

Wageningen University and Research

Social innovation in co-creative tourism networks

A case study of the Stay Active and Independent for Longer (SAIL) project
in Zeeland

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“Luctor et emergo”
Motto of the province of Zeeland

Abstract

The province of Zeeland (the Netherlands) is characterized by an ageing population and a high influx of elderly tourists, pressuring the traditional health care and social services. The lack of residents results in a low density of facilities, while the tourism industry is booming and therefore providing facilities for tourists. The Stay Active and Independent for Longer (SAIL) project aims to create new combinations between health and the tourism and leisure industry through social innovation and co-creation, providing solutions for problems related to the ageing population.

The process of co-creation is carried out in a network of different stakeholders. This thesis aims to understand the workings of co-creative networks aiming for an innovative product in the tourism and leisure industry. Based on innovation and network theory, a conceptual framework is developed that analyses the actors in the network and their relationships, in which they exchange shared perspectives and understandings next to resources to aim for social innovation. The involvement of residents and tourists in the co-creative approach receives extra attention. The case studies of Cadzand and Domburg are used to study the project.

Results show that Cadzand and Domburg are both successful tourism towns with different informal networks of elderly residents. These informal networks are used for the co-creative process. Two executive projects partners connect different stakeholders and are responsible for obtaining resources. Financial resources are shared with a select group of organisers, and information is only shared with a small circle of stakeholders, leaving other stakeholders disconnected. The local university of applied sciences (HZ) sees itself as scientific partner, but is also seen by stakeholders as executive partner as well, leading to unclarity and frustration. Within the network, two major clashing ideas on innovation play a role: innovation as a product of the network, resulting in business cases for entrepreneurs; and innovation as a co-creative process in the network, in which the process itself is key. The output of this process is currently not innovative and therefore not interesting for tourism entrepreneurs to invest in. Different ideas on the target groups also influence the process, as only the active elderly residents are included, and tourists are hardly included in co-creation. Organizing one activity or service for two very different target groups proves to be very complicated.

My study shows that social innovation in co-creative networks is negatively influenced by several issues, namely the reliance on the informal networks and the project partners, the limited involvement of tourists and tourism entrepreneurs, the difficulties of reaching all elderly residents and the different perspectives on innovation as outcome or process. Recommendations are given for further research and practice.

Keywords: social innovation, network study, co-creation, health, tourism, elderly, residents.

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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Abstract..... | 3 |
| Acknowledgements..... | 4 |
| 1. Introduction..... | 7 |
| 1.1 Relationships between leisure, tourism and health..... | 7 |
| 1.2 A need for innovation..... | 7 |
| 1.3 Stay Active and Independent for Longer..... | 8 |
| 1.4 Research aim and research questions..... | 9 |
| 1.5 Structure of this thesis..... | 9 |
| 2. Literature review and conceptual framework..... | 11 |
| 2.1 Innovation in tourism studies and industry..... | 11 |
| 2.1.1 Definition of innovation..... | 11 |
| 2.1.2 The relevance of innovation in the tourism sector..... | 13 |
| 2.1.3 Co-creation and innovation..... | 14 |
| 2.2 Network theory..... | 15 |
| 2.2.1 Definition of networks..... | 15 |
| 2.2.2 Network theory in tourism research..... | 16 |
| 2.3 Themes in network studies..... | 17 |
| 2.3.1 Actors within the network..... | 17 |
| 2.3.2 Relationships in the network..... | 17 |
| 2.3.3 Co-creation in the network: involvement of residents..... | 19 |
| 2.4 Conceptual framework..... | 20 |
| 3. Methodology..... | 21 |
| 3.1 Study of documents..... | 21 |
| 3.2 Interviews..... | 21 |
| 3.2.1 Actor analysis and interviewee selection..... | 21 |
| 3.2.2 Local inhabitants..... | 22 |
| 3.2.3 The use of conceptual framework in interviews..... | 22 |
| 3.2.4 Analysis of interviews..... | 22 |
| 3.3 Participant observations..... | 22 |
| 3.4 Limitations..... | 23 |
| 4. Results..... | 24 |
| 4.1 Stay active and independent for longer..... | 24 |
| 4.2 Case studies..... | 25 |
| 4.2.1 Vitality Boulevard Cadzand..... | 25 |
| 4.2.2 Seaside resort Domburg..... | 26 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 4.2.3 The bath status and the pilots..... | 27 |
| 4.3 Results of the analysis..... | 27 |
| 4.3.1 Comparison Cadzand and Domburg..... | 27 |
| The networks in Cadzand and Domburg..... | 27 |
| The tourism sector in Cadzand and Domburg..... | 29 |
| 4.3.2 Composition of the network | 30 |
| Network: project partners..... | 30 |
| Network: sharing of resources..... | 33 |
| Network: forming bonds and creating trust..... | 35 |
| Perspectives: innovation..... | 35 |
| Perspectives: different stakeholders, different perspectives | 37 |
| Perspectives: target group | 37 |
| Co-creation: residents and tourists..... | 38 |
| 5. Conclusion and discussion | 40 |
| 5.1 Conclusion..... | 41 |
| 5.2 Discussion..... | 43 |
| 5.2.1 Innovation theories..... | 43 |
| 5.2.2 Network theory | 44 |
| 5.2.3 Co-creation | 45 |
| 5.2.4 The future of the project | 45 |
| 5.2.5 Recommendations..... | 46 |
| Research | 46 |
| Practice..... | 47 |
| 6. References | 49 |
| Appendix A Interview guide and list of interviewees | 53 |
| Interview list | 53 |
| List of interviewees | 55 |

1. Introduction

1.1 Relationships between leisure, tourism and health

Engaging in tourism and leisure can be considered healthful in nature (Travis & Ryan, 1981; as cited in Pyke, Heartwell, Blake & Hemingway, 2016). Health is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “not the mere absence of diseases, but a state of well-being”. (WHO, 1948). Tourism and leisure contribute to the process of self-regeneration, relaxation, education and indulgence (Ryan, 1997), which may lead to more well-being. In tourism research, the use of the concept of well-being is limited, although this has been changing in the last few years (Pyke, Hartwell, Blake & Hemingway, 2016). A concept that can be used to explore the relationship between health, wellbeing and leisure is salutogenesis. Salutogenesis studies the factors that can support health, in contrast with the pathogenic approach which studies factors that make people ill. People maintain or enhance their health through resources: each individual or group possesses resources. These resources help people to perceive their lives as consistent, structured and understandable. Resources are “money, knowledge, experience, self-esteem, healthy behaviour, commitment, social support, cultural capital, intelligence, traditions and view of life” (Lindström and Eriksson 2006, p. 241). Tourism and leisure are one of the pathways to obtain these resources. Leisure affects physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing. It also has a social function which stimulates social integration and socialization. Leisure can relieve from stress by providing social support and relationships. Leisure stimulates sense of coherence, which makes one feel that he can manage situations occurring in life. It helps with education, balancing sexual energy and expressing identity. It contributes to feelings of coping (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993). For elderly people, who have to deal with feelings of loneliness and a deteriorating physical health at the same time, leisure can form a way to maintain or increase their physical and mental health. Providing leisure activities could raise self-esteem of elderly, which in turn helps them cope with deficiencies in familial or social support (Jang, 2006).

Next to improving social contacts and mental health status of elderly, leisure is also an invaluable resource for increasing physical activity amongst elderly. Physical inactivity increases the risk of getting several chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus and different forms of cancer as shown by an extensive literature review by Warburton, Nicol and Bredin (2006). Next to that, physical activity reduces the risk of cognitive impairment amongst elderly, such as dementia and Alzheimer (Laurin, Verreault, Lindsay, MacPherson & Rockwood, 2001). In the Netherlands, both chronic diseases and different forms of dementia have a high prevalence amongst the 65+ population, while only 56 % of this group (65-74) and 45% (75+) meet the Dutch standard for ‘healthy movement’ (Nederlandse Norm Gezond Bewegen) (Kenniscentrum Sport, n.d.). Leisure activities could therefore help increasing the health status of this group.

Another health issue amongst elderly is their eating habits. Independently living elderly aged 70+ often do not meet the Dutch criteria for healthy eating (Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu, 2013). Also, elderly that live independently often eat alone. Eating alone is related to a less varied diet and feelings of loneliness and depression, as eating is seen as a social activity (Kimura et al., 2012). Eating together can also work as a pathway to foster and manage social relationships (Vesnaver & Keller, 2012) and it may improve dietary intake (Vesnaver & Keller, 2012).

1.2 A need for innovation

Life expectancy in years has been rising in the Netherlands in the past decades (Van den Berg Jeths, Timmermans, Hoeymans & Woittiez, 2004). The Dutch population consists of an increasing

percentage of elderly, or otherwise called an ageing population. The combination of a higher life expectancy and an increasing percentage of elderly persons result in a higher prevalence of chronic diseases, causing pressure on the current Dutch health care system. More and more elderly persons live alone (Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu (RIVM), 2018), and more of them suffer from complex health care needs, such as the combination between mental and physical problems (RIVM, 2018). Meanwhile, the number of people able to give informal care is decreasing (RIVM, 2018), which causes a high demand of traditional health care services. However, the traditional system does not seem able to satisfy this demand. Therefore, innovation within the health care system and outside of it is inevitable (RIVM, 2018). The ageing population triggers a need for innovation in health care products and services (Hjalager, 2010). Innovation in health care often means technological innovation, like employing artificial intelligence and robotics. Several factors make the use of these technologies in health care complex. Often expensive, inhibited by laws and rules and aimed at an elderly population who are often not tech-savvy, the application of these technologies is not widespread yet (RIVM, 2018). However, next to traditional health care other opportunities exist for innovation to improve health amongst the elderly, especially in lifestyle and living environments. This means that one can look beyond the health care industry in other sectors for creative and innovative solutions for problems linked to an ageing population. Traditionally, an interest in healthy lifestyle exists within the health care industry, but the term also attracts attention from other fields, such as the leisure and tourism industry (Novelli, Schmitz & Spencer, 2006).

