature and the landscape, and care farm	Culemborg
3	Emma's Hof [Emma's Court]	Residents of the Regentesse neighbourhood	Development and maintenance of city garden and organizing all kinds of activities	The Hague
4	Kracht van Utrecht [Power of Utrecht]	Residents of Utrecht	Making integrated proposals for accessibility, economic development and environmental quality in the city of Utrecht	Utrecht
5	Mooi Wageningen [Beautiful Wageningen]	Residents of Wageningen	Vigilant about threats to nature and the landscape, and undertaking a range of activities related to the local landscape	Wageningen

		<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Where</i>
6	Ecovrede [EcoPeace] also called EVS, or 'ecologisch vernieuwende samenleving' [ecologically innovative society]	EcoVrede Foundation	New concept for ecologically innovative society/connections between people and nature. The aim is to involve people in ecological projects, so that they experience and connect with nature	Arnhem
7	As We Speak	Young residents of Arnhem	Digital platform that highlights innovative and sustainable projects and initiatives in the city of Arnhem going on 'as we speak'	Arnhem
8	Singelpark Leiden [Canal Park Leiden]	Friends of Singelpark Foundation	Aiming to transform the banks of the six-kilometre-long canal around Leiden into a continuous park	Leiden
9	Groen Speelplein Vrije School Harderwijk [Harderwijk Steiner School Nature Playground]	Parents of children who attend the Steiner School	Transforming a paved playground into a 'green play and learning landscape' and maintaining the playground	Harderwijk

Table 2: *Overview cases.*

In-depth interviews were held with the initiators of these nine Dutch green urban initiatives. These semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed. Secondary materials were studied, such as websites, policy documents and scientific reports. Moreover, two learning network meetings were held with the members of these initiatives, in which the role of information in the initiatives was discussed. We used triangulation to enhance the interpretation of the findings from different sources. The interaction of multiple sources of data collection leads to an enrichment of the research (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Although multiple case studies are analysed, our primary aim is not to compare. We aim to offer insights with regard to groups of people taking charge of their living environment, their motivations, their working methods, their interactions and how information manifests itself in these practices. We prioritize analyses that connect practical knowledge with theoretical assessment. As the interviews focused on everyday meaning and everyday relationships expressed in ordinary language, some quotes are used in the chapter for illustration.

6.4 INFORMATION IN CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

Information and communication are both objective and means

The objectives, ideals and ideology driving an initiative 'make' the initiative. The objectives, ideals and ideology are also what appeal to others and draws them in. 'That goal, and sharing that goal – creating a platform of young people who map transformations – a lot of people respond to that' (respondent from As We Speak). The initiators are also aware that a strong ideal is what attracts people, so this is actively used in the communication. Generally, people are charmed by the idea of a citizens' initiative in which citizens implement their own ideas. 'People warm to the idea that this was not invented by the municipality, but by residents – who have no vested interests. Not by a civil servant, politician or landowner' (respondent from Canal Park Leiden). Emphasizing that citizens are acting and achieving things by themselves is what gets people on board.

For several of the initiatives, acquiring and/or communicating information is one of their objectives. Power of Utrecht, for example, produces reports to inform and convince other actors, while As We Speak is a platform for communicating information about innovative sustainability. For EcoPeace too, key objectives concern information and knowledge, and raising awareness in particular. However, initiators also see the possession and provision of information as a means to achieving their ends. Take for example Emma's Court and Canal Park Leiden, in which communication is used to realize their main objective: developing a city park. The initiators think that poor communication undermines the concept, while good communication helps them achieve their objectives.

Information and means of communication

The citizens' initiatives in our study use and emphasize different means of communication. Almost all the citizens' initiatives have a website but other means of communication are used too, such as flyers and project plans. Moreover, they actively approach media such as local papers and regional and national TV news programmes. Some initiatives, such as Canal Park and As We Speak, make extensive use of social media, while others, such as Power of Utrecht, Emma's Court and Caetshage, do not. Several citizens' initiatives found there were groups of people who could not be reached through the Internet or social media (e.g. Sustainable Soester Quarter). According to the initiators, these were mostly the elderly and people with a lower level of education. In those cases either a personal approach is chosen (e.g. going door to door), or a more institutional one (going through relevant institutions such as housing associations). So different 'target groups' are

approached and involved in different ways. For Caetshage and Harderwijk Nature Playground, face-to-face encounters are the most important because it is felt that they generate the strongest connections. But for As We Speak, for example, it is the combination and interaction of online and offline activities that is important. The people in this initiative are very digitally oriented, both individually and as a group, and their activities blend well with their social lives.

The various means of communication are used to inform people, attract attention and stimulate all kinds of activities, as well as to amass informational capital. In Canal Park Leiden, people were asked via Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook to give examples of other, larger cities with city parks. Collecting information about what is happening, where it is happening and who is involved is of great importance to the way a citizens' initiative operates.

6.5 INFORMATIONAL CAPITAL, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL

Social capital and informational capital

Although most of the citizens' initiatives in our study (e.g. Canal Park Leiden, Eco-Peace, Caetshage, Beautiful Wageningen, Emma's Court) are legal entities and have officially appointed chairs, secretaries and treasurers, in practice they act informally most of the time. The legal entity and its formal roles are mostly used in relation to the outside world. Most of the initiatives in our study consist of a small core group surrounded by a larger group of people connected to the core with different degrees of intensity, in different ways and at different times.

We observe a combination of work and social life that is typical of citizens' initiatives (Van Dam et al., 2014a, 2014b). This applies to the objectives, and also to the information, knowledge and expertise present. In addition to the fact that the initiative often becomes 'a way of life', it also gives active professionals a chance to apply their skills in a citizens' initiative aimed at improving their living environment (e.g. Harderwijk Nature Playground and Beautiful Wageningen). Canal Park Leiden, for example, uses this appeal to recruit active initiators. In several cases, the day-to-day management and the division of tasks and roles are a reflection of informational capital.

Social capital in this research refers to the group processes, the social ties, trust and shared norms and values. We found that a collective feeling about who they are and what they stand for is very important according to the citizens' initiative

members. For quite a few of these initiatives, part of this collective identity is the appeal of implementing your own ideas and plans – ownership and deciding and acting on your own. Working together, trusting each other and having the feeling that relations are mutual/reciprocal are also important aspects. One can say that the informational capital of a group is defined by the social capital of the group. This works the other way around too: the social network/structure of a group is strongly determined by the information flows.

Human capital and informational capital

The informational capital, such as the knowledge and expertise of the people involved in the citizens' initiatives, often reflects the competencies they gained from their education and/or current or previous jobs. Take for example the initiators of As We Speak, who studied communication and sustainable innovation at university. Their degrees were directly relevant to the development of a digital platform for sustainability. Similarly, one of the initiators of EcoPeace specialized in citizens' participation and communication at university.

Moreover, some of these initiators work in a relevant field as professionals and it is not uncommon for them to have more informational capital or to be better informed than, for example, the civil servants in the municipality or employees at relevant institutions. In the case of Canal Park Leiden, the plan for Leiden city centre, which includes the idea for the park, was written and designed by the main Canal Park initiator and then adopted by the municipality.

As a rule, implementing a citizens' initiative is not an easy process. The initiators need to have a great deal of perseverance, passion and conviction, and to put in a great deal of time, work and energy. Several respondents describe it as an extra job on top of their 'day job' (e.g. Caetshage, Harderwijk Nature Playground and Canal Park Leiden). Referring to the initiative as a whole, or sometimes to certain activities within the initiative, some respondents even said if they had known what it entailed, they would never have started. These initiatives make big demands on human capital such as social skills, entrepreneurship, strategic vision, and organizational and communication talent (e.g. Caetshage, Beautiful Wageningen and Sustainable Soester Quarter).

The main initiators are a deciding factor in the implementation of a citizens' initiative: the initiative bears the stamp of their personality and they guide it towards success. Initiators keep their eyes and ears open in the field and are alert to developments in the local community: this is one of the initiators' qualities that contribute to the success of an initiative. This success is felt to depend on access to a lot

of different informational capital. But the main initiators must be careful not to be too dominant, and to ensure that other people are acknowledged for their contribution too. Moreover, it is of strategic importance to show the outside world that other people are involved too. Municipal civil servants, for instance, always want to know how much support an initiative enjoys in the local community. In this situation, it is considered strategic to present the initiative as a group. The main initiators tend to be highly educated, to work in a profession that is related to the initiative and to have useful contacts – which contributes to the social capital of the initiative. In short, one could say that the various forms of capital – informational, human and social capital – are interrelated and reinforce each other.

6.6 INFORMATIONAL CAPITAL IN RELATIONAL STRATEGIES

Relational strategies in citizens' initiatives

The activities and strategies of the citizens' initiatives emerge in interactions with others, resulting in connections with various people and institutions. The citizens' initiatives have strong links to the outside world and are developed and implemented through these links. The initiators, for example, make connections with people with a similar identity (bonding). These are mostly people they have strong ties with, such as neighbours, peers, friends and family. They connect with and motivate others through personal contact, and the initiative becomes known by word of mouth and through social media. They organize meetings with a social goal in mind, and devote much attention to keeping all these connections 'active'. Many initiators have found that the process of bonding is enhanced by keeping things informal, emphasizing the social side (e.g. having a good time) and celebrating successes (however minor). As an initiator in Emma's Court puts it: 'Yes, actually there was a very strong social aspect. Sitting around the table as a group of friends, philosophizing about what could be done over a bottle of wine... We have become a group of friends'. As We Speak says they make all decisions about what goes on the website together. The relational strategy of bonding often takes the form of carrying out activities together and lending a hand, but also includes gaining informational capital.

The initiatives of Power of Utrecht and As We Speak, for example, actively seek to involve people who have informational capital, as does Canal Park Leiden:

'Friends of the Canal Park has six committees, and I approached all those people myself. I visited them all at home or met them in the pub, and they are all top people in their fields. (...) So on those committees we've got a water-board official and some directors of big companies; our treasurer is

treasurer at KLM – millions go through his hands. The whole Leiden municipal budget is peanuts to him, let alone the budget for the Canal Park. Whereas it makes me very nervous. In this way, you get the best: we've got directors of communication in hospitals and other institutions on our communication committee, and bankers on the fundraising committee.'

The citizens' initiatives also show examples of bridging: connections with others who might have different objectives and are not as close – at least at the start – but are more or less equal in terms of their status and power. Power of Utrecht for example, formed a group linking people from different communities in the region who shared concerns about car use and nature. Other examples of bridging are the connections that were made between different categories of local residents (e.g. Sustainable Soester Quarter, which started out with home owners and then linked up with tenants in rented accommodation), contact with different groups of residents (e.g. Emma's Court) and contact with other related citizens' initiatives or associations (e.g. Power of Utrecht).

For many citizens' initiatives, 'linking' is another important way of implementing their initiatives. Among our cases, there are many examples of initiators who want or need to connect with the municipality, a project developer or NGOs. In several cases, these actors are contacted out of necessity, because for example a municipality or project developer owns the land on which the citizens' initiatives' activities are planned to take place, as in the case of Caetshage City Farm. But the contact can also be strategic, because these parties bring in informational capital. Another reason is simply that you are stronger together, a motive for the cooperation between Power of Utrecht and Natuur en Milieu Federatie Utrecht [the Utrecht Nature and Environment Federation]. The method of communication plays a central role in forging such links between the informal world of citizens' initiatives and the formal world of the institutions and their systems (Van Dam et al., 2014a).

Citizens' initiatives often start out with a great deal of informational capital of their own, but if they lack certain information they actively seek to obtain it via relational strategies.

Informational capital in relational strategies

There were many examples of communication activities aiming at reaching and involving people, whether through bonding, bridging or linking. Some of these connections were deliberately pursued, by inviting a municipal councillor, for instance, or approaching civil servants. In the case of Emma's Court, there was an attempt to make use of personal contacts. The initiators sat around the table

and made a list of who would contact whom. They found they were developing all kinds of networks and ideas. But connections are also based on luck, coincidence and the unexpected turn of events. For example the project developer who owned the land at Emma's Court turned out to support their idea and gave them a hand. What informational capital is needed is often decided in response to what happens in practice. Citizens' initiatives act upon changes and grasp opportunities as they arise. So there is often a combination of tactics and 'luck', as expressed by a respondent from Power of Utrecht: 'In that sense, to some extent we are doers and thinkers who weigh up our strategy and tactics, and at the same time you just happen to run into the councillor in town or you suddenly find out that someone has a lot of knowledge on a particular topic.'

With every new connection, more connections and goals emerge and that is how an initiative develops. For example if an initiative takes on a different task, such as care, this brings in new contacts, who in turn bring in further connections. An example from Caetshage of reaching and involving people is their crowdfunding campaign to finance the farmhouse, which went quite well and resulted in a substantial amount of money.

Some initiative groups thought they had missed out on connections and certain chances of success because communication was not handled appropriately, as EcoPeace put it. Their projects tended to only reach a small group, which they relate to 'inadequate communication'. At Caetshage, too, it was felt that with better communication more could be accomplished and more connections made with other people and institutions. That is why they wanted someone whose specific task was communication: 'I've always done it on the side, somehow: the website and all that. Whereas if someone did it systematically, a lot more could be achieved. A lot of people get very enthusiastic if you just give them the opportunity to get to know about it.'

Information in connecting to the outside world

The information the initiative has about what is happening in practice, the images, visions and ideas that are formed as a consequence, and the way initiators act as a result are of great importance. This defines how the initiative develops. This process of self-transformation makes clear that citizens' initiatives are related to the outside world and operate contingently. On the one hand, the initiatives try to keep as many people as possible informed about what they are doing (mass communication). They do this through the Internet, newspapers and social media such as Twitter. On the other hand, the initiators are selective in their approach, recruiting specialists, for example, and asking them what their knowledge and

expertise can mean for the initiative and/or the society as a whole, or holding one-to-one discussions. EcoPeace mentioned that people who get involved must support the ideals and objectives. Earlier experiences made them rather hesitant to let just anyone become involved. Informing others about your plans can also encourage an initiative and make it start to become real, partly because other people may hold you to your promises (e.g. Emma's Court).

In some citizens' initiatives, people also actively 'steer' things in a certain direction through the kind of information they give and the tone that is used. For example, Canal Park Leiden has moderated the comments on their Internet site and Facebook page, averting 'sour' reactions. The initiatives want to project a particular image. Canal Park Leiden's image management includes the use of what they call a 'mantra': 'the longest, most beautiful and most exciting city park'. In cases where initiatives oppose certain policy developments, they often present themselves as constructive and formulate an alternative (e.g. Power of Utrecht). They are aware of their image, or that of the subject they focus on, and tackle this proactively. For example, As We Speak wants to give sustainability a sexier image, so they actively promote a certain image through their choice of target groups and media – they do not respond to all offers of publicity from traditional media such as newspapers.

The consensus among the initiatives is that image should be taken seriously and is key in convincing other people or institutions to come on board. EcoPeace actually had to struggle to change their image: because one of the initiators was very young, the municipality thought they could not live up to their ambitious plans.

6.7 CONCLUSIONS

In our 'information society' it is important for citizens' initiatives to have informational capital. This can be expertise or certain kinds of knowledge, but when talking about citizens' initiatives, information on who to contact and connect with has been proven to be most essential. We analysed how informational capital is important in the day-to-day management of citizens' initiatives. The roles people take on within an initiative are almost always related to their knowledge and expertise. The main initiators have significant human capital and play an important role in generating, using and sharing informational capital, as well as in forming social capital. The various forms of capital interact and can reinforce one another, contributing to the development of the initiatives.

Informational capital and communication play a role in informing other people outside the initiative, as well giving the initiators themselves information. More-

over, informational capital and communication are key in persuading and convincing others to be aware of something or to do something. More specifically, it can mean that others get involved and become active in the initiative itself, thus becoming a way of selecting people and generating human, social and informational capital. Another area in which informational capital plays a role is in creating a group with a collective identity, taking action collectively, selecting members of the group and generating social capital, and tapping into resources and connecting the informal world of the initiatives with the formal system of institutions.

Informational capital is formed through the relational strategies of bonding, bridging and linking. Through these relational strategies, initiatives gain, apply and expand informational capital. Different kinds of people and institutions bring in different kinds of informational capital, enabling citizens' initiatives to interact, cooperate and form relationships in order to realize their objectives. This works both ways, however. Searching for informational capital on the Internet, for example, leads to new and different social relations. This is just one example of the many ways in which using and generating informational capital enables a citizens' initiative to connect with, generate, enlarge and make good use of their social networks, both online and offline, through the relational strategies of bonding, bridging and linking.

Figure 8 illustrates the operation and development of a citizens' initiative in which the dynamics between informational capital, human capital and social capital and the reciprocal relationship between informational capital and the relational strategies of bonding, bridging and linking play a vital role:

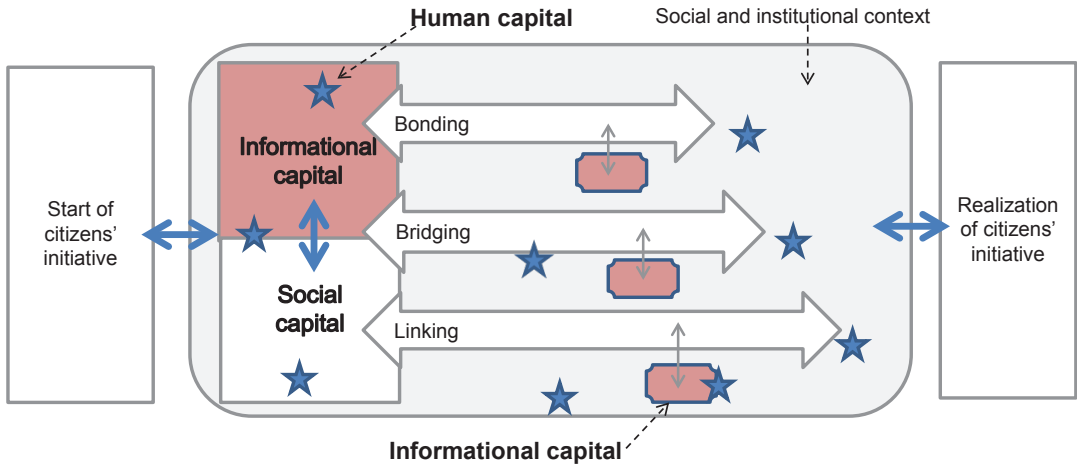


Figure 8: Dynamics of informational, human and social capital, and relational strategies in implementing citizens' initiatives.

For a citizens' initiative to be successful, all three relational strategies seem to be important. Which strategy should be emphasized depends on the initiative and the phase it is in. Besides collecting information, it is also important to use information in the 'right' way. Good communication, and most importantly, informal and personal communication with a strategic exchange of information, is vital to the success of citizens' initiatives. Although we found that citizens' initiatives can be selective about their informational capital and communication, it seems that more, or more diverse, informational capital generally leads to more success in the development of the initiative. It seems that – depending on the objectives of the initiative – initiatives that use a wider range of relational strategies are more successful in realizing their objectives. In our study, for example, EcoPeace has been less successful in developing connections through bridging and linking and seems – for the moment at least – to be less successful in achieving its objectives. Canal Park Leiden, by contrast, has made the most of the various relational strategies, and, consequently, seems more successful in achieving its objectives. Although this is an exploratory study and more detailed research is recommended, it seems that those initiatives which are able to connect in a variety of ways, using a range of relational strategies to mobilize all kinds of individuals, organizations and institutions (with all kinds of informational capital), are able to acquire a broader palette of informational capital, which helps them to realize their objectives.



7

CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis set out to investigate the practice of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities, seen as groups of people who organize themselves, go into action in the public domain, create public values and organize and manage their social, cultural and green living environment. More particularly, it studies the relational strategies and processes of these self-organizing citizens and the consequences and implications for governance processes. The research questions read:

1. *How do the dynamics in and between groups of people taking charge of their living environment and their surroundings manifest themselves?*

This research question is linked to a second research question which focuses on how the practice of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities affect the organization and steering of society and vice versa:

2. *How do groups of people taking charge of their living environment affect governance processes and vice versa?*

The research questions have been addressed in the empirical chapters of this thesis, but will be discussed together in the following sections. Section 7.2 presents the findings and conclusions relevant to the first research question, on the practice of citizens taking charge of their living environment and the different kinds of dynamics emerging from the relational processes citizens engage in. Section 7.3 draws some conclusions on the second research question, which is about the consequences and implications for governance processes, including the roles of citizens and governmental organizations. Then section 7.4 comments on the methods and theory identified in the previous empirical chapters. Section 7.5 suggests some avenues for future research and section 7.6 concludes with some reflections on practice.