The attention for healthy lifestyle in the leisure and tourism industry appears at the same time as a need to seek for opportunities for a sustainable future of the tourism industry (Kenniscentrum Kusttoerisme, n.d.). The Research Centre for Coastal Tourism (Dutch: Kenniscentrum Kusttoerisme) has performed a research called Hospitable Netherlands (Dutch: Gastvrij Nederland). The reason for starting this research is the trend that most Dutch holiday makers go abroad for their holiday. In 2018 8.7 million persons spent their holiday abroad, compared to 2.5 million persons spending their holiday in the Netherlands. Attracting more Dutch to stay in the Netherlands for their holidays, means an increase in tourism and leisure related spending (Gastvrij Nederland, n.d.). Also, it was important to understand whether the Dutch tourism industry needs a new image or product changes. Five types of Dutch holiday makers were developed, enabling entrepreneurs to focus more on offering experiences instead of services (Gastvrij Nederland, n.d.). As consumers have developed a bigger interest for a healthy lifestyle, they are more aware of not only everyday healthy choices but incorporating this lifestyle in their leisure time as well (Douglas 2001; as cited in Novelli et al., 2006), providing opportunities for entrepreneurs to develop healthy experiences for leisure and tourism purposes ensuring a sustainable future for their businesses.

1.3 Stay Active and Independent for Longer

A project aiming to develop these healthy leisure and tourism experiences to find innovative solutions for problems in an ageing population, is the Stay Active and Independent for Longer (SAIL) project. The development of these experiences is aimed to relieve the pressure on traditional health care and social services, by providing elderly residents and tourists with the opportunity to regulate health and wellbeing through leisure and tourism.

The SAIL project is an Interreg project in the Two Seas Area (South of England, south of the Netherlands, the coast of Flanders and north of France, connected by the Channel and the North Sea). The Two Seas Area is a unique area that experiences problems related to ageing, as the population is

often older than average and knows a high influx of elderly tourists and second-home owners, resulting in a high demand for traditional health care and social services (Interreg SAIL, n.d.). The objective of the project is: “to stimulate active ageing and longer independent living by identifying new ways of helping people remain independent for longer, more self-reliant and less dependent on traditional health care and social care services.” (Interreg SAIL, n.d.). To reach this objective, a social innovation process of co-creation is adopted, stimulating working together with different disciplines and creating a network with the actors, including its end-users in the process of developing. It is an interesting approach offering opportunities for innovation in the tourism and leisure industry. However, it is a fairly new approach and studies into this subject are limited. The lack of research leads to uncertainty about the advantages and limitations of a co-creative approach, which may limit the innovative outcomes of such approaches.

1.4 Research aim and research questions

The aim of this research is to understand the workings of co-creative networks aiming for an innovative product in the tourism and leisure industry. This may lead to a better understanding of these processes, leading to more innovative capacity within these networks.

The main research question is as follows:

What are the most important similarities and differences between the co-creative networks of case studies of the Stay Active and Independent for Longer (SAIL) project, and how does that influence social innovation?

To answer this research question, two case studies were chosen: Cadzand-Bad and Domburg. In Chapter 3 a description of selection criteria for the case studies can be found.

Multiple sub research questions were formulated to ensure the answering of the main research question.

1. What is the composition and functioning of the network during the different phases of the pilots, in respectively Cadzand-Bad and Domburg and how are resources shared within this network?
2. Which perspectives and understanding occur in the networks of Cadzand-Bad and Domburg and how does that influence social innovation?
3. What is the level of involvement (co-creation) of residents, tourists and second-home owners and how does that influence social innovation?

1.5 Structure of this thesis

This research is structured in five chapters that, besides this introduction, present the literature review and conceptual framework, an in-depth description of the case studies and the research results, as well as an conclusive chapter that answers the research questions as well as providing recommendations for further research and practice.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review and focuses on the concepts of innovation and networks. The concept of innovation is discussed resulting in common characteristics of its definition, as well as its meaning for the tourism industry. Special attention is paid to the meaning of social innovation and the relationship of co-creation and innovation. Next to that, network theories are discussed and by using

several studies, important themes of network studies for this research are highlighted. These discussions of innovations and networks result in a conceptual framework.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used in this research, which is a qualitative approach using interviews with stakeholders as well as a documents study. The limitations of this research are also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 4 shows the results of this study, starting with an in-depth description of both case studies, followed by an analysis of the network's composition, resource-flows, and the different perspectives in the network. Extra attention is paid to the co-creative process that has been carried out.

Chapter 5 concludes on these results to answer the research questions. It also provides an in-depth discussion of the findings and what these mean for further research and practices.

2. Literature review and conceptual framework

In this chapter, the literature on innovation in tourism studies and the tourism industry is reviewed to provide a definition of innovation and the significance for tourism. Also, co-creation will be discussed in the context of innovation. Next to that, an overview of network theory will be given, resulting in concepts that provide a focus point for the research. Lastly, a conceptual framework on co-creation networks for innovation will be illustrated.

2.1 Innovation in tourism studies and industry

A striking feature of contemporary western society is a never-ending urge for the creation, adoption and diffusion of innovation (Pol & Ville, 2009). The word innovation is used everywhere and anytime. Apparently, innovation is something that we really want and need in our society, and it seems crucial for success. The SAIL project is no exclusion to this innovation-craze, as one of its aims is to innovate. The priority axis of the project is social and technological innovation, with the specific objective of social innovation. By including the end-users of the project in the designing and developing phase in a co-creation process, the acceptance of the innovation provided is expected to be high.

However, the use of the word innovation has turned it into a buzzword in recent years. It is used extensively across different scientific disciplines, without one clear definition. To understand this concept better, firstly the different definitions of innovation in (tourism) literature will be given and common characteristics of these definitions will be highlighted. Secondly, the importance of innovation for the tourism industry will be explained using literature from tourism studies.

2.1.1 Definition of innovation

Innovation is a term coined by the economist Joseph Schumpeter (Sørensen, 2004; Hjalager 2010; Nagy, 2012). He defined innovation as an activity that creates economic development (Schumpeter, 1961; Sørensen, 2004). The drive for economic development is related to change production processes or even the product (Schumpeter, 1961). Schumpeter did not make a division between product of process innovation as done in later research (Abernathy & Utterback, 1975; as cited in Sørensen, 2004). Product innovation relates to that what is produced, and process innovations refer to how this is produced (Sørensen, 2004).

Research into innovation is fuelled by the fascination of creating and adopting something new (Gopalakrishnan & Damanpour, 1997). Nowadays innovation is a concept used in many different scientific disciplines, resulting in a range of definitions and interpretations. Gopalakrishnan and Damanpour (1997) review innovation research from three general scientific disciplines: economy, technology and sociology. Economists build on the definition of Schumpeter and view innovation as cause for economic productivity and growth (Scherer, 1984; Mansfield, Schwartz & Wagner, 1981; Schumpeter, 1934; Mansfield, 1968; Schmookler, 1966; as cited in Gopalakrishnan & Damanpour, 1997). Technologists study innovation as a continuous process, which changes innovation as it is used and assimilated (Sahal, 1981; as cited in Gopalakrishnan & Damanpour, 1997). Lastly, sociologists look at the characteristics of organizations that fuel or limit the adoption of innovation (Gopalakrishnan & Damanpour, 1997).

Within tourism studies, innovation is a relatively new and young study object (OECD, 2006, Peters & Pikkemaat, 2006, as cited in Paget, Dimanche & Mounet, 2010; Nagy, 2012), it is currently being a highly researched topic (Sørensen, 2004; Nagy, 2012). Tourism research knows a relatively late adoption of the concept of innovation with first mentions of innovation in 1980 but rising during the 2000s (Nagy, 2012), however, research is now reaching a level equivalent to research of other

economic sectors (Hjalager, 2010). Despite all the attention for innovation in tourism research, existing studies are scattered and fragmented, dealing with different concepts (Paget, Dimanche & Mounet, 2010). Researchers in tourism studies may borrow conceptualisations of innovation from the different disciplines as described by Gopalakrishnan and Damanpour (1997), resulting in different perspectives. Innovation may also be used as a buzzword without reflecting on what anything moderately novel brings to the tourism industry (Hjalager, 2010). Therefore, it is important to understand the deeper meaning and relevance of innovation for economic development of the tourism sector, but it is also of great importance for industry and policy makers (Hjalager, 2010).

Innovation has been traditionally conceptualised in the context of manufacturing industries and the patents coming forth out of this industry (Hjalager, 2010). However, the emergence of a service industry, and the exploding software industry has led to a recognition of innovation potential in these industries as well, leading to more recognition for the potential of innovation in the tourism and leisure industry (Miles, 2003; as cited in Hjalager, 2010).

Within tourism studies the concept of innovation has different meanings. Newness, change and success are all linked to innovation in most of the definitions (Assink, 2006). One of the most simple and straightforward definitions of innovation is “the process of bringing any new, problem-solving idea into use.” (Hjalager, 2010). However, innovation seems to be more than a problem-solving idea. Crucial to the success of innovation is the acceptance and implementation of the innovation. The capacity to change something with the innovation and to adapt to the innovation is also important (Hjalager, 2010). Adapting and change is also vital for value creation of innovation, as comes forward from the definition of Assink (2006) “The process of successfully creating something new that has significant value to the relevant unit of adoption.” (p. 217). Schumpeter (1961) also points out that the practice of innovation leading to improvement is as important as the innovation itself.

To summarize, these definitions point out three crucial ingredients for innovation; 1. A new idea, that solves a problem; 2. Adapting and change within target population; 3. Value creation for target population. These three elements are also vital in the success of the innovation of the case studies, as they are providing a new idea that needs to be adapted by the target population while causing a change (lower dependency on traditional health care services by a more active and independent lifestyle). In the end, the user determines by adapting whether something new is an innovation (Weber, 2011).