7.2 THE DYNAMICS IN AND AROUND GROUPS OF PEOPLE TAKING CHARGE OF THEIR LIVING ENVIRONMENT

This thesis revealed four sets of dynamics: 1) the dynamics of drivers underlying citizens taking charge of their living environment; 2) the dynamics of various forms of capital 3) the dynamics of relational strategies of bonding, bridging and linking; and 4) the dynamics between social and spatial bonding. In answering the first research question, this section will address these four sets of dynamics in turn.

Dynamics of drivers underlying citizens taking charge of their living environment

Citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are triggered by an interplay of drivers that originate on the one hand in the citizens' ideals and their intrinsic will to do something, and on the other hand in dissatisfaction with the current situation, whether locally, at the policy level or at a broader societal level (chapter 2; chapter 4; chapter 6). The motives of the people involved can be understood with reference to the concept of 'life politics', which refers to people linking political and social aims with 'the project of their own lives' and the lifestyle that goes with them (Giddens, 1991). They often choose subjects close to their everyday lives but with a broader societal component. As a consequence, the interplay between public and self-interest is another important driver in how and why citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities operate. Characterized by strong personal commitment, self-organizing communities and citizens' initiatives are 'action- and solution-oriented': their (unspoken) motto seems to be 'no endless meetings, let's get to work'. The actions and strategies exercised are not always planned in advance, but are often intuitive, pragmatic and flexible in seizing unexpected opportunities. They operate in both an informal context (e.g. with fellow residents) and a formal one (e.g. with institutional actors), therefore engaging in both formal and informal organizational practices (chapter 4). Because citizens experience more freedom to approach things differently than for example formal institutions, they can often deliver tailor-made solutions.

Dynamics of several forms of capital

In the operation, development and realization of groups of self-organizing citizens, an interaction takes place between social capital, human capital and informational capital. These forms of capital can be seen as 'resources' that 'feed' the communities and initiatives, facilitating their success (Putnam, 1995; Salamon, 1991; Bourdieu 1987, 1998). Social capital refers to actual or potential resources in the form of social ties, trust, reciprocity and shared norms and values (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1995). Whereas the research in this thesis refers to social capital at a group level, it sees human capital at an individual level. Human capital includes skills and competences such as an enterprising attitude, leadership, networking skills, strategic vision, improvisation talent, empathy and perseverance (Coleman, 1988, Salamon, 1991; Woodhall, 2001). Although citizens' initiatives are characterized by the role and importance of the 'main' initiator or initiators, human capital is not restricted to the main initiator, but is present in all the individual members. Informational capital too is seen as a resource for citizens and relates to all kinds of data, information, knowledge and expertise citizens have at their disposal, in both explicit and more informal and tacit forms (chapter 6). Social, human and

informational capital are forms of capital related to a changing society in which citizens play a vital role in creating public values and where other, less tangible, forms of capital become important. The various forms of capital interact and can reinforce each other, contributing to the development of the initiatives (chapter 4; chapter 6). The use, sharing and generation of the various forms of capital often goes hand in hand with other kinds of exchange mechanism. Consciously or unconsciously, many citizens apply the principle of 'generalized reciprocity', which refers to a continuing relationship of exchange that is at any given time unrequited or imbalanced, but that involves mutual expectations that a benefit granted now should be repaid in the future (Putnam, 1993). This type of reciprocity does not necessarily manifest itself financially, the 'goods' exchanged can differ (someone might for example contribute expertise and receive a product in return), and the exchange is often informal and not necessarily simultaneous. Key values in how self-organizing communities and citizens' initiatives operate are giving, sharing, helping each other, trust and reciprocity (chapter 4; chapter 6).

Relational strategies of bonding, bridging and linking

The research in this thesis reveals how citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are developed and realized through the relational strategies of bonding, bridging and linking (chapter 3; chapter 4; chapter 6). By establishing connections with others, citizens' initiatives embed themselves in society. They interact with others, using and at the same time growing their social, human and informational capital. So they connect with different actors, both institutional and non-institutional, at different times and levels of intensity. These connections give rise to new informal social relationships.

The relational strategy of *bonding* concerns trusting co-operative relations between members of a network with a similar social identity (Putnam, 2000). As such it refers to the dynamics between the initiators and their fellow residents and forms the basis of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities. It forms the 'group'. The objective, ideal and ideology driving an initiative 'make' the initiative. The objective, ideal and ideology are also what appeals to others, drawing them in and leading to the creation of new social bonds (chapter 6). This often makes citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities both personal and collective in nature. A sense of community arises and develops from strong, shared experiences. A community does not necessarily spring from emotional involvement or rational calculation, but more importantly from undergoing or undertaking something intensively together (chapter 5). Working together demands a combination of rational thought and emotion, of which group formation is an important product (Schuyt, 2009). The feeling of being part of a group

or community arises from doing things together, from 'bonding by doing' so to speak. Moreover, an important aspect of a group's social capital is the formation of shared meaning and collective values and identity. Collective identity refers to the identification of a person with a group and is formed by an interactive and mutual process between the individuals making up the group. This collective identity contributes to mutual trust and reciprocity and provides opportunities for collective action, and vice versa (chapter 2; chapter 3; chapter 4).

The relational strategy of *bridging* concerns connections between those who are unlike each other, but are more or less equal in terms of their status and power (Putnam, 2000). It refers to the dynamics between the initiators and other local groups with different interests or orientations such as farmers, entrepreneurs, local residents who go back generations and more recent arrivals (also called 'import'), etc. It is illustrated by the case of Fort Pannerden, where the squatters were able to create a 'bridge' with the local residents. The local residents, who did not have a very positive view of squatters beforehand, were won over by the squatters: in the end they talked about them as 'their' squatters and saw them as the keepers of the fort. Local residents helped the squatters and when the going got tough, they published a manifesto stating their support for the squatters and their occupancy of the fort (chapter 3). The evidence suggests, however, that although bridging occurs, it is less prevalent as a relational strategy (chapter 3; chapter 4; chapter 6).

The relational strategy of *linking* concerns the interaction between individuals and networks that are unequal in terms of power and influence (Szreter and Woolcock, 2004). An example is the dynamics between initiators and institutional actors, which is a relational strategy quite commonly used in the cases studied (chapter 3; chapter 4; chapter 5; chapter 6). In the dynamics between governmental institutions and groups of people taking charge of their living environment, governmental institutions seem dominant to some extent. Key mechanisms which support this include self-transformation and subjectification, which will be further evaluated in the next section (chapter 4; chapter 5; chapter 6).

The relational strategies of bonding, bridging and linking are interrelated. The relational strategy of bonding lays the foundation, enabling a group to become a group and to undertake action together. Doing things together, with everyone contributing in their own way, is one of the main strengths of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities. The relational strategy of linking is often developed in groups of citizens taking charge of their living environment too. It is important in the relational strategy of linking that citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are, and act as, groups. This is a feature of the relational strategy of

bonding. Governmental organizations are particularly curious about whether the action is supported by a group and about the group's dynamism. Bonding and linking seem most in evidence in the cases, whereas the above-mentioned relational strategy of bridging seems to be exercised less often. This might have to do with ownership of the place citizens are concerned with. Many of the cases studied concern areas in which the actual ownership is in the hands of institutions, while citizens feel a sense of belonging or mental ownership (Breiting, 2008; Ritchie et al., 2004). Nowadays there is more of a tendency to look beyond governmental organizations towards the market, peers and other parties. The study shows that all three relational strategies are important for citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities (chapter 3; chapter 4). Those initiatives which are able to use a range of relational strategies to mobilize all kinds of individuals, organizations and institutions are able to gain a broader palette of human, social and informational capital, helping them to realize their objectives (chapter 6).

Interaction between the social and the spatial

The research revealed another kind of dynamics too, namely the dynamics between the social and the spatial. The self-organizing communities and citizens' initiatives studied in this thesis manifest themselves spatially. Place turned out to be more than the context. Often it is also part of the objective: all the initiatives in some way took charge of their living environment, which is in most cases part of a cultural or green heritage. The cases showed the key role of self-organizing citizens in restoring, maintaining or developing green or cultural heritage. Take Border Experience Enschede, which was able to restore an old border patrol path, or Lingewaard Natural, which developed and now manage a 15-hectare agricultural nature park. Local, small-scale involvement and familiarity are typical of these initiatives, and feelings of belonging to a place or area are crucial (chapter 2; chapter 3). The citizens themselves connected to a place, and thought and behaved in a certain way, but they also enabled others to connect (or reconnect) with a place and to think and act in a certain way in relation to the place. So these citizens mobilize and connect people. In the practice of the groups of people taking charge of their living environment, we clearly see that social bonding processes (bonding, bridging and linking) and spatial bonding processes (cognitive, affective and conative) are inextricably intertwined: they interact with, influence and reinforce one another. This is symbolized by the double helix, two DNA strings twisted around each other (chapter 3).

The sets of dynamics are also related. Figure 9 illustrates the dynamics of and between the various sets of dynamics the operation and development of self-organizing groups of citizens taking charge of their living environment.