As mentioned before, the aim of the SAIL project is social innovation. Next to the definition of Assink (2006), it is important to understand what is meant by this definition to understand what the project aim is. As for innovation in general, social innovation does not have one clear definition as well (European Commission, 2013) and it is sometimes labelled as a buzzword as well (Pol & Ville, 2009). The European Commission (2013), who invest in the Interreg project through the European Fund for Regional Development, defines social innovation as “the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations.” (European Commission, 2013, p. 6). Social innovations are a reaction to pressing social issues (such as ageing populations in the case of SAIL). Social innovation aims to improve human wellbeing, by improving society and enhancing individual’s capacity to act (European Commission, 2013). At the core of each social innovation one finds co-creation in the form of active involvement of citizens in public service delivery (Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers, 2013).

2.1.2 The relevance of innovation in the tourism sector

The tourism industry has been characterized as extremely innovative during history (Hjalager, 2010). Innovation is deemed crucial in the tourism sector, as destinations need to draw tourists in a highly competitive field. Also, constantly changing market demand due to social and economic changes drives a need for innovation within the tourism industry (Hjalager 2002; Weiermair, 2005; Weiermair, Peters & Schukert 2007, as cited in Zach & Hill, 2017).

However, contrary to this innovative character, the tourism industry has also been conceptualised as an industry with a low innovative capacity (Fussing-Jensen, Mattson & Sundbo, 2001; Hjalager, 2002; Ioannides & Petersen, 2003; Mattson, Sundbo & Fussing-Jensen, 2005; Peters & Pikkemaat, 2005; as cited in Rønningen, 2010). Four reasons for this are mentioned (Rønningen, 2010). Firstly, most firms are small enterprises, while innovation is positively correlated with the size of an organisation (Mohnen, Mairesse, & Dagenais, 2006; Salte, 2007; as cited in Rønningen, 2010). Secondly, these firms often lack managerial systems to increase innovation (Rønningen, 2010). The third reason is the low competence of employers. Lastly, tourism firms are often not involved in networks or other forms of collaboration, hindering the exchange of knowledge and experiences and restricting innovative capacity (Hjalager, 2002; as cited in Rønningen, 2010). Therefore, many tourism firms do not have the right knowledge to innovate (Rønningen, 2010).

Innovations in the tourism industry are heavily influenced by mostly technological innovations (Poon, 1988; Hjalager, 2002; Orfila-Sintes et al., 2005; Victorino et al., 2005; Sundbo et al., 2007; Orfila-Sintes and Mattsson, 2009; Hjalager, 2010; Aldebert et al., 2011; Lopez-Fernandez et al., 2011; Meneses and Teixeira, 2011, as cited in Nagy, 2012) as innovations within the service industry tend to be mostly technological (Evangelista & Savona, 2003; as cited in Nagy, 2012). Often, innovations within the tourism industry are driven by innovations in other industries and not coming from the tourism sector itself. Especially innovations coming from the ICT sector form a driving force for innovating in the tourism industry. (Hjalager, 2010). A recent innovation in the tourism industry coming forth from ICT is AirBnB, which considers itself as an ICT-company instead of a tourism company.

Schumpeter (1961) already pointed to the importance of entrepreneurial heroes that were able to cause great structural breakthroughs (Sørensen, 2004). Entrepreneurs are sometimes considered as essential in creating new tourism products and to increase competitiveness, leading to better business outcomes and higher benefits for populations (Hjalager, 2010). The shift to 'post-tourism' leading to a demand for differentiated tourism and leisure products made the importance of small-scale entrepreneurs and businesses widely recognized (Williams et al., 1989; Johnston et al., 1944; Buhalis & Cooper, 1998; Thomas, 1998; Page et al., 1999; as cited in Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000). Lifestyle entrepreneurs, who perform entrepreneurship based on non-economic motives, are often innovative but active in small-scale. The products and services that they offer are usually based on their personal values. These entrepreneurs are influential for innovation and changes in the wider industry (Novelli, Schmitz & Spencer, 2006).

Again, contradictory to this, in general a lack of knowledge exists on how to innovate in tourism firms (Sørensen, 2007). Research into the value of entrepreneurs for innovation within tourism has mixed outcomes (Hjalager, 2010). Entrepreneurs start tourism businesses with limited knowledge and skills in business and have limited experience or knowledge on innovation (Lerner & Haber, 2000; Morrison, Rimmington, & Williams, 1999, as cited in Hjalager, 2010). Next to that, innovation is never only the result of the creativity of entrepreneurs, but it is the outcome of a very complex process (Fischer 1999; Asheim & Cooke 1999; as cited in Sørensen, 2004).

If the tourism industry is indeed as innovative as claimed, it becomes clear that the innovation processes taking place and their workings are not fully understood yet (Hjalager, 2010). Customer participation in new product development has been highly recognized in literature (Biemans, 1991; Evans, 1996; Gemünden et al., 1992; Gemünden et al., 1996; Leonard, 1999; Rothwell, 1986; Shaw, 1985; as cited in Weber, 2011), however this has been mostly studied within an industrial production perspective. A gap within literature as well is the focus on merely customer involvement in development instead of customer co-creation specifically (Weber, 2011). Within the service industry consumer driven innovation and consumer involvement in innovation processes is a current topic that deserves more attention from managers and the industry (Von Hippel, 2005; as cited in Hjalager, 2010). Attention for customer involvement is especially relevant for the service industry, as services are highly dependent on interactions with customers (Gray & Hooley, 2002; as cited in Weber, 2011). Within the service industry consumer and producer are often interacting closely, meaning that consumer involvement and consumer driven innovation could be interesting options to increase innovativeness in the industry (Hjalager, 2010). Customers can contribute to the development and design of new services, leading to a higher value (Weber, 2011).

Another issue that limits innovation in the tourism industry, is that the knowledge produced by universities is not well spread amongst the industry, leading to lower innovation process outcomes. It should be better diffused in the business community (Hjalager, 2010). Universities could have a mediating or even catalysing role to stimulate innovation in regions or enterprises. This proposition also comes forward within the SAIL project, as the HZ University of Applied Sciences is lead partner in the project, stimulating diffusion of knowledge generated amongst the stakeholders involved.

2.1.3 Co-creation and innovation

A process that includes end-users and which supposedly leads to innovative outcomes, is the process of co-creation. Co-creation is the process of communicative self-steering, leading to dialogues between equal partners (Binkhorst & Ten Dekker, 2009), replacing a top-down process of product or service development. Co-creation is aiming for joint value creation between provider and user (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Co-creation is a method to reach user-driven innovation (Hjalager & Nordin, 2011). User-driven innovation occurs when a new product or service are inspired by or the result of needs, wishes, ideas and opinions of external users (Von Hippel, n.d.; as cited in Hjalager & Nordin, 2011).

The process of co-creation has been upcoming in an economy providing with customers with more choice of products and services than ever seen before, but with high customer dissatisfaction (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The economy has been shifting to an 'experience economy', in which businesses are looking to provide customers with not only a product or service, but an experience. Within the co-creation process, customers are gaining more power and control over the final product or service with the co-creation experience as a starting point of innovation, instead of product- and company-centred innovations (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Binkhorst & Ten Dekker, 2009). Co-creation is supposed to lead to higher value of the provided experience by matching this perfectly to consumers' needs, wishes and living environment and context (Binkhorst & Ten Dekker, 2009). In tourism, the process of co-creation may even be part of this experience (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Within the SAIL project, co-creation is used to identify new opportunities and possibilities, especially between different sectors. Next to that, the elderly participating in the co-creation social

innovation process are coached for a durable process and increased independence (Interreg SAIL, n.d.), ultimately aiming for value creation for the end users.

2.2 Network theory

As innovation has been recognized as a complex process (Fischer 1999; Asheim & Cooke 1999), it has been argued that innovation does not take place within organizations or firms, but rather in the network between different firms (Håkansson 1987; Biemans 1992; Easton 1992; Ahuja 2000; Gulati 1998, as cited in Sørensen, 2004). It is the time of networks (Sørensen, 2004), as their societal and economic importance are getting bigger. Networks may be crucial to the development and spread of innovation. Cooperation in networks stimulates the exchange of information and experiences and is therefore likely to foster innovation (Hjalager, 2002; as cited in Rønningen, 2010). It is important to understand how these networks are composed and what happens within these networks to get a grasp of the innovation process. However, no such thing as one straightforward network theory exists (Sørensen, 2004). Instead, this chapter will be a discussion of the definition of networks and the meaning of network theories for tourism research. Using this, a conceptual framework using network theory and innovation network theory is developed.

2.2.1 Definition of networks

Like innovation, network is another term that has been used broadly in different scientific disciplines. Various definitions of networks are used within the tourism literature. There is consensus on what defines a network, but not on the various types of networks (Szarka, 1990, as cited in Tinsley & Lynch, 2001). Most studies agree that a network is 'a specific type of relation linking a set of persons, objects or events' (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1983, p. 12). These relations are defining the network.

To provide a general template for the tourism and leisure industry, Novelli, Schmitz and Spencer (2006) use the network definition of Knoke & Kuklinski (1983), describing networks as specific types of relations linking sets of persons, objects and events, and the definition of clusters in their study of a healthy lifestyle tourism cluster. Clusters are defined as 'geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a field, linked by commonalities and complementarities' (Porter, 1998). These two concepts describe a general pattern in the tourism industry. Niche markets, such as the 'healthy' leisure and tourism industry, gain from networks and cluster building. Tourism is created within these niche markets and it provides increased economic and social benefit for the local community (Novelli, Schmitz & Spencer, 2006). Clusters and networks seem to be important for regional development and the innovative capacity, performances and productivity of local businesses (Novelli, Schmitz & Spencer, 2006), as the spread of innovation happens in these networks tied together in a cluster (Sørensen, 2004). However, there has been little discussion in literature whether networks and clusters can be used as an innovative process to contribute to local development (Novelli, Schmitz & Spencer, 2006). What could possibly explain the innovativeness of this network-cluster structure is the global-local paradox as explained by Porter (1998). In an increasingly global market, competitive advantages are concentrated in the local, such as communication and locally produced, economically friendlier products and services. The globalised market pushes SMEs and other local players to be competitive to survive, leading to innovation, co-operation and collaboration for competitiveness (Porter, 1998). Therefore, local network and cluster building may be important in the development and diffusion of innovation.

Networks and clusters are both relevant for the SAIL case studies, as the case studies can be defined as clusters due to the geographical proximity of the partners, in which networks are formed by these

partners. Next to that, the case studies do not only consist of persons, but objects (e.g. the thalasso centre in Cadzand-Bad) and events (e.g. cooking workshop in Domburg) play a role. Using the theory behind networks and clusters also provides an insight in innovation, as these clusters may have an advantage in innovating and have the potential to provide social benefit to the residents through their innovations. This fits with the assumption of SAIL that tourism businesses can provide benefits for residents and vice versa.

2.2.2 Network theory in tourism research

To complement the definition of networks and clusters, network theory is an important theoretical framework. Networks are often implied in tourism research, but more in a general speech than an academic study (Lynch, 2000; as cited in Sørensen, 2004). However, there is a growing interest in network studies within tourism. In general, two themes of network studies are used in tourism research. Networks may be a useful tool to understand the evolution of business, product development and opportunities for development (Tinsley & Lynch; as cited in Presenza & Cipollina, 2010). The second possibility for application of network studies is to understand the structure governance of tourism, especially in public-private partnerships (Palmer, 1996, Tyler & Dinan, 2001, Pforr, 2002; as cited in Presenza & Cipollina, 2010). These themes are often overlapping and studied at the same time, as innovative networks need planning and a flexible environment to catalyse something new (Dredge, 2006; as cited in Presenza & Cipollina, 2010). However, few have studied the relationships between networks and innovation in tourism firms (Sørensen, 2004). Studies do not identify the mechanisms in a network leading to innovation explicitly, but rather seem to assume such a link implicitly (Sørensen, 2004).

Networks are generally considered as a vital element for innovation in the tourism and leisure industry, not only for big multinationals but as well for small and medium sized businesses (Lynch & Morrison, 2007, as cited in Hjalager, 2010). Novelli, Schmitz and Spencer (2006) study the case of the Healthy Lifestyle Cluster in the UK to discuss the process of network development in tourism.

Networks and clusters can contribute to development and innovation within the region, but it is crucial to pay important to the process of network formation and collaboration (Novelli, Schmitz & Spencer, 2006). Following the importance of networks for innovation, it is important to understand several assumptions made in innovation network theory. Sørensen (2004) provides an overview of these assumptions. Firstly, innovation is not a straightforward linear process, as interactions and feedback during the innovation process are stressed for their importance in reaching innovation (Fischer, 1999; as cited in Sørensen, 2004). Another important assumption is that there is more than market and hierarchy; namely the relationships within a network (Küppers, 2002; Håkansson & Snehota; 2000, as cited in Sørensen, 2004). These relations are important links and enjoyed by individual firms (Sørensen, 2004) as a firm is never an independent unit. Networks may have the potential to be more effective than markets and hierarchies as an organizational form, as market imperfections and the strictness of hierarchy are overcome (Fisher, 1999; Tödtling, 1995; as cited in Sørensen, 2004). These assumptions all boil down to one bigger assumption. Innovations take place through interactions in relations amongst firms (Sørensen, 2004), as linkages between firms stimulating communication and information exchange are crucial for innovation (Dyer & Singh, 1998; as cited in Sørensen, 2004). Innovation is a result of interplay between actors (Håkansson, 1987; as cited in Sørensen, 2004), and therefore a product of a network (Sørensen, 2004).

2.3 Themes in network studies

Central to the potential of the SAIL project are networks and innovation, as the pilot stakeholders form a network to co-create and innovate creative solutions in the leisure and tourism industry. Networks have been studied in tourism literature, but research into the effects of networks on innovation processes has been scarce (Sørensen, 2004; Novelli, Schmitz & Spencer, 2006).

Networks and their elements can be studied in different ways. After studying literature on network theory and innovation, several themes for research questions arose which will guide the network analysis. As stated by Sørensen (2004), often these themes are implicitly mentioned within the article. For this thesis, the themes were made more abstract and applicable in research. The themes appearing in literature are actors within the network, relationships in the network described by the shared understandings and perspectives in the network and the exchange of resources in the network and the involvement of local inhabitants and tourists within the network (Ap, 1992; Hummel & Van der Duim, 2016; Wilkinson & Young, 2002; Baggio & Cooper, 2010; Baggio, 2017; Swan, Newell, Scarbrough & Hislop, 1999; Eshliki & Kaboudi, 2012; Hall, 1995; Mowforth & Munt, 2012; Sørensen, 2004; Sørensen, 2007; Arai & Pedlar, 1997; Inkpen & Tsang, 2005; Page et al., 2017; Ren, Jóhannesson & Van der Duim, 2018). These themes were chosen because they are, next to evidence from literature, also relevant for the success of the SAIL project. Especially the involvement of local inhabitants is crucial for the co-creative social innovation, the goal of the SAIL project, therefore extra attention will be paid to this theme.

2.3.1 Actors within the network

The persons, businesses and organizations involved in a project are called actors. An actor is a person, a role-occupant, or a group that acts as a single unit (Emerson, 1972; as cited in Ap, 1992). In a host resident-tourism situation, an actor may refer to “individuals or groups such as local residents, local workers, local entrepreneurs, town officials, resident action groups, tourists, tourism operators, developers, environmentalists, or investors.” (Ap, 1992, p. 671). To understand the network, it is important to understand who are in it and who are not. This to understand whether the composition of the network and the organizations involved can reach the goals of the project and to find out if important or relevant actors are left out and why. It could also identify possibilities to expand the project or to increase the partners of the project in a place. Network analysis helps to understand the most relevant actors, as it sheds light on who is believed to make the most important contribution to the network or those who know how to benefit from their position best (Presenza & Cipollina, 2009; Cooper et al. 2009; Sainaghi & Baggio, 2014; as cited in Baggio, 2017).

2.3.2 Relationships in the network

In organizations, actors connect in relations. They change, and interact with the environment around them, making a connection between people and materials in growing networks (Hummel & Van der Duim, 2016). Relationships are “the focus of substantial investments in time, money and effort and are the means by which knowledge as well as other strategically important resources are both accessed and created” (Wilkinson & Young, p. 124). Relationships in the network are crucial and the main reason of existence for a network, since actors cannot achieve the goals of the project by themselves. Amin and Thrift (1992; as cited in Sørensen, 2004) state: “The value of a firm’s actions and investments in innovation ... is dependent on what other firms do and on the structures of the network” (p. 107). However, relationships also prone a big challenge for actors as relationships and networks cannot be controlled by an individual actor (Wilkinson & Young, 2002). Next to that, the

outcome of actions cannot be predicted. To deal with the insecurities caused by this, actors within the network constantly adapt their actions. Network structures and behaviours arise with interaction of network members, which may occur as a bottom-up, self-organizing method (Wilkinson & Young, 2002). Therefore, for this thesis it was assumed that networks are not a fixed identity, but rather a fluid process that is carried out by the actors' doings and sayings within the network.

To understand the relationships in the network, two concepts are relevant: the shared understandings and perspectives of actors in the network, and the exchange of resources within the network.

Shared understandings and perspectives in the network

For a successful cooperation, it is important that actors in the network have the same ideas and understanding about the common goal and how this goal will be reached. Actors balance between reaching their own goals as well as the main goal of a project (Wilkinson & Young, 2002). A way of understanding the understandings, perspectives and ideas within a company or network are modes of ordering. Modes of ordering are described by Law (2001) as mini-discourses that "run through, shape, and are being carried out in the materially heterogeneous processes that make up tourism and their constituent organizations" (Van der Duim, Ren & Johannesson, 2013, p. 11). Modes of ordering are coherent sets of ideas that can be found in thoughts, practices and relationships. They are strategic notions about an organization and its development and functioning (Hummel & Van der Duim, 2016). Van der Duim (2005; as cited in Van Heiningen, 2018) describes three levels on which modes of ordering can be studied. One is the notion of how something should be practiced (in this case, how innovation should be practiced). Secondly, practices themselves (how innovation is actually carried out in the project). Lastly, intertwined modes of ordering can be studied, resulting in findings of supporting modes of ordering. These modes can be found amongst different actors and can be found in different modes of ordering, in this example between tourism and health.

Van Heiningen (2018) uses modes of organization to understand how innovation, the organisation and tasks are understood. In the case studies, modes of ordering can be used to understand whether the actors have the same shared perspective and understanding, but also what their contribution to the project is and how they relate to the project and other organizations in the network.

Exchange of resources within the network

Networks provide firms with access to knowledge, resources, markets or technologies (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005, p. 146). Through the relationships in these networks, several types of bonds can be formed to exchange certain resources. A prerequisite for innovation in the tourism industry is understanding how resources within destinations are sourced, shared and used (Sørensen, 2004; Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Relations exchanging these resources can be broad, ranging from friendship to transfer of funds (Gulati 1998, as cited in Sørensen, 2007). To obtain these resources, an actor needs an exchanging relationship with the actor in control of these resources. Sørensen (2004) describes the types of bond an actor can enter to obtain resources. The types of bonds are technological (adapting to one another in a technological manner), time related bonds (to limit spending of capital by a single actor), knowledge bonds (actors know things about each other), social bonds (the trust and confidence that is slowly built up that link to responsibility and fulfilment of obligations) and economic and legal bonds (to ensure fulfilment of duties) (Håkansson, 1989; as cited in Sørensen, 2004). Out of these bonds, it is the exchange of knowledge and information that has been extensively discussed in network literature. Knowledge is widely recognized as crucial for competitive success (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). For innovation networks are a vital source of knowledge and information, and if one wants access to information he has to engage in a network structure (Gulati, 1998; as cited in

Sørensen, 2007). Information and learning are important resources for innovation (Sørensen, 2004). The way information and knowledge flows within a destination network is relevant for the general behaviour of the network (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Knowledge must be constantly created and recreated within the network to ensure actors have a common frame of reference (Swan, Newell, Scarbrough & Hislop, 1999).