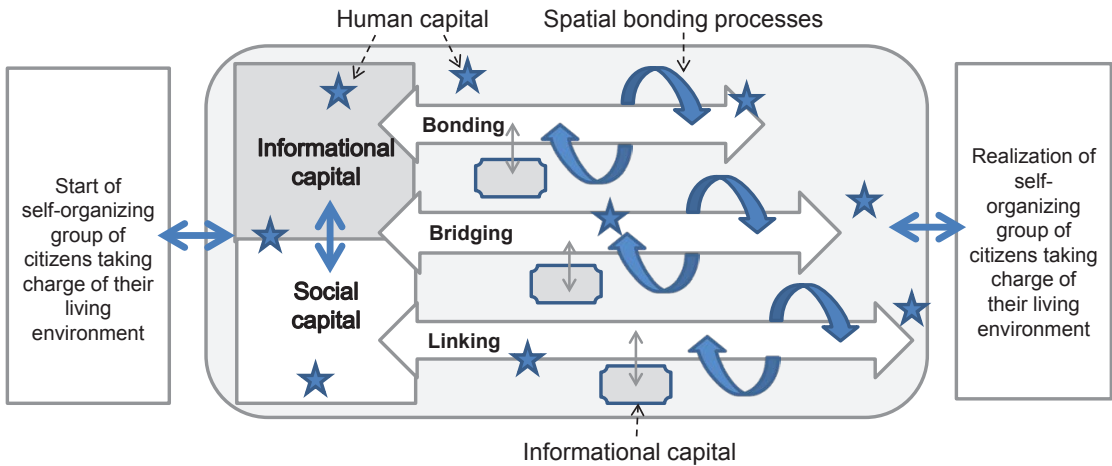


Figure 9: Dynamics of informational, human and social capital, and relational strategies bonding, bridging and linking, and the spatial bonding processes in realizing self-organizing groups of citizens taking charge of their living environment.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE PROCESSES AND ROLES OF CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

In answering the second research question, this section will deal in greater depth with the interaction in governance processes by summarizing the patterns and mechanisms found in the interaction between self-organizing citizens and others. The main focus will lie on the patterns and mechanisms between citizens and governmental organizations in governance processes. Besides the interrelated mechanisms of self-transformation and subjectification, we look at patterns such as catalysis, adaptation and anticipation, which have consequences for both the roles of citizens and governmental organizations in governance processes. Lastly, this section offers some insight into how the interplay between citizens and governmental organizations leads to mutual value creation in governance processes.

Interaction patterns and mechanisms in governance processes

The empirical chapters analysed a pattern in how the internal process of groups of citizens taking charge of their living environment relates to the outside world. This pattern is called a process of self-transformation (Luhmann, 1995, 2008; Seidl, 2005). The identity of a citizens' initiative – seen broadly as how they define themselves and how they operate – is influenced by their interpretations of the immediate and relevant outside world, which in turn shapes their strategies (chapter 4; chapter 5; chapter 6). It was shown for example how Collective Farm-

ers of Essen and Aa's focused on the relational strategy of bonding and developed an informal and socially oriented initiative, and how Natural Area Grasweg's main focus on linking meant this group chose a formal identity and matching strategies, almost becoming a 'surrogate' governmental institute. The process of self-transformation pans out differently in each case but both excel in self-realization by self-transformation (chapter 4). So in this process of self-transformation in relation to governmental organizations specifically, citizens' initiatives tend to internalize the assumptions about what is considered important to the relevant governmental institutions, often leading to the exercise of formal strategies and the adoption of a formal identity (chapter 4; chapter 5).

In line with the process of self-transformation, a process of subjectification can be distinguished too. Following Foucault (1998) power is seen as contingent and relational, as something that is exercised, not as something one possesses. Subjects are constituted within governance and can be considered a result of governance practices. Both Foucault (1982) and Butler (1997) see the becoming or making of the subject not just as a one-way act of domination, but as also activating or forming the subject. So a form of power is suggested which 'both subjugates and makes subject to' (Foucault, 1982:781). The case studies showed that governmental institutions to some extent exercise their power and overrule citizens' initiatives with governmental rules and preferences. Governmental organizations apply the techniques of identification with objectives and with organizational form, and they use the technique of marginalization to counteract citizens' initiatives that go against the grain. This means that governmental organizations often only like those citizens' initiatives that they can relate to, in terms of both content and form. Citizens' initiatives that have other objectives, another course of action, a different form, or a different opinion are often bullied or treated as irrelevant. This governmental dominancy is influenced in turn by the way citizens' initiatives act and position themselves towards governmental organizations. They adapt, anticipate and act strategically towards their images of governmental organizations and their interpretations of these organizations' wishes. In other words, they apply the techniques of adaptation, anticipation and framing themselves constructively. So in the practice of Dutch citizens' initiatives, the initiators are both made subject by and subject themselves to governmental organizations. This leads to the conclusion that there is teamwork going on between citizens and governmental organizations, in which there is a mutual reproduction of government thinking.

Roles and attitudes of citizens' initiatives in governance processes

The case studies resulted in a picture of informal, communicative, fluid and contingent citizens' initiatives, whose activities and strategies are not always shaped

around a clearly defined plan. The plurality of citizens' initiatives is fed by both their variability (e.g. in objectives, in approach, in organization form, etc.) and their changeability (chapter 4). Realizing the objectives of a citizens' initiative or self-organizing community is not easy and the passion and perseverance of the main initiators is crucial (chapter 3; chapter 4; chapter 6). Citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are able to work as catalysts and are very capable of mobilizing people, in several cases better than governmental organizations (chapter 3; chapter 6). Their ability to mobilize, to anticipate, to adapt and to transform makes groups of people taking charge of their living environment important players in governance processes. And, although their continuity is often considered uncertain in government circles, in practice citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are quite sustainable because of the strong personal and emotional ties involved: people do not let go easily. And if citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities disappear, they are uniquely capable of entering into new relations. Spin-off movements and/or involvement in several different initiatives are quite common. Citizens' initiatives can also reinvent themselves by replacing old communities with new ones or through new bonding processes and relational strategies. Particularly in a pluralistic society, many forms of bonding and many sorts of relations are present simultaneously. Where one citizens' initiative or self-organizing community disappears, another appears.

Moreover, it was found that citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities have and use several forms of capital, such as social, human and informational capital (chapter 6). In relation to potential and also to power, it must be emphasized that self-organizing citizens are quite capable of using and growing these forms of capital. Part of the idea behind informational capital is that information has 'intrinsic value', which means that information gained, used/injected, or shared/exchanged is also a way of gaining, using/injecting, or sharing/exchanging power. In line with the above, Becks' concept of subpolitics (1993, 1997) is relevant. The term subpolitics refers to the social action that goes on outside the representative institutions of the political hierarchy and yet is politically significant because of its influence in society.

Roles and attitude of governmental organizations in governance processes

Besides the big impact that initiators themselves have on the practice of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities taking charge of their living environment, the attitude and role of governmental organizations is decisive too (partly because they are often involved or necessary in these spatially oriented initiatives). The case studies showed that governmental organizations prefer self-organizing communities and citizens' initiatives to be rational rather than emotional, to tran-

scend local goals, to be a 'valid' expert rather than an expert by virtue of 'experience', to make clear that they are not after their own interest but after public interest, etc. (chapter 5). The government discourse gets largely reaffirmed through processes of self-transformation and subjectification. Looking at the attitude of citizens' initiatives in the process of subjectification, one could describe them as obedient, docile and submissive, or as smart and strategic. The latter depiction reflects an awareness that the citizens' initiatives also exercise power and will go to great lengths to get the things done that they want done. When citizens start putting their ideas and ideals into practice there is often no stopping them. Their tenacity can arouse irritation among the individuals and institutions they deal with.

Seen from the perspective of governmental organizations, dealing with citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities is not easy. Although active citizens are an empirical and normative reality, interaction with citizens can be hard work. Governmental organizations have to reckon with formal accountability, control and democratic legitimacy. Moreover, there are differences in their use of time and focus, with a different balance in terms of decisiveness in the short term versus public support in the long term. In other words, there is a divide between the social and informal praxis of the self-organizing communities and citizens' initiatives, and the institutionalized environment of the institutional actors. They are different entities, with different logics, values and ways, which are not easy to overcome in interaction (chapters 4; chapter 5).

Something else which makes citizens' initiatives difficult to interpret and deal with exclusively in terms of governance and steering is their plurality, both in their variety and their changeability. The feasibility of standardization in approaching citizens is questionable, not least because citizens' initiatives are far from equal or standard. The plurality of citizens' initiatives calls for anti-essentialist, pluralist approaches in governance (Fuchs, 2001; Gaventa, 2004). Specifically, this means differentiating and changing roles of governmental organizations in relation to citizens' initiatives (i.e. playing different roles and changing roles and attitude to fit the situation) and avoiding 'essentializing' of citizens' initiatives by turning them into objects of participation (i.e. approaching citizens' initiatives as initiators) (chapter 5).

Interestingly, civil servants who often deal with citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities find dealing with their own organization the most difficult thing in their work, not dealing with the initiators themselves, as one might have expected. The organization they are part of throws up the most hindrances, in the form of accountability requirements, for example, and relations between politics and policy. Civil servants often feel caught in the middle between gov-

ernmental organization and active citizens. And if they somehow go easy on the rules and regulations to facilitate citizens, they come under pressure within their organization.

Interplay and mutual value creation in governance processes

The interplay between citizens, institutions and non-governmental institutions is equally central wherever citizens have 'the lead' in realizing, protecting and managing nature, landscape, heritage, etc. Ideally, a situation develops in which there is joint value creation based on the combined knowledge, time, effort, money, commitment and networks of governments, business organizations, peers, intermediary organizations, land management organizations, entrepreneurs, artists and others. Ideally, all these stakeholders contribute in their own way, taking a role that fits the situation and themselves.

Trust in citizens and their capital turns out to be essential. Trust is seen as a mental state of expecting something favourable from the other person (Breeman, et al., 2013). Only when there is trust can there be good interaction or even collaboration. This applies both to citizens and to governmental organizations. An important lesson from the practices of groups of people taking charge of their living environment is that the parties and persons involved learn by doing: confidence and experience is gained in action. Everyone is learning as they go along how best to cooperate and to provide space for self-organizing citizens (Van der Steen et al., 2014; Healy, 2015). In each situation there is a quest for the right balance between space for the energy of active citizens and taking political/administrative responsibility for the public interest. The micro-level perspective with its emphasis on the actual practices of active citizens shows that each practice is different and develops within a specific context. An open mind and a willingness to make mistakes help people to learn from these practices. In conclusion, it is important to acknowledge that citizens should not necessarily interact only with governmental organizations, but also perhaps with peers, business organizations, etc. This point will be addressed in the section on avenues for future research.

7.4 REVISITING METHODS AND THEORY

Methods

In this thesis an interpretive research approach was chosen, based on case studies and the principles of openness and heterogeneity (Whiteley and Whiteley,

2006; Bevir, 2010a; Lincoln and Canella, 2004). The interpretive research approach made it possible to start with a general interest in the development of groups of people taking charge of their living environment and from there to go deeper into the aspects that seemed relevant. This resulted in a bigger focus on the relational perspective in the second phase. It became clear that the fact that citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are different entities to governmental organizations is a decisive factor in their roles, attitudes and strategies. In the light of this, the interpretive research approach enabled me to further explore the logics, values and other kinds of capital of groups of people taking charge of their living environment. The principles of openness and heterogeneity have been followed in all stages of the research, from the general idea, to the method and case selection, to data collection and analysis. All these stages are described in this thesis.