2.3.3 Co-creation in the network: involvement of residents

In the studies of sustainable development of tourism, it has been widely accepted that the involvement of residents may lead to more sustainable destinations by providing economic opportunities and more positive attitudes towards tourism (e.g. Inskeep, 1994). Tourism and leisure can improve the quality of life in an area by offering services, attractions and recreational opportunities (Eshliki & Kaboudi, 2012). Local residents' attitudes partly determine the success of tourism. However, in the case of the SAIL project, it is not about providing local residents with economic opportunities, as in most sustainable development research, but with services and activities they can use to regulate and increase their health, social contacts and independence. Next to that, in the project a co-creative approach is taken, which involves residents and tourists in designing and developing, which goes further than merely involvement. It has been assumed that local inhabitants are willing to be involved in tourism development planning (Hall, 1995), whereas other research made clear that participation and involvement can range from passive to self-mobilised participation (Mowfort & Munt, 2009). Therefore, one cannot assume that everyone in the community is willing to participate and that the participating group is a proper sample of the target population. Within the SAIL project, the target population (elderly residents, tourists and second-home owners) play a big part in the success of this innovation. They will be coached in the co-creative social innovation processes that take place, which should lead to increased independence and durable process (Interreg, n.d.). An example of a similar project is provided by Arai and Pedlar (1997) who study citizen participation in a healthy communities' project. Participants who were involved in the envisioning and planning phase of the project, felt a significantly higher benefit of participation in the activities provided by the project than those who did not participate in planning, which is an argument for the involvement of end-users in the planning process. Self-determination and self-direction are key elements in the healthy communities' philosophy.

Co-creation results from a growing interest to combine public policy and businesses with application of university research. Universities and universities of applied sciences are looking for ways to demonstrate the value of the generated knowledge within their research, and governments are looking for ways to stimulate these forms of knowledge transfer. Universities are more publicly engaged leading to benefits for both research as well as the public sector (Page et al., 2017). Co-creation is an important concept in this development. It has become a buzzword in different scientific disciplines, also in tourism research. A clear definition does not exist (Ren, Jóhannesson & Van der Duim, 2018). One definition that has been used in tourism research is that co-creation can be defined as a process in which "mutually derived benefits occur through cooperation, collaboration and joint working" (Page et al., 2017). The benefits of knowledge generated within universities are shared to solve problems that occur in society. However, not only policy and knowledge actors are of importance in the process of co-creation. It is also important to think about wider public engagement when applying academic knowledge to the real world, which is important for the SAIL project as well as they are aiming to include businesses, local residents, tourists and second-home owners

2.4 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework shows that actors in the networks share resources, have their own perspectives, and use the involvement of elderly tourists and residents to reach social innovation outcomes. Based on the literature I assume these three factors influence social innovation within a network.

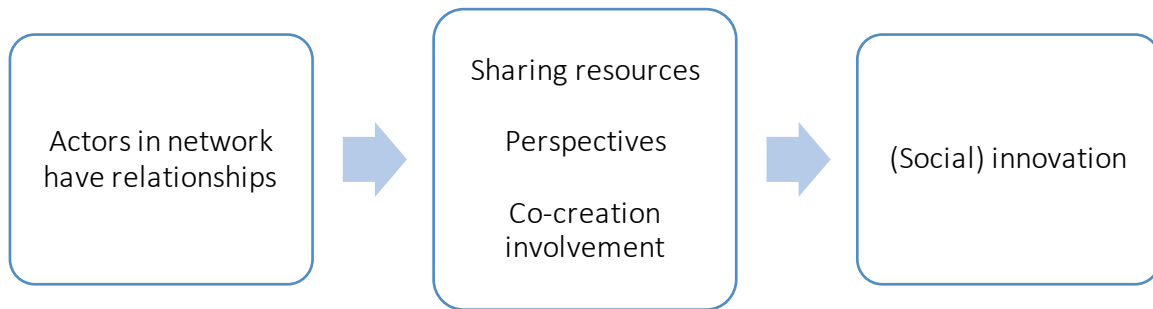


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

To understand the workings of the co-creative networks studied, three forms of data collection have been employed. The first one was the study of documents related to the project and its case studies, to understand what has been going on so far. The second one was semi-structured interviews with stakeholders involved in the case studies, to get more in-depth insights and information into the workings of the network. The third form of data collection that I planned to use was participant observation while engaging myself in activities organized in the pilots, but this method has not been used in the end due to the fact that no activities were organized in the data collection period, but I was able to engage in stakeholder meetings as a participant.

3.1 Study of documents

Phase 1 and 2 were studied using the documents provided by the project leaders. These documents are shared via Basecamp, an online platform accessible for those working on the pilots or those studying them. The documents that can be found on Basecamp mostly consist of schedules of (stakeholder) meetings, and reports of these meetings. The documents can provide a first insight in which activities took place to explore opportunities, needs and wishes related to SAIL and which stakeholders were involved in these activities. It helped to get a first overview of the actors, activities and relationships. Next to that, it provided insight in which stakeholders are interesting to interview.

3.2 Interviews

A qualitative approach was used to understand how the network works and influences innovation. Interviews provide the researcher with an opportunity to learn about the social life of the interviewee, and the interviews offer the interviewee an opportunity to share their stories and ideas (Boeije, 2010). The interviews were used to understand all three phases that the pilots have gone through so far.

3.2.1 Actor analysis and interviewee selection

The actor analysis was carried out before the start of the interviews. This was done to have a complete overview of the actors to enable a selection for the interviews. A selection had to be made when looking at the number of actors (around 50) and the time frame of this study. This selection was carried out with help of the literature findings (who is potentially most interesting to answer the questions) and with help of the project leaders, who have the most insight in the project and its most relevant actors. However, as I discovered in my research, the network was a lot smaller than it seemed on paper and after a few interviews I kept hearing the same answers.

To gain a first understanding of the actors involved, the project description was studied. However, more important was the information gained in interviews with different actors in the network, to find out who are involved and who they think should have been involved (more). This resulted in an analysis of involved partners and potential interesting partners that should have been or should be involved to assure success of the project.

To understand the relationships in the network, actors were asked to sum up the partners that they have a relationship with and which kind of bond they have (technological, time-related, knowledge, social, economic/legal, (Håkansson, 1987; as cited in Sørensen, 2004). This is an open nomination approach as described by Scott (2017) and can be part of a social network analysis. The open nomination approach leaves the answers open to the actors themselves, instead of mentioning the names of partners already. This made analysing the data slightly more complicated since actors may

mention different names or less/more names than other questioned actors (Scott, 2017). However, it ensured a complete picture of the network and did not assume anything about relationships within the network before the research started.

3.2.2 Local inhabitants

As local inhabitants are such an important part of the pilots it was one of the focus points of the interviews. To include them, the representatives of citizen organisations involved in the co-creative process were approached and asked for interviews. During the literature study carried out to design the conceptual framework, it became clear that citizen co-creation in exploring, designing and carrying out a pilot program has not been researched much, leading to a gap in literature. The study of these pilots provided a better understanding of the effects of involvement of citizens on innovative projects.

3.2.3 The use of conceptual framework in interviews

The conceptual framework was used to both guide the interviews and the coding process after. The interview questions revolved around the three concepts actors, relationships and co-creation as they were deemed crucial for answering the research questions. The coding process was guided by the concepts but is not limited to the concepts, as an open coding was applied to see whether other relevant themes come forward in the interviews. The interview guide can be found in Appendix A together with a list of interviewees.

3.2.4 Analysis of interviews

Firstly, the answers of the interviews needed to be transcribed to be able to analyse them. The interviews were analysed using the coding program Atlas.ti. Boeije (2010) describes different forms of coding. Open coding is the process of breaking down and categorizing data (Boeije, 2010). It is a thematic approach (Boeije, 2010), which fit very well with the five themes of the conceptual framework. It also provided the opportunity for the researcher to interpret the acquired data. Open coding resulted in a coding scheme. After open coding, axial coding was applied to make connections between the different categories in the open coding (Boeije, 2010), which will aid in answering the research questions.

3.3 Participant observations

Participant observation was regarded as a method for observation only, it is now considered essential to provide insights in meanings, feelings and experiences (Boeije, 2010).

As the pilots of SAIL were in the testing phase (phase 3), participant observation could have provided more insight in what happens in this phase. Participant observation was applied in two cases:

1. The activities that were carried out for participants of the pilot. This may have helped in gaining more information about the involvement of the local inhabitants and tourists, but also the entrepreneurs and others that carry out activities. By joining these activities, I hoped to understand the role of locals even better. It could have provided opportunities for informal interviews, to gain more data. However, no activities were organized during the data collection, therefore this method was not used.
2. The network and stakeholder meetings. By joining these meetings, I hoped to gain more understanding of the network, its actors and the relationships within the network. In the end, I was able to join one meeting between the partners in Zeeland, which did not provide new information as I interviewed the stakeholders separately before, but it confirmed certain findings. Some stakeholders were sometimes also present at activities I did for my internship, for example a meeting about the beach wellness. This was not directly related to SAIL, but during this meeting and through informal

talks I was able to gather additional data as well. Whenever I heard something relevant, I always asked permission after the meeting to use what I heard in my thesis.

3.4 Limitations

During the research, some problems were encountered that formed limitations to this research. First of all, the network was less extensive and less strongly connected than expected beforehand. This required a change in both perspective on the pilots and the network analysis. When starting this research, I expected an extensive network with pilots producing multiple activities and services. However, as I started to obtain more information using the documents and interviews, I discovered that the network was smaller than I expected. Also, the amount of activities and services was lower than I initially thought. This required me to switch up my perspective. Instead of investigating an extensive network with lots of activities as an output, I tried to understand why the number of stakeholders and activities was lower than I expected based on what I read and heard in the beginning of this research project. Related to this, some interviewees were very enthusiastic when they were approached with an interview request, but it turned out that they were not very involved with the project and therefore did not know a lot on the project. This is of course a result as well, but it made the process of data gathering more difficult. Luckily, some of these interviews provided me with context about Zeeland and the project that proved to be valuable. On the other hand, when speaking to stakeholders who had a lot of information, they lacked openness about the project as they did not want to cause problems by giving their honest opinion of the project. It is understandable that people who still must work together on the project do not want to offend other stakeholders, but it made it sometimes hard to understand all the issues going on. However, slowly more trust was gained as my name became more familiar for stakeholders involved in the project, which led to interviewees opening up more. It also helped that I attended different meetings in which stakeholders were present as sometimes they found it easier to speak in a more informal atmosphere after the meeting than in a formal interview setting.