The interpretive approach also meant I didn't decided a priori how many respondents or practices to include in order to fully understand the dynamics of groups of people taking charge of their living environment. In each phase I continued to gather information until saturation point, a point of diminishing returns from the data collection efforts at which we can reasonably assume that a thorough study has been conducted (Guba, 1978; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The process stopped when a convincing and empirically grounded argument could be constructed which was intelligible not only to the authors, but also to others, without the need for full closure (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2011). It provided me with insights in the practice of groups of people taking charge of their living environment and into the dynamics within and surrounding these groups of people. Although the analysis is the interpretation of the authors and the logic of the arguments is for the reader to evaluate, analysing patterns and mechanisms helps make the analysis transferable to other situations, as does the multiplicity and plurality of cases. Nevertheless, it is still difficult and sometimes even impossible to define generally valid (policy) measures. This does not mean recommendations cannot be made, but that modesty should be exercised.

In an interpretive research approach, meaning is seen as intertwined with action, so that researchers cannot dissociate themselves from the practice being studied. As Taylor (1995) says: our understanding of the world is grounded in our dealings and actions. This has several implications. Firstly, as a researcher, however much distance you maintain, you are part of, and therefore also influencing the practice studied. Secondly, it has consequences for the choices made by the researcher in this research. This is not necessarily explicit but an inevitable consequence of the fact that the understanding of our world is

grounded in our dealings and actions. So my viewpoint and priorities are reflected in this research, even if not explicitly. To give an example, I am interested in processes, in how things develop and interact. It therefore comes naturally to me to look at things from a developmental and relational perspective and to focus on mechanisms and principles. Thirdly, Taylor's words relate to the question of how involved you are or choose to become as a researcher. The initiators are people who are putting words in to action. Moreover, they seize the opportunities they get, and they often see the research itself as an opportunity. The initiators perceive research and me as a researcher as a possible 'tool' for legitimation, acknowledgement and recognition, things which many citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities crave. Lastly, there are implications for methodology. Among the many methods used, I carried out non-participatory observation as well as participatory observation and I also engaged with initiators in some meetings. Generally, I would say that as a researcher I acted as an observer who was involved, meaning that I was genuinely interested in and genuinely cared about the motivations, perspectives and actions of the respondents.

Theory

This research contributes to the existing literature by shedding light on the actual practice of groups of people taking charge of their living environment and on how the roles of both citizens and governmental organizations are taken up. This thesis can be seen as an elaboration of people's actual activity in practice, viewing actors as interdependent subjects whose identities and resource capabilities – i.e. the very assets that enable them to act – are co-constituted by their relations. This corresponds with theory on practice (Knorr-Cetina, et al., 2001; Arts et al., 2012). And as the contribution of citizens in the creation of public values becomes more and more important, in the 'green domain' as elsewhere, it is relevant to have a detailed view of the organization, development and dynamics of groups of people taking charge of their living environment. Taking a relational perspective and looking at citizens' initiatives in their social and institutional context, it becomes clear that the roles of both citizens and governmental organizations are related and thus influence each other. We also see the contextuality, the path-dependent nature and the contingency of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities, which is something to take into account in governance processes (refs relational turn). At an ontological level, the focus on practices and the relational perspective enters the structure-agency debate by ascribing a greater role to agency as opposed to structures in analyses. For classical public administration theory, traditionally accustomed to categorizing, making frameworks and sketching other formal pathways and

solutions, this focus poses the challenge of how to deal with these pluralistic, informal and contingent citizens' initiatives (Shafritz, 2015; Dubois et al., 2009; De Schutter and Lenoble, 2010).

In line with the above, by focusing on the micro level of the practice of groups of people taking charge of their living environment, this thesis also highlights the importance of place. The activity of the groups of people in the cases concerns a certain place. They connect not only socially or institutionally, but also, and in some cases primarily, with a place. As has been mentioned, initiators are persistent and driven. And this drive is fuelled by emotion: at the heart of these groups of people taking charge of their living environment are their feelings about a place. A place they see as magical, or a place that could be magical with a little help, or a place in need. In any case, place is not often included as a factor that influences the governance of self-organizing communities and citizens' initiatives. Yet a lot of current citizens' initiatives manifest themselves spatially, and place may even form an important driver. It therefore seems fruitful to follow both the social and the spatial factors at work and to intensify the cross-fertilization of the social and spatial aspects of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities.

Another concept, that of informational capital, is neither well-known nor widely used. The concept originates from Bourdieu (1987, 1998), who extrapolated it from the concept of cultural capital. Informational capital is generally used to indicate formal forms of information. Munk (2003), for example, analyses the acquisition of informational capital, i.e. academic capital, measured as student mobility and understood as transnational investments in prestigious foreign educational institutions. And Arvidsson (2003) refers to informational capital as intellectual capital and relates it to ownership of information which is relevant to discussions on intellectual property such as patents, trademarks and brands. In this thesis, informational capital is viewed as a form of capital like human and social capital. These forms of capital reflect a changing social system in which citizens play a vital role in creating public value, and other, less tangible, forms of capital and reciprocity gain importance alongside financial capital and generalized reciprocity (chapter 4; chapter 6). The concept of informational capital has been broadened to include not just formal kinds of information but also informal kinds of information, thus broadening the intellectual and academic perspective as well. Informational capital is seen as a resource for citizens and covers all kinds of data, information, knowledge and expertise which citizens have at their disposal, in both explicit and informal, tacit forms. It implies a capacity for action based on information. And those resources, that informational capital, can also be gained, used/injected, and shared/exchanged.

7.5 AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Self-organization is a central theme in the research of this thesis. Over time, a development can be noticed from citizens as protesters to citizens as initiators, sometimes framing their protest as a new initiative (Van Dam, et al., 2014). The forms of self-organization, however, are developing as we speak. While most of the research described in this thesis analysed cases on the continuum between citizens and government, development is also taking place on the continuum between citizens and the market, as well as in a variety of different combinations of these players (Bourgon, 2009; 2011; Avelino and Wittmayer, 2015; Van der Steen et al., 2014). Hybrid and more entrepreneurial forms which can also be called social innovation and social entrepreneurship are up and coming too (Knudsen et al., 2014; Wagenaar et al., 2015; Salverda, et al., 2012). Some of the cases in the explorative study of information capital (chapter 6) were hybrid forms or could be called social entrepreneurship, and it would be interesting to look more closely at these forms, seen by some as the next generation of citizens' initiatives.

In the individual citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities related to the green living environment, we found little use being made of bridging. Nowadays many new kinds of networks of citizens' initiatives are developing, sometimes stimulated and supported by institutions, but often also deriving from initiators themselves. Some of these networks aim for exchange with peers, such as for example the Maatschappelijke AEX (MAEX), a platform and social value index launched by Kracht in Nederland. Others aim at working together. It is possible that in these more hybrid and entrepreneurial initiatives, the relational strategy of bridging is used more. It would be most interesting to take a closer look at both the individual citizens' initiatives and the various networks, to discover whether and how this relational strategy of bridging is used.

Following up on the exchange of information with peers and the concept of informational capital, it would be interesting to do research concerning information processes in which citizens themselves have more control over information, as for example in citizens' science. Citizen science refers to the involvement and participation of citizens in the scientific process and is currently developing quickly in all kinds of scientific areas such as psychology, ecology, astronomy, medicine, computer science and statistics, and it is taking a variety of forms (Eames and Egmore, 2011; Dickinson et al., 2012). In citizens' science the ownership of the information stays with citizens themselves. They collect, analyse and use the information in governance processes. Research on citizens' science could provide a broader perspective on the changing role and power of citizens in governance processes and in the organization of society as a whole.

7.6 REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are mostly driven by their ideals, but also often by dissatisfaction with certain things in society. The news today is flooded with societal 'challenges'. We live in times of religious extremism, climate change, streams of refugees, worldwide loss of financial security, transnational terrorism, hunger, earthquakes and tsunamis, poverty, increasing inequality between rich and poor, a loss of social cohesion and so on. The world is in a state of turmoil (Beck, 2013). And in that context people step up: citizens themselves want to be active and take charge and are also encouraged to do so (Boonstra and Boelens, 2011; Fung and Wright 2003). Assuming we want to move towards a more citizen-driven society, in this section I will make some reflections and recommendations towards new practices.

First I want to emphasize that there is indeed a lot of potential in citizens, who can achieve many great things. That citizens are taking charge of the living environment is mostly a constructive and hopeful development. Citizens' initiatives contribute to feelings of community and cohesion and are able to create all kinds of combinations (Van der Heijden et al., 2011). They are able to create public values and mobilize people. However, it sometimes seems these days as if active citizenship is promoted as the solution to everything (Tonkens, 2006; Denters et al., 2013). In this context, calls for realism are quite justified (Tonkens, 2009; Uitermark, 2014). Self-organizing citizens cannot provide a panacea. Not everyone can and wants to be involved in them. They should be seen as complementary to other ways of organizing society. But as the title of the first empirical chapter of this thesis proclaims: transition starts with people. The challenges entailed call for new roles for the parties involved, and this leads to innovation.

Secondly, both citizens and governmental institutions need to learn, and to take the next step. As mentioned before, there is a need for an interplay of forces in which all actors contribute in their own way to the joint creation of public values. And what is required in the relationship between citizens and governmental organizations may be not so much 'letting go' as 'holding each other differently'. Moreover, the strategy of small wins is sensitive to the pragmatics of the practices of citizens and civil servants (Weick, 1984). It should be mentioned here, however, that governmental institutions and civil servants have a lot to learn about how to deal with citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities: to stop seeing them, for instance, as an instrument of their policy, or to be less rigid about administrative formats. Becoming more open towards citizens and more human, not only in the way the system works but also in attitude, could improve relations (Van der Stoep, 2014; Boogerd and Michels, 2016). But citizens can po-

sition themselves differently too, and adapt themselves less to a government discourse. Although the development of self-organization is also taking place on the continuum between citizens and the market, as well as in a variety of different combinations of these players, one can say that the way to go forward, specifically in the relationship between citizen and government, is to aim for an interplay in which 'learning by doing' is followed by 'bonding by doing'.

Thirdly, the participative democracy can be seen as complementary to the representative democracy. Citizens and governmental organizations both invest democracy with their own interpretation of the democratic values of freedom, equality, solidarity and good governance values such as transparency and accountability (Salverda et al., 2014). In the search for a new relationship between governments and citizens, the question arises of to what extent either the participative democracy or the representative democracy are perceived as democratic (Cohen, 2015). This is clear from the perceptions of government and citizens about each other (Van Dam et al., 2010; 2011). The emergence of groups of people taking charge of something they care about reveals a need for new forms of democracy. Citizens sometimes question the extent to which governmental policy is democratic and want more of a say about their living environment. Conversely, governmental organizations often question the extent to which citizens' initiatives are democratic. 'Who do citizens' initiatives represent?' they ask, and, 'Do they represent a majority?' And citizens wonder: 'Doesn't democracy mean people having a say?' 'The policy does not reflect what we want as citizens,' they conclude: 'We know what is important in our living environment and everyone is invited to participate.' In other words, both the formal representative democracy and groups of people taking charge of their living environment (or something else) as an expression of an informal and participatory democracy substantiate democratic values. This 'do-ocracy' is not just a competitor but can also be a complementary form of democracy that meets a need related to democratic values (Verhoeven et al., 2014; Chen, 2009). Democracy must respond to the times. Plural democracy is such a response, in which various forms of democracy (formal and informal, participatory and representative) coexist and complement each other. Democracy can be seen as an ongoing process which needs working on: 'It is about doing things. Democracy is a verb, not a fait accompli' (Mulgan, 2013; West, 2004).

ANN
HANSEN

DIRECT ACTION

GEOGRAPHY OF FREEDOM

FLEMING

BLACK
BOOK
BOOKS

BLOOD OF
SPAIN

ROBERT
GRASSER

CUBAN ANARCHISM

FRANK FERNANDEZ

JACQUES J. OBRY

ANARCHISM IN SPAIN

Emma Goldman Mijn leven deel 1

Emma Goldman ESSAYS EN BRIEVEN

Goldman

LIVING MY LIFE

VOLUME ONE

Dover

0-486-22544

NO GODS NO MASTERS

BOOK ONE

DANIEL GUÉRIN

NO GODS NO MASTERS

BOOK TWO

DANIEL GUÉRIN

G. J. HANSEN - Blouse en rode jeugd

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SUMMARY

SAMENVATTING

BONDING BY DOING

The dynamics of self-organizing groups of citizens taking charge of their living environment

SUMMARY

This thesis is about groups of citizens following their ideals and taking charge of their living environment. The research set out to investigate the practice of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities, seen as groups of people who organize themselves, take action in the public domain, create public values and organize and manage their social, cultural and green living environment. The topicality of the concept of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities – from empirical, normative and scientific perspectives – sparked an interest in investigating their actual practice: people's reasons for getting involved, the meaning they assign to place and what people mean for places, the activities and the strategies, the (informal) organization, how the initiatives develop and the relations they entail. Besides investigating how citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities develop and achieve things, the research examines the implications for governance processes, and the role and approach of citizens and government organizations in these processes. A micro-perspective is used to focus on analysing how citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities act on the road from ideal to realization. Moreover, the practice of groups of citizens taking charge of their living environment is approached here from a relational perspective, focussing on questions around bonding processes and interaction, and the dynamics that come with them. As a consequence, the research questions are: (1) how do the dynamics within and between groups of people taking charge of their living environment and their surroundings manifest themselves? and (2) how do groups of people taking charge of their living environment affect governance processes and vice versa?

In this thesis, an interpretive research approach was chosen, based on case studies and the principles of openness and heterogeneity. The interpretive research approach made it possible to start with a general interest in the development of groups of people taking charge of their living environment and from there to delve deeper into the aspects that seemed relevant. Importantly, particularly given that this study focuses on people's approaches and activities, this approach views the social as constructed in the intertwinement of action and meaning; it

also values various ways in which meaning arises, including informal and less rational approaches and values. In total, seventeen cases of citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are studied. Of these seventeen, one case is studied in great depth and at various points in time, another seven in moderate depth and nine cases are studied at a broader, more illustrative and exploratory level. The data was collected through a combination of interviews, casual conversations, participatory observation, non-participatory observation and learning network meetings, as well as a study of secondary material. The qualitative analysis took place in iterative phases in which several analytical concepts were applied. Triangulation was ensured by using a variety of methods and theories. The findings are presented in five empirical chapters (Chapters 2 to 6 of this thesis).

Chapter 2 describes a study in which the transition in societal organization from a heavy reliance on the state to self-organization is examined by analysing two self-organizing communities. The case studies of the ADM squatter community [Amsterdamse Doe-het-Zelf Maatschappij – Amsterdam Do-it-yourself Company] and the Golfresidence Dronten show how these communities of self-organizing citizens created their own residential arrangements and took the initiative in developing a unique spatial environment. The role self-organization plays differs depending on how the communities were established and the inhabitants' motivations. There are also differences in the physical appearance of the two communities and the communities' organization and rules. Although quite different self-organizing communities, both are manifestations of alternative living arrangements, both socially and spatially, and address the differences in citizens' needs concerning living arrangements in society in general. As such, concluding remarks concern the value of and need for heterogeneity.

Chapter 3 presents an analysis of the social and spatial bonding processes affecting a squatter community who lived at Fort Pannerden for about seven years. Besides describing the relation between the squatters and the fort, the chapter analyses the influence of the squatters' actions on the development of the fort and on the local community and local governmental organizations in terms of social and spatial bonding processes. It shows how a non-institutional actor – a squatter community – was able to breathe new life into a national monument that had been abandoned for several decades, reconnecting a cultural heritage site to society and vice versa.

Chapter 4 analyses the citizens' initiatives Natural Area Grasweg and Collective Farmers of Essen and Aa's in terms of their evolution, their organization and the strategies adopted. Strategies are understood as something people *do*, rather than something organizations and firms *have*. Natural Area Grasweg chose a for-

mal approach for the organization of their initiative, adjusting it to institutional settings. For Collective Farmers of Essen and Aa's, by contrast, it is an explicit goal to get local residents involved, fostering a sense of community and collectively improving the cultural historical landscape. Both cases are viewed here as the contingent product of a self-transforming organization, and a way of relating its internal processes to the outside world. The chapter analyses the ability of citizens' initiatives to adapt and to mobilize, which makes them a powerful and relevant development in the governance area.

Chapter 5 focusses on the mutually activated process of subjectification in citizens' initiatives. Analysing the citizens' initiatives Lingewaard Natural, Border Experience Enschede and Residents' Association and Action Committee Horstermeerpolder, it is argued that the discourses produced by governmental organizations on what it entails to be an active citizen have a performative effect on citizens' initiatives, which adapt themselves, anticipate what is expected of them and act strategically with respect to these discourses.

Chapter 6 presents an exploratory study of the citizens' initiatives Sustainable Soester quarter, Caetshage City Farm, Emma's Court, Power of Utrecht, Beautiful Wageningen, Ecopeace, As We Speak, Canal Park Leiden and Harderwijk Steiner School Natural Playground. The study shows how the participatory society and information society come together at the community level. Regarding the role of information in how citizens' initiatives operate and develop, it is concluded that informational capital is fundamental to the realization of citizens' initiatives, that there is a dynamic between social capital, human capital and informational capital and that informational capital is generated, identified, used and enlarged through the relational strategies of bonding, bridging and linking. It is a process which works both ways and reinforces citizens' initiatives.

Chapter 7 synthesizes the outcomes of the five chapters and provides an answer to the research questions. The research revealed four sets of dynamics in and between groups of people taking charge of their living environment. Firstly, there are the dynamics of the drivers causing citizens to take charge of their living environment. Citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities are triggered by an interplay of drivers that originate on the one hand in the citizens' ideals and their intrinsic will to do something, and on the other hand in dissatisfaction with the current situation, whether locally, at the policy level or at a broader societal level. They often choose subjects close to their everyday lives but with a broader societal component. As a consequence, the interplay between public interest and self-interest is another important driver in how and why citizens' initiatives and self-organizing communities operate. Secondly, in the operation, development

and realization of groups of self-organizing citizens, there is a dynamic relationship between social capital, human capital and informational capital. These forms of capital can be seen as 'resources' that 'feed' the communities and initiatives. Social, human and informational capital are forms of capital related to a changing society in which citizens play a vital role in creating public values and where other, less tangible, forms of capital become important. The various forms of capital interact and can reinforce each other, contributing to the development of the initiatives. The third set of dynamics concerns the dynamics of the relational strategies of bonding, bridging and linking. Using the interrelated relational strategies, groups of people taking charge of their living environment connect with different actors, both institutional and non-institutional, at different times and levels of intensity. By establishing connections with others, citizens' initiatives embed themselves in society. They interact with others, using and at the same time growing their social, human and informational capital. Fourthly, the dynamics between social and spatial bonding are revealed in groups of people taking charge of their living environment. Place turned out to be more than the context; often it is also part of the objective. The citizens in the initiatives connected with a place and thought and behaved in a certain way, but they also enabled others to connect (or reconnect) with a place and to think and act in a certain way in relation to the place. So these citizens mobilize and connect people. When groups of people take charge of their living environment, we clearly see that social bonding processes (bonding, bridging and linking) and spatial bonding processes (cognitive, affective and conative) are inextricably intertwined: they interact with, influence and reinforce one another. This can be symbolized by the double helix, two DNA strings twisted around each other.