Another issue for the research was that the pilots were less extensive than expected beforehand. A reason for this was the low availability of financial resources, which of course was limiting the amount of activities that could be carried out. However, I believe that this is also one of the reasons why less stakeholders were involved, as less activities were being organized. This was especially problematic because mostly the tourism entrepreneurs were not involved, and the theory was mostly based on tourism literature. This required a different method than prepared. Forthcoming, to understand tourism networks and innovative capacities better, a research into a network with more tourism entrepreneurs would be very useful.

The lessons learned from this research may be useful for other pilots in the project as well, but as locations differ from each other and all have a specific focus as a result of the co-creation process that focuses on local needs and wishes, not all outcomes that are relevant for the studied pilots may be generalised to the project as a whole. However, hopefully there are useful lessons for other co-creation projects within SAIL or similar projects.

4. Results

4.1 Stay active and independent for longer

The Stay Active and Independent for Longer (SAIL) project is an interregional (Interreg) project in which new combinations are created between health and the tourism and leisure industry through social innovation and co-creation. The aim of the project is to stimulate an active and independent lifestyle amongst elderly residents and tourists. The themes that are addressed in the project are “Wellbeing and Nutrition” and “Sport and Movement” (Kenniscentrum Kusttoerisme, n.d.) and the specific objective of the project is social innovation (Interreg, n.d.). The project has pilots in several coastal regions in England, Belgium (Flanders), France and the Netherlands, also called the Two Seas Area. These pilots are all connected to a local university, to gain scientific knowledge and understanding of social innovation. The project is partly financed by the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRD) and its lead partner is the HZ University of Applied Sciences (HZ) in Vlissingen, the Netherlands.

The project claims to be unique because the target group consists of elderly residents, tourists and second-home owners. SAIL aims to combine these groups and hopes to use ‘underused potential’ of facilities in the region. The main assumption of the project is that the tourism industry has something to offer to residents, and that tourists and second-home owners can profit from services normally directed at residents only (HZ, 2019).

The project is taking place in the Two Seas Area because these regions are facing specific problems related to an ageing population. The regions are often characterized by a high percentage of elderly inhabitants as well as an incoming stream of ageing newcomers (second-home owners) as well as tourists of higher age. This mixed ageing population puts pressure on the health care system and other social services. To reduce costs and pressure on these systems, it is important to ensure that this ageing population lives an active lifestyle, leading to a prolonged independence, improving wellbeing and quality of life.

The local potential of the region is considered in the process of designing and implementing the pilots. SAIL wants to go beyond a mono disciplinary approach only involving one sector, and is looking for innovative solutions from different sectors, for example the leisure and tourism industry. A process of co-creation is started to create new partnerships and opportunities in different and unexpected business sectors, leading to new and sustainable business models that contribute to healthy and active ageing.

In the Netherlands, the pilots of SAIL are situated in the province of Zeeland. In this region the SAIL project tries to address several problems such as the existence of facilities in a low-populated area (as little customers make it hard to economically survive), an ageing population that has the wish to live at home and sustainable tourism for the future. All these issues are addressed within the project which aims to connect the leisure and health care industry in order to realise lower dependence of elderly on traditional health care services and other social services. Innovative combinations are realised to supply elderly with different ways to maintain their health and wellbeing. These combinations form new opportunities for the leisure and tourism industry to develop sustainably (Hogeschool Zeeland, n.d.). Main project partners in the Netherlands are NV Economische Impuls Zeeland, GGD Zeeland, SportZeeland, HZ University of Applied Sciences, the Research Centre for Coastal Tourism (Dutch: Kenniscentrum Kusttoerisme) en het Lectorate Healthy Region (Kenniscentrum Kusttoerisme, n.d.).

Each pilot goes through four phases:

1. Exploring phase: wishes, needs and personal values of end-users and stakeholders are explored and compared between the different regions
2. The design & develop phase: in this phase, the findings of the exploration phase are translated in pilots in a social innovative, co-creative process
3. Testing phase: the pilot is implemented and tested
4. Evaluation phase: the pilot is evaluated to address the successes and problems the project faced

Currently, four pilots have been launched in Zeeland. These pilots are Oostkapelle in Motion, Vitality Boulevard Cadzand, Healthy Food Chain Cadzand and Seaside Resort Domburg. For the purpose of this thesis, two pilots are selected to study which are Vitality Boulevard Cadzand and Seaside Resort Domburg. The used criteria for choosing these pilots are:

1. Together, the pilots must address the two themes of Wellbeing and Nutrition and Sport and Movement
2. The pilots are similar to SAIL pilots outside the Netherlands; to be able to generalize results
3. The pilots are in the testing phase when the field work is carried out (November 2018 – January 2019).
4. The pilots consist of different activities, products and services; which is interesting for a network study since many actors are supposed to be involved.

The two pilots that were chosen based on these criteria are Vitality Boulevard Cadzand and Seaside Resort Domburg. The executing partners in these two pilots are representatives from the GGD Zeeland (Municipality health services) and Impuls Zeeland, an organization aiming for innovation and increase of economic activity in the province. For the two other pilots SportZeeland is also a partner, which focuses on offering sports activities to inhabitants.

4.2 Case studies

4.2.1 Vitality Boulevard Cadzand

Cadzand is a village consisting of two parts: Cadzand-Dorp and Cadzand-Bad. Cadzand-Dorp is mostly a residential area whereas Cadzand-Bad is mostly inhabited by tourists and second-home owners. The idea of SAIL is to improve the connection of the two areas to make better use of the facilities in tackling loneliness amongst residents and increasing vitality of residents and tourists. The seaside town resort of Cadzand-Bad has a long history going back to 1866 with the construction of the first bathing house (VVV Zeeland, n.d.). Cadzand-Bad got awarded with the bath status (Dutch: badstatus) of the European Spas Association in 2014 (Cornelius, 2016), reinforcing its branded image of a mundane sea-side resort (Gemeente Sluis, 2006). The bath status is awarded when research showed the healing properties of the sea water, the climate and soil products like clay, in combination with offered wellness and vitality activities in the area (VVV Zeeland, n.d.). Cadzand-Bad offers therapeutic and wellness activities as well as sport-related activities, cultural activities and culinary activities (VVV Zeeland, n.d.). The bath status can form an impulse for the tourism and leisure sector in Cadzand and attract more visitors to Cadzand and the rest of Zeeland. The pilot in Cadzand-Bad is trying to embrace this status by developing a vitality boulevard or wellness route. This vitality boulevard will not only boost tourism and leisure in Cadzand, it will also offer opportunities for the local elderly population and second-home owners. Involved in this process were the village council of Cadzand and Cadzand-Bad, Hotel Noordzee, Beach Hotel, MOIO Beach, a yoga studio, the soos which is an organization for elderly (social activities), the municipality, tourism entrepreneurs, the association of second-home

owners in West-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, Sport Zeeland and Bodyline (HZ University of Applied Sciences, n.d.).

The boulevard will consist of three elements:

1. Offering different forms of movement in combination with a fit-test and lifestyle coach
2. Organizing small-scale events and activities with a sport or movement theme
3. A thalasso centre. Thalassotherapy is defined as “the exposure to seawater (as in a hot tub) or application of sea products (such as seaweed) to the body for health or beauty benefits (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

The thalasso centre has been developed outside of SAIL already but chose to join SAIL for networking and financial benefits. Next to the other two ideas, eating together is also an important output in Cadzand.

Main pilot partners are Impulse Zeeland (a support centre for entrepreneurs in Zeeland) and HZ University of Applied Sciences. External stakeholders are entrepreneurs who are active in the field of sport and movement, vitality and the organization of a Feel-Good Market offering food, products and activities related to feeling good, health and wellness. Elderly inhabitants were also involved in the exploring and design and development phase.

The pilot has been through the exploring and design & develop phase. On the 20th of September 2017 a lunch was organized where elderly inhabitants of Cadzand were asked to tell about their experiences with social contacts, food and nutrition, sports and movement and independent living, to identify possible wishes and needs that can be fulfilled by the pilot. On the 29th of March 2018 the second stakeholder meeting took place. Participants in this meeting were several businesses and entrepreneurs, inhabitants and HZ. In this meeting, a short presentation was given about the process so far. The ideas from the first stakeholder meeting have been compared to the objectives of SAIL. Three ideas related to Vitality Boulevard have been chosen (a range of different movement activities with a condition test and a lifestyle coach, small-scale events relating to sport and movement, and a thalasso centre). In relation to Healthy Foodchain four ideas were chosen: eating and drinking together, availability of healthy and fresh nutrition (local or social mobility), small-scale events related to nutrition and a mobile food- and beverage establishment. This was followed by round table sessions, in which the stakeholders, consisting of participants/inhabitants, experts on the topic and entrepreneurs could give their opinion and ideas about the activities suggested. In December 2018 the testing phase of the pilot has started.

4.2.2 Seaside resort Domburg

Another town in Zeeland that has been rewarded with the bad-status is Domburg. Domburg is also a seaside town with a high influx of tourists year-round. A pilot to strengthen the bath status has been developed. This pilot focuses on healthy food and wellbeing and three ideas were thought of:

1. A flexible range of activities related to sports and movement, including condition tests
2. Public kitchen garden in which people can work and harvest healthy foods and herbs
3. “Domburg eats healthily”, consisting of cooking and eating together and a healthy offer of food in retail and catering.