Furthermore, the interaction in governance processes was dealt with by summarizing the patterns and mechanisms found in the interaction between self-organizing citizens and others, particularly between citizens and governmental organizations. A pattern was analysed in how the internal process of groups of citizens taking charge of their living environment relates to the outside world. In this process of self-transformation, the identity of a citizens' initiative – seen broadly as how they define themselves and how they operate – is influenced by their interpretations of the immediate and relevant outside world, which in turn shapes their strategies. In this process of self-transformation, specifically in relation to governmental organizations, citizens' initiatives tend to internalize the assumptions about what is considered important to the relevant governmental institutions, which often leads to them pursuing formal strategies and adopting a formal identity. The case studies showed that government officials often only tend to like those citizens' initiatives that they can relate to, in terms of both content and form. Citizens' initiatives that have other objectives, take a different

course of action, have a different form or express a different opinion are often bullied or treated as irrelevant. This governmental dominancy is influenced in turn by the way citizens' initiatives act and position themselves with respect to governmental organizations. They adapt, anticipate and act strategically with regard to their images of governmental organizations and their interpretations of these organizations' wishes. In other words, they apply the techniques of adaptation, anticipation and framing themselves constructively. So in the practice of Dutch citizens' initiatives, the initiators are both made subject and subject themselves to governmental organizations. The initiators can be labelled as obedient and submissive, but also as smart and strategic. This leads to the conclusion that there is teamwork going on between citizens and governmental organizations, in which there is a mutual reproduction of government thinking.

Assuming we want to move towards a more citizen-driven society, this thesis reveals that there is indeed a great deal of potential in citizens. Reflecting further on new practices, one can say both citizens and governmental institutions need to learn and to take the next step. There is a need for an interplay of forces in which all actors contribute in their own way to the joint creation of public values. Although the development of self-organization is also taking place on the continuum between citizens and the market, as well as in a variety of different combinations of these players, one can say that the way to go forward, specifically in the relationship between citizens and government, is to aim for an interplay in which 'learning by doing' is followed by 'bonding by doing'. To conclude, groups of people taking charge of their living environment (or something else) is an expression of an informal and participatory democracy that is giving shape to democratic values. This 'do-ocracy' is not just an alternative but can also be a complementary form of democracy that meets a need related to democratic values. Democracy can be seen as an ongoing process which needs working on.

VERBINDING DOOR TE DOEN

De dynamiek van zelforganiserende groepen burgers die initiatief nemen en actief worden in hun leefomgeving

SAMENVATTING

Dit proefschrift gaat over mensen die hun idealen volgen en initiatief nemen en actief worden in hun leefomgeving. Het onderzoek richt zich op burgerinitiatieven en zelforganiserende gemeenschappen, die beiden gezien worden als groepen mensen die zichzelf organiseren, actie ondernemen in het publieke domein, publieke waarde(n) creëren en hun sociale, culturele en groene leefomgeving organiseren en beheren. De actualiteit van burgerinitiatieven en zelforganiserende gemeenschappen – vanuit empirisch, normatief en wetenschappelijk perspectief – vormt de aanleiding om de praktijk van burgerinitiatieven te onderzoeken: de redenen van mensen om zich in te zetten, de betekenis die zij toekennen aan een bepaalde plek en de betekenis van mensen voor die plek, de activiteiten en strategieën, de (informele) organisatie, hoe initiatieven zich ontwikkelen en de relaties die zij aangaan. Behalve dat onderzocht is hoe burgerinitiatieven en zelforganiserende gemeenschappen zich ontwikkelen en hun doelen bewerkstelligen, is gekeken naar de implicaties voor governance processen en de rol en benadering van burgers en overheidsorganisaties in deze processen. Er is een ‘micro-perspectief’ gehanteerd om te onderzoeken hoe burgerinitiatieven en zelf-organiserende gemeenschappen handelen op de weg van ideaal naar realisatie. Daarnaast wordt via een relationeel perspectief gefocust op vragen rondom bindingsprocessen, interactie en de dynamiek die daarmee gepaard gaat. Dit leidt tot de volgende onderzoeksvragen: (1) hoe manifesteren de dynamiek in en tussen groepen mensen die initiatief nemen en actief worden in hun leefomgeving en hun omgeving zich?; en (2) hoe beïnvloeden groepen mensen die het initiatief nemen en actief worden in hun leefomgeving governance processen en vice versa?

In dit proefschrift is gekozen voor een interpretatieve onderzoeksbenadering, gebaseerd op casestudies en op principes van openheid en heterogeniteit. De interpretatieve onderzoeksmethodiek maakt het mogelijk eerst in het algemeen de ontwikkeling van groepen mensen die actie ondernemen met betrekking tot hun leefomgeving te bestuderen en vervolgens dieper in te gaan op relevante aspecten. Daarnaast wordt in deze benadering het sociale begrepen als opgebouwd en ontstaan in de verwevenheid van actie en betekenis en heeft de benadering oog

voor de verschillende wijzen waarop betekenis ontstaat, hetgeen ook informele en minder rationele benaderingen en waarden kan behelzen. Dit alles past goed bij deze studie die focust op activiteiten van mensen. In totaal zijn 17 verschillende burgerinitiatieven en zelforganiserende gemeenschappen bestudeerd. Deze casussen zijn bestudeerd in verschillende intensiteit en op verschillende momenten: één casus is zeer uitvoerig bestudeerd en op verschillende momenten in de tijd, zeven casussen zijn gematigd uitgebreid bestudeerd, en negen casussen zijn op een bredere, meer illustratief en verkennende wijze bestudeerd. De dataverzameling bestaat uit een combinatie van interviews, informele gesprekken, participatieve observatie, non-participatieve observatie, leernetwerkbijeenkomsten en bestudering van secundair materiaal waaronder websites, rapporten en sociale media. De kwalitatieve analyse vond plaats via een iteratief proces waarin verschillende analytische concepten zijn toegepast. Triangulatie is gewaarborgd door toepassing van een variëteit aan methoden en theorieën. De resultaten zijn gepresenteerd in 5 empirische hoofdstukken (hoofdstukken 2 tot 6 van dit proefschrift).

Hoofdstuk 2 beschrijft een studie waar de transitie van steunen op en vertrouwen in de Staat richting zelforganisatie wordt bestudeerd door de analyse van twee zelforganiserende gemeenschappen. De ADM krakersgemeenschap (Amsterdamse Doe-het-zelf Maatschappij) en de golfresidentie Dronten laten zien hoe deze zelforganiserende gemeenschappen hun eigen woon- en leefomstandigheden creëren en het initiatief hebben genomen in het ontwikkelen van een eigen, unieke ruimtelijke omgeving. De rol die zelforganisatie speelt is mede afhankelijk van hoe de gemeenschappen zijn ontstaan en de redenen van de bewoners. Tevens zijn er verschillen in het fysieke voorkomen van beide gemeenschappen, in de wijze waarop de gemeenschappen zijn georganiseerd en in de regels die worden gehanteerd. Alhoewel de gemeenschappen in grote mate van elkaar verschillen, zijn beide gemeenschappen manifestaties van alternatieve leefomstandigheden. Zowel sociaal als ruimtelijk en adresseren zij de behoefte van burgers in verschillende leef- en woonomstandigheden in de maatschappij als geheel. De concluderende opmerkingen gaan dan ook in op de waarde van en noodzaak voor heterogeniteit.

In hoofdstuk 3 volgt een analyse van ruimtelijke en sociale bindingsprocessen van de krakersgemeenschap die zeven jaar op Fort Pannerden leefde. Naast het beschrijven van de relatie tussen de krakers en het fort wordt geanalyseerd welke invloed de acties en activiteiten van de krakers hadden op de ontwikkeling van het fort, op de lokale gemeenschap en op de lokale overheidsorganisatie in termen van ruimtelijke en sociale bindingsprocessen. De studie laat zien hoe een niet-institutionele actor – een krakersgemeenschap – in staat was om een

nationaal monument nieuw leven in te blazen nadat het fort voor meerdere decennia was verlaten en geheel was afgesloten. De krakers zorgden daarmee voor een hernieuwde verbinding tussen het cultureel erfgoed en de maatschappij en vice versa.

Hoofdstuk 4 laat een analyse zien van de ontwikkeling, organisaties en geadopteerde strategieën van de burgerinitiatieven Natuurlijk Grasweggebied en Boermarke Essen en Aa. Strategieën worden hierbij gezien als iets dat mensen *doen* en niet zozeer als iets dat organisaties en bedrijven *hebben*. Natuurlijk Grasweggebied koos een formele aanpak, zich sterk relaterend aan de institutionele omgeving. Voor Boermarke Essen en Aa was het echter een expliciet doel om medebewoners te betrekken, gemeenschapszin te bevorderen en gezamenlijk het culturele landschap te verbeteren. Beide casussen worden gezien als een contingent product van een zelf-transformerende organisatie die hun interne processen relateren aan de buitenwereld. Het hoofdstuk laat het vermogen van burgerinitiatieven zien om zich aan te passen en te mobiliseren, hetgeen hen een krachtige en relevante ontwikkeling in de governance arena maakt.

Hoofdstuk 5 gaat in op het gezamenlijk geactiveerde proces van subjectification in burgerinitiatieven. Door middel van een analyse van de burgerinitiatieven Lingewaard Natuurlijk, Grensbeleving Enschede en Bewonersvereniging en actiecomité Horstermeerpolder, wordt beargumenteerd dat de discoursen betreffende actief burgerschap die geproduceerd worden door overheidsorganisaties een performatief effect hebben op burgerinitiatieven, die zichzelf aanpassen, anticiperen op wat van hen wordt verwacht en strategisch handelen in relatie tot deze discoursen.

Hoofdstuk 6 presenteert een exploratieve studie van de burgerinitiatieven Duurzaam Soesterkwartier, Stadsboerderij Caetshage, Emma's hof, Kracht van Utrecht, Mooi Wageningen, EcoVrede, As we Speak, Singelpark Leiden en Groen Speelplein Vrije School Harderwijk. De studie laat zien hoe de participatiemaatschappij en informatiesamenleving samenkomen op gemeenschapsniveau. Betreffende de rol van informatie in hoe burgerinitiatieven functioneren en ontwikkelen, blijkt dat informational capital essentieel is in de realisatie van burgerinitiatieven. Verder blijkt er dynamiek tussen social capital, human capital en informational capital en wordt informational capital gegenereerd, geïdentificeerd, gebruikt en vergroot door de relationele strategieën van 'bonding', 'bridging' en 'linking'. Dit proces werkt beide kanten op en versterkt burgerinitiatieven.