Out of these ideas, “Domburg eats healthily” is currently being executed. Even though the idea of the ‘movement range’ was not totally in line with the focus on healthy food and wellbeing, the condition tests were offered as a kickoff for the project. The idea of a garden was too time-consuming for the time-frame of the pilot, due to obtaining permits and the process of plantation.

The pilot has been through the explore and design & develop phase and went into the testing phase in November 2018. The external stakeholders in the pilot are entrepreneurs, food expert, restaurants, grocery stores, hotel owners, suppliers of vitality products and services and the lifestyle coach of Veere. Elderly inhabitants and representatives of health care and elderly homes were involved in this process as well.

In Domburg, the exploring phase was carried out extensively. Several meetings took place in which stakeholders from the municipality that could potentially be involved in health tourism had a brainstorm with representatives of the project. Next to that, the wishes and needs of inhabitants were assessed in different meetings with inhabitants, as well as meetings with persons working with elderly (doctors, sport coach, nursing home). Other potentially interesting stakeholders were also contacted, for example Dagattracties Zeeland and a food producer focusing on local and fresh foods. Events in the region, such as an inspiration day for health tourism were visited to get ideas for the project. Lastly, tourists visiting Domburg were interviewed. As of January 2019, two activities were carried out. A cooking workshop took place, to inform elderly about healthy eating and providing them with an opportunity to socialize. Next to that, a menu called Domburgs menu was in development, which is a menu with healthy options made with local products, offered in restaurants in Domburg to provide tourists and other customers with a healthier alternative.

4.2.3 The bath status and the pilots

Not coincidentally, three out of four pilots take place in Cadzand and Domburg, which both have been awarded the bath status. The connection with SAIL was sought for partly as an opportunity to strengthen the bath status for both towns, since the bath status is considered a pull factor for tourists. The pilots were developed to both deepen and strengthen the bath status. The vision to strengthen the bath status does not focus on elderly only, but also wants to include all age groups in several health and vitality programs.

4.3 Results of the analysis

To examine the co-creative and innovative process, a network analysis was carried out focusing on the composition of the network, the exchange of resources and forming of bonds within this network and the different perspectives or modes of ordering that stakeholders within the network have. The analysis revealed different factors that influence the execution and results of the project. These are the similarities and differences between the cases of Cadzand and Domburg, the structure of the network and its leading partners, the role of HZ in the network, the use of existing informal networks, the sharing of resources, the forming of bonds between stakeholders and the different perspectives on the target group and the meaning of innovation in the network. Lastly, the co-creative process in the network is described and analysed.

4.3.1 Comparison Cadzand and Domburg

Interview results showed similarities and differences between the networks formed in Cadzand and Domburg. The results show that the existing informal networks in both towns are important but that there are some differences in the organizations of these networks. Another important factor for the project outcomes is the current situation of the tourism sector in both towns and the tourism entrepreneurs.

The networks in Cadzand and Domburg

In both Cadzand and Domburg, the project partners largely relied on the already existing network

within the villages to connect with elderly residents. In Domburg, a network for elderly exists in which two organisations play a big role: Commissie Welzijn Veere (Commission Wellbeing Veere) and Stichting Welzijn Veere (Foundation Wellbeing Veere). These organizations focus on the wellbeing of all inhabitants of the municipality Veere. Commissie Welzijn has people in each residential core of the municipality, which helps with having oversight of the local situation. The Commissie Welzijn has an extensive network of elderly volunteers who are familiar with the local community. They have an insight in who lives where and who potentially could be interested in the activities offered by SAIL. This network also promotes participation in activities, as it seems that being familiar with other people going can be a motivator for elderly people to come to the activities. Next to that, the activities organised by SAIL were also promoted at well-visited activities of the Commissie Welzijn, such as the promotion of the cooking workshop during a meal that the Commissie organized. The use of the network also provided with opportunities for feedback during the pilots to understand whether the activities offered are fitting with the needs.

In Cadzand, there are similar organisations, but the structure seems to be less tight compared to Domburg. Cadzand has three main organizations in which groups of elderly are active, wherein Domburg Commissie Welzijn forms a central point for the elderly to connect. Cadzand has a very active organisation for the elderly (ouderensoos), who are organizing quite some activities already. The structure of the soos is similar to that in Domburg, and those active within the soos are well-informed on the community. The second organization is the church that organizes meals and activities for elderly as well. The third organization is the so-called spiritual community of Cadzand, who do not have a formal organization like the soos and the church. This is influencing the sense of community in Cadzand. The people belonging to the three organizations apparently do not really mix. This makes it difficult to provide one activity for the whole group of elderly since the interests and needs are more different per group. Therefore, one interviewee suggests organizing different activities aimed at the subgroups.

Another problem that contributes to the lower sense of community in Cadzand is the geographical situation. Domburg is one village in which residents live close to facilities aimed at tourists, such as restaurants and hotel. It is also directly situated at the coast. Contrary to Domburg, Cadzand is not one village, but it consists of two villages: Cadzand-Dorp and Cadzand-Bad. Cadzand-Bad lies directly at the seaside and does not have many permanent residents but consists mainly of tourist accommodations and facilities. Cadzand-Dorp has a bigger permanent population but is less involved in the touristic sector. Apart from the physical distance between these two, and therefore also a physical distance between residents and tourist facilities, there is also a perceived distance. One interviewee describes this:

“Cadzand-Dorp and its residents were always differently oriented in comparison to Cadzand-Bad. The perception is that Cadzand-Bad is there for the tourists, and not for the normal people such as the local baker, office workers or farmers.”

This perceived distance results in the residents of Dorp are not using the facilities offered in Bad, while this offers different opportunities, both economically as opportunities for leisure as one interviewee signals. However, in another interview the following was stated:

“Wrong assumptions have been made in the starting phase of the project. There has been assumed that there should be a connection between Cadzand-Dorp and -Bad. However, no resident is waiting for this. So, for who are we doing it for?”

An issue for understanding the situation in Cadzand is that Cadzand is further away from the project partners. Domburg is on the same island on which the project partners are based, namely Walcheren. To get to Cadzand, one has to take either the ferry or the tunnel to get to the island of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, which takes a lot of time. One project partner explains the consequences:

“I live close to Domburg, so I read the local newspaper and I understand what is going on in Domburg. I know it better and have more feeling with it. Cadzand is an hour drive away, which makes it difficult. And this (having the feeling for the situation) is very important I think.”

It is easier to spend more time in Domburg to get to know the situation, simply because of its geographical location.

The tourism sector in Cadzand and Domburg

Both Cadzand and Domburg have been characterized in interviews as successful tourism destinations. The towns and the province of Zeeland are highly-visited year-round, especially by older tourists. However, in the project application, an important assumption was made that entrepreneurs in these towns are looking for opportunities to expand their business. This is contradictory to the current situation. According to some interviewees, entrepreneurs do not need the extra income.

“Maybe at the start they thought the ideas would be so innovative that entrepreneurs want to invest in it. But there has to be a business case. (...) Within these two places in Zeeland, it is going very well economically. Especially in Domburg, they do not need initiatives like this. There is no economic drive to invest in this.”

The problem is not only that entrepreneurs do not feel the need for extra business cases, but it also questioned whether the ideas coming out of the pilots are innovative enough to help increase incomes when entrepreneurs would be interested. Even if some entrepreneurs may need extra income, the ideas of SAIL may not be innovative enough for them to invest in.

One of the entrepreneurs from Domburg that was present at the stakeholder meetings indicated that joining in initiatives by SAIL would be out of societal motives. The residents can experience nuisance from the tourism entrepreneurs. Organizing an activity in for example a hotel could help to stimulate mutual understanding. Another stakeholder that helps to organize the activities in Domburg said the following:

“Residents are disturbed by the activities of tourism entrepreneurs. So we ask the entrepreneurs if they want to do something back for the community. They are very enthusiastic and happy to do something for the residents.”

An important difference between Domburg and Cadzand is that in Cadzand a thalasso centre developed which could be a major boost for tourism and which can be seen as an innovative idea, as nothing like it exists in the Netherlands. Domburg does not have a similar project at the moment. This is also related to the network that has been created in Cadzand: the connections have mainly started through tourism entrepreneurs who were already developing the idea of a thalasso centre or beach wellness, whereas in Domburg the first organizations to connect with were the elderly and wellbeing organizations.

The expectation is that even though Cadzand is already doing very well in attracting tourists, this project could ensure a continuous flow of tourists. A project manager involved in the development of the thalasso centre in Cadzand said the following about the low season in Cadzand:

“Cadzand is already really busy, and even in winter it is getting busier (...) The group coming in winter are coming in the weekends, partly because of the good restaurants, partly to enjoy the coast. Adding another facility (the thalasso centre) may ensure a higher number of visitors during the week.”

For the thalasso centre, different entrepreneurs have been consulted and it is expected that it will majorly boost Cadzand as a destination. Entrepreneurs are interested in opportunities like this, but these are opportunities that are still mainly aimed at tourists and not residents. The developers of the thalasso centre hope that residents will also use the thalasso centre to relax or to receive treatment, but it is unclear whether the residents would be interested in that. Some entrepreneurs from the tourism sector are heavily involved with the development of the thalasso centre, as they see the importance of strengthening the bath status of Cadzand to ensure the future of tourism. In Cadzand the entrepreneurs recognize and indicate the need for constant destination development for a sustainable income also in the future.

Another factor that may play a role in the enthusiasm of the entrepreneurs in Cadzand is that they are already used to working together. Some point out that the entrepreneurs in Cadzand are more enthusiastic to work with the bath status than those in Domburg. It has been said that in Cadzand cooperation between the entrepreneurs is normal, where Domburg is believed to have more competitive entrepreneurs. A tourism entrepreneur commented on the cooperation in Cadzand:

“The idea is that guests who stay in one hotel, will also use facilities offered by other entrepreneurs, as guests like variation: one day they eat a meal at beach club A, and have a drink at hotel B. We get profit from guests, even if they do not stay at our hotels.”

Therefore, it is interesting to work together to develop a big tourist attraction: every entrepreneur expects to profit from the guests that it will attract.