In hoofdstuk 7 komen de onderzoeksresultaten van de vijf empirische hoofdstukken samen en wordt antwoord gegeven op de onderzoeksvragen. Het on-

derzoek laat zien vier soorten dynamiek zien in en tussen groepen mensen die initiatief nemen in hun leefomgeving. Allereerst is er dynamiek in de drijvende krachten achter burgers die het heft in handen nemen betreffende hun leefomgeving. Burgerinitiatieven en zelforganiserende gemeenschappen worden gedreven door een samenspel van krachten dat enerzijds voortkomt uit de idealen van burgers en hun intrinsieke wens om iets te doen en anderzijds uit ontevredenheid met de huidige situatie. Dit kan lokaal zijn, op beleidsniveau of op maatschappijniveau. Initiatiefnemers kiezen vaak onderwerpen die dicht bij hun dagelijks leven staan maar ook een bredere maatschappelijke waarde kennen. Daarmee is het samenspel tussen publiek belang en eigenbelang een andere belangrijke drijvende kracht in hoe en waarom burgerinitiatieven en zelforganiserende gemeenschappen functioneren. Ten tweede is er een dynamische relatie tussen social capital, human capital en informational capital in het functioneren, de ontwikkeling en de realisatie van groepen zelforganiserende burgers. Deze vormen van kapitaal kunnen worden gezien als 'bronnen' die gemeenschappen en initiatieven 'voeden'. Social, human en informational capital zijn vormen van kapitaal die gerelateerd zijn aan een veranderende samenleving waarin burgers een vitale rol spelen in het creëren van publieke waarden en waarin andere, minder grijpbare vormen van kapitaal belangrijker worden. De verschillende vormen van kapitaal interacteren en kunnen elkaar versterken en als zodanig bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van de initiatieven. De derde vorm van dynamiek betreft de dynamiek in en tussen de relationele strategieën 'bonding', 'bridging' en 'linking'. Groepen mensen die initiatief nemen met betrekking tot hun leefomgeving maken gebruik van deze relationele strategieën om zich te verbinden met verschillende actoren, zowel institutioneel als niet-institutioneel, op verschillende momenten en in verschillende niveaus van intensiviteit. Door verbintenissen met anderen, verankeren de initiatieven zich in de maatschappij. Ze interacteren met anderen, gebruikmakend van hun social, human en informational capital die daardoor ook worden versterkt en vergroot. Een vierde vorm van dynamiek die zich voordoet betreft de dynamiek tussen ruimtelijke en sociale binding in groepen mensen die initiatief nemen met betrekking tot hun leefomgeving. Een plek blijkt meer dan context; vaak maakt de plek ook deel uit van het de doelstelling. De burgers in de initiatieven verbonden zich aan een plek, en dachten en gedroegen zich op een bepaalde manier ten aanzien van deze plek. Tevens maakten ze het mogelijk voor anderen om zich (opnieuw) te verbinden met een plek en op een bepaalde wijze erover te denken en te handelen. Deze burgers mobiliseren en verbinden dus mensen. Daarnaast zien we dat als groepen mensen initiatief nemen met betrekking tot hun leefomgeving dat sociale bindingsprocessen (bonding, bridging en linking) en ruimtelijke bindingsprocessen (cognitief, affectief en conatief) onlosmakelijk met elkaar verbonden zijn: ze interacteren, beïnvloeden en versterken elkaar.

Dit kan worden gesymboliseerd met een dubbele helix, twee DNA-strengen die in elkaar verwerkt zijn.

Verder is de interactie in governance processen geadresseerd door in te gaan op de patronen en mechanismen die in de interactie tussen zelforganiserende burgers en anderen ontstaan, met name die tussen burgers en overheidsorganisaties. Er wordt een patroon onderscheiden in hoe interne processen van zelforganiserende groepen burgers gerelateerd worden aan de buitenwereld. In dit proces van 'selftransformation' wordt de identiteit – grofweg gezien als hoe mensen zichzelf definiëren en hoe zij handelen – beïnvloed door hun interpretatie van de directe en relevante buitenwereld, hetgeen mede vormgeeft aan hun strategieën. In dit proces van zelf-transformatie neigen burgerinitiatieven de assumpties over wat belangrijk is volgens de relevante (overheids)organisaties te internaliseren. Dit heeft tot gevolg dat ze veelal formele strategieën volgen en een formele identiteit aannemen. De bestudeerde case studies laten zien dat overheidsmedewerkers een voorkeur hebben voor burgerinitiatieven waar ze zich aan kunnen relateren, zowel qua inhoud als vorm. Burgerinitiatieven die andere doelstellingen hebben, een andere weg bewandelen, een andere vorm hebben of een andere mening toegedaan zijn worden vaak als irrelevant behandeld. Deze overheidsdominantie wordt mede beïnvloed door de wijze waarop burgerinitiatieven handelen en zichzelf positioneren. Zij passen zich aan, anticiperen en handelen strategisch in lijn met hun beeld van de overheidsorganisatie en met hun interpretatie van wat deze organisatie wil. Anders geformuleerd passen zij technieken van adaptatie, anticipatie en 'framing' toe om constructief over te komen. Als gevolg hiervan worden in de praktijk van Nederlandse burgerinitiatieven de initiatiefnemers 'subject' gemaakt en maken zij zichzelf 'subject'. De initiatiefnemers kunnen hiermee gezien worden als gehoorzaam en onderdanig, maar ook als slim en strategisch. Dit leidt tot de conclusie dat er teamwerk is tussen burgers en overheden in het wederzijds reproduceren van overheidsdenken. Aannemend dat de maatschappij zich verder ontwikkelt richting een meer burgergedreven-maatschappij, laat dit proefschrift zien dat burgers inderdaad veel potentieel hebben. Verder reflecterend op nieuwe praktijken, zou men kunnen zeggen dat zowel burgers als overheidsorganisaties moeten leren en nieuwe stappen moeten maken. Er is noodzaak voor een samenspel van krachten waarin alle actoren op hun eigen manier bijdragen aan gezamenlijke publieke waardecreatie. Alhoewel de ontwikkeling van zelforganisatie zich ook afspeelt op het continuüm tussen burgers en markt en in verschillende combinaties van deze spelers, kan men zeggen dat de weg voorwaarts, met name in de relatie tussen burgers en overheid, is zich te richten op een samenspel waarin 'leren door te doen' wordt gevolgd door 'verbinding door te doen'. Concluderend kan gezegd worden dat zelforganiserende groepen mensen die actie ondernemen met be-

trekking tot hun leefomgeving (of iets anders) een uiting is van een informele en participatieve democratie, die ook vorm krijgt met democratische waarden. Deze 'doe-democratie' kan gezien worden als complementaire vorm van democratie die tegemoet komt aan een behoefte betreffende de invulling van democratische waarden. Democratie kan gezien worden als een doorgaand proces, waar constant aan gewerkt moet worden.



Name of the learning activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS*
A) Project related competences			
	Orléon	2007	0.3
Linguistic Analysis			
Summerschool SIOO	SIOO, Amersfoort	2008	1
Course Reading Landscape	WUR, LNV	2004	0.9
Governanceplatform	PAP, WUR	2007-2009	2
Masterclass Polarisation	FORUM, Utrecht	2011	1.8
Literature discussion group fellow PhD-students	WUR	2008-2015	2.8
B) General research related competences			
Mansholt Introduction course	Mansholt	2009	1,5
Mansholt Multidisciplinary Seminar	Mansholt	2010	1
Information Literacy including Endnote introduction	WUR Library	2008	0.8
Scientific Writing Courses	Language Center CENTA	2005, 2006, 2008	3.6
Presentation skills	De Baak, Driebergen	2010	1.2
Masterclasses Social Media	LaVerbe, WUR	2012, 2014	0.8
Citizens and Landscape	CDI, WUR	2011	1
Theory, trends and examples of active citizenship in the Netherlands			
Presentation on local governance for Azerbaijan Guests			
Keynote speaker: <i>'Planning Cultures in Europe. Coping with Cultural Differences in planning and cooperation'</i>	INTERFORM, France and Spain	2007	1
<i>'Closed communities and residential segregation'</i>	ESA Conference, Glasgow, Great Britain	2007	1
<i>'Too beautiful to use just for a party: a squatter community as the keeper of cultural heritage'</i>	Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden	2011	1
<i>'Strategies of citizens' initiatives in the Netherlands: connecting people and institutions'</i>	ECPR Conference, University of Iceland, Reykjavik	2011	1

<i>'The Twilight zone between citizens' initiative and citizens' protest conference'</i>	IPA Conference, Tilburg	2012	1
<i>'Strategies of citizens' initiatives</i>	PECSRL Conference, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands	2012	1
<i>Wisdom of the crowd as value creation'</i>	ECSA Conference, Berlin, Germany	2016	1
Contribution, presentations, workshops and lectures in Exchange on Awareness Raising and Capacity Building for Protection of Cultural, Historic and Natural Heritage as a Part of Social Transformation in the Republic of Tatarstan, the Russian Federation	Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, the Russian Federation	2009-2010	2

C) Career related competences/personal development

Reviewing scientific papers for various journals	PAP, WUR	2013-2016	1
Member program team Boundaries of Space	WUR	2004-2007	1.3
Bestuurskunde kring Oost	Landelijke bestuurskunde Vereniging	2014	0.5
Chair Mini-Symposium cultural heritage and identity politics	WUR	2010	0.3
Advisory Commission and contribution to Plattelandsparement	The Hague	2012	1
Member Thorbeckekring	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, The Netherlands	2012-2016	0.5
Member Scientific board for Police	Ministry of Security and Justice, the Netherlands	2013-2016	1.3
Guest lectures	WUR: FNP, LUP, SRA Van Hall Larenstein	2009-2015	2
Supervision BSc thesis and MSc-thesis	WUR: SRA, FNP, LUP	2012-2015	2

Total (30 - 45 ECTS) **37.6**

*One credit according to ECTS is on average equivalent to 28 hours of study load

Photography cover

Thanks to Lingewaard Natuurlijk, Vrienden van Fort Pannerden, Grensbeleving Enschede, René van Corven/Atelier Van Corven, Duurzaam Soesterkwartier, Rosalie van Dam

Photography inside thesis

Thanks to Rosalie van Dam (p.10 and p.50), René van Corven/Atelier van Corven (p.34, p.136 and p.156), Heijmans (p.54), Vrienden van Fort Pannerden (p.60 and p.63), Marcel van den Bergh (p.62 and p.73), Boermarke Essen en Aa's (p.76), Grensbeleving Enschede (p.98), Duurzaam Soesterkwartier (p.118).

Cover and book design

Marije Rosing