4.3.2 Composition of the network

Network: project partners

The structure of the pilots has been designed to have project partners execute the pilots while receiving scientific support from their local university. In executing the pilots, connections are made with stakeholders such as local organizations and people. The project partners come from organisations in different domains, for example, health and social care or economic development. In the two pilots studied in this research, two project partners were executive partners, working for respectively the municipal health services (GGD) and Impuls, an organisation stimulating entrepreneurship and innovation in Zeeland. Both in Cadzand and Domburg the two project partners play a major role in organizing and carrying out the activities. Every interviewee points them out as the pivot of the project. Their different backgrounds provide them with different perspectives and both comment on the fact that these perspectives are very different, but complementary to each other, which helps in building a successful collaboration. The partner from the GGD works with communal health and wellbeing, focusing on disease prevention and healthy lifestyle implementation in Zeeland. Impuls manages projects that help entrepreneurs and companies in the tourism and leisure industry in Zeeland that want to innovate or develop their company. The partners explain that having these backgrounds enables them to connect with organizations that are in their domain: for example, the

GGD has more experience with elderly organisations, while Impuls' focus is with entrepreneurs. An illustrative comment on this:

“Each of us works from his own strength, his own expertise, capacities, network and knowledge. And this helps the project to evolve. I really like that. The other project partner has a different vision, but that does not mean you cannot work together. Exactly in that case working together is so nice. I find it very valuable.”

Impuls has more experience in writing project reports and organizing the financial aspects and therefore is responsible for those tasks. They are responsible for arranging the financing of the pilots by applying for subsidies and organizing sponsorship within the local community. The leadership of both project partners has been positively commented on in the interviews with other stakeholders. They comment positively on the large time and energy investment the partners make.

These project partners invest in the relationships with local organisations and people, as well as relationships within the municipality and the province. In both Cadzand and Domburg, the project partners have a strong relationship with the local organizations that organize activities for the elderly (the soos and the Commissie Welzijn). These two organizations combined with the project partners are the main executors of the activities currently provided through SAIL. The project partners connected with these already existing networks to spread the word about SAIL activities during activities that were organized by either the soos or the Commissie Welzijn, to reach potentially interested elderly. Relying on the existing networks has an advantage that the local residents know best about their community. Integrating completely in a community is difficult and it takes a lot of time, as pointed out by the project partners. Using the already existing knowledge saves time and it provides access to the community. These informal networks also help with activating elderly, as it seems that elderly people are more likely to join an activity when invited by someone they know, instead of being invited by a project worker from SAIL. Lastly, since the network exists already before the start of the project, the activities may continue after the project as well. The trust between people is already built up and they have found a way to exchange information and resources. This also promotes the continuation of the project as the already existing structure can take over tasks, which is what has been aimed for by the co-creative approach. However, a drawback to using informal networks is that some people are not reached since they are not part of the network. In the case of the informal networks formed by the elderly organisations, this is especially relevant for elderly that are lonely. This will be discussed further on when analysing the target group. Both project partners point out the importance of creating relationships within the local community and maintaining these relationships. However, forming these relationships takes a lot of time, especially working with elderly people. One partner explains:

“You would want even more time to invest in the relationships (...) you become a part of this local community. That makes it easier to understand the community.”

The other partner adds:

“Building relationships takes time. And it is such an important factor in success, also towards these elderly people. They are more usually a bit timid.”

Next to the relations with informal networks, the project partners also connect with local entrepreneurs to provide sponsorships or a one-time activity for the elderly, such as a meal at a

restaurant. They also made connections with other possible stakeholders during the explore phase, to discuss ideas and possibilities for SAIL and to see whether entrepreneurs or social organizations were interested in joining the project.

The role of HZ

The SAIL project takes place in four European regions. In each of these regions, a local university is appointed to be the scientific partner of the local pilots. HZ University of Applied Sciences is responsible for providing scientific support in Zeeland. The tasks that the university must do are setting up a group of experts, defining baseline values and methodology, data collection during both the design and development phase and the exploring phase, analysis of the developed businesses and services to determine their feasibility and socioeconomic viability and lastly monitoring and evaluation of the pilots. At this point in the pilot, HZ is involved in doing research. Different researchers are working on the project and collecting data. These researchers also supervise students who are carrying out research about SAIL, which helps with providing data for HZ. The biggest part of these tasks is analysis after the project ends, therefore it cannot be judged now if HZ fulfils these tasks. The most important objective is to learn about co-creation and which success factors play a role in this process. All universities involved in the larger Interreg project will exchange the gained knowledge with each other. Within the pilots of Zeeland, scientific support is provided, currently by the collection of data by several researchers from both lectorate Healthy Region and Research Centre for Coastal Tourism. The goal for HZ is to understand the co-creative process from a scientific perspective together with other universities and to learn from this project for future (Interreg) projects. The cooperation between universities and other project partners is monitored. The last mid-term evaluation showed that some partners are not connecting a lot with others, which is an issue that the European project leader will work on.

HZ has also been the responsible party for writing the project application of the pilots in Zeeland. Researchers from HZ have worked together with an external advisory bureau to create the application. The project application has been based on several assumptions about the region. These assumptions are questioned by several interviewees, as they are different from the real situation in Zeeland. It is unclear whether this can be contributed to inadequate research into the situation or that other factors played a role. However, sometimes it has been hard to execute parts of the project simply because the situation turned out to be completely different than assumed. The biggest problem here is the expectation of innovative project output where entrepreneurs want to invest resources in, as this output is simply not really happening in Zeeland. This makes it hard to get entrepreneurs enthusiastic for a long-term investment leading to sustainable income. It has also been assumed that entrepreneurs are looking for more business opportunities. In the development of the project, examples of villages in Zeeland that only have a high season flow of tourists have been used. However, in the pilots of Domburg and Cadzand, this is not the case, as entrepreneurs and other stakeholders indicate that both towns are booming tourism destinations year-round. The project's aim for this seems unnecessary in that case. It is unclear how this assumption has been made.

HZ has also recruited partners that were interested in joining the project. Partly due to the assumptions on innovation and business opportunities in the project application, some interviewees indicated that they had different expectations of the project, as they expected more innovative outcomes leading to investment opportunities. Currently, the focus lies more with social innovation and not with creating new activities and services, which is not very interesting for some stakeholders. Also, the roles that partners have been assumed before the start of the project turned out to not

suffice for the successful execution of the project. The expertise of stakeholders was not used to its full potential, both in the stakeholder round table sessions and the execution of the project. During the stakeholder sessions, some felt that they had to speak about a topic that was not fully linked to their knowledge and skills. A problem with the execution of the project was that some partners were assigned to a pilot in which they felt they did not belong based on their knowledge and expertise. Contrary to that, some pilots only have one partner, which is a problem in a project that is based on creating connections between different organizations.

Next to that, HZ as regional partner is also responsible for ensuring smooth cooperation. However, within the HZ organisation, no one seems to have the full responsibility for this. Tasks such as having stakeholder meetings are divided between different people within HZ or between the project partners. HZ aims to be a 'sparring partner' for the Dutch and Flemish partners, helping them with matters concerning on how to approach people for the project and how to organize stakeholder meetings, as HZ already has experience in this. The different expectations between HZ and its partners are problematic. HZ sees itself as a scientific partner, for collecting and analysing data and supporting the partners with their experience, while other stakeholders think HZ is also responsible for the practical organization and support of the pilots. The stakeholders are focusing more on the role of HZ as regional project leader that ensures smooth cooperation. In the pilot of Cadzand, HZ is included as a project partner, which results in the expectation of not only scientific support but also support related to the content and the execution of the pilot. HZ does currently not meet these expectations and was not completely aware of the fact that they have been listed as an executive partner. This has its influence on the process as a role is not fulfilled, leading to more work for other stakeholders as well as confusion and irritation because expectations are not met.

Next to providing the local pilots with scientific support and ensuring smooth cooperation, HZ is also lead partner of the whole project. This means that HZ has responsibility and overview; they are responsible for organizing at least 2 steering group meetings per year, (mid-term) evaluations, progress report and overseeing the financial claims that need to be handed in at least twice per year. HZ has an European project manager in charge of these tasks. As this is not part of the regional project, no questions were asked about this in the interviews.

Network: sharing of resources

Resources within the network are shared between stakeholders, with the project partners as a central point. The two most important resources that are shared within the network are financial resources and information or knowledge.

Financial resources are scarce in the pilots. The project budget that was applied for proves insufficient in providing enough financial resources to execute the activities and services as planned by SAIL. Only the working hours are funded by Interreg due to the miscalculation in the application. This leaves no budget to organize activities, which in the case of the cooking workshop have costs as renting a room, hiring a cook for the workshop, buying ingredients etc. Therefore, a big responsibility for the project partners is to get access to financial resources. To get these resources, entrepreneurs and other organizations such as the municipality are asked whether they want to contribute to the project. One of the partners indicated that there is a lot of time spent to create these economic bonds, and that the time would rather be spend on something else. Creating economic bonds is done in two ways: through subsidies from municipality, province and other organizations, and through sponsorship.

The policy officer of the municipality of Sluis, which Cadzand belongs to, indicated that the municipality was happy to subsidise the project, as they saw it as an opportunity to strengthen the

bath status of Cadzand. They are aiming to profile themselves as a destination for health and wellness tourism in the Netherlands and cooperating with SAIL can help in reaching that goal. However, they also indicated that when they allocated the funding to SAIL they expected a bigger focus on innovative results that were interesting for entrepreneurs instead of the more social innovation output that is currently happening. Still, the municipality is pleased that the elderly residents make use of the activities and that the financial resources are used well.

The sponsorship is done by local entrepreneurs who are willing to contribute to projects that are of benefit for the local community. A reason to sponsor are to create goodwill in the community (as they can experience nuisance from tourists and tourism-related activities in the high season). Having residents visit for example a hotel to have dinner leads to a better mutual understanding as people may be less likely to complain about tourism if they get something back from the tourism entrepreneurs. Also due to the perceived distance to the tourism industry, this creates more insight amongst residents on what is happening in tourism enterprises.

Next to financial resources, another important resource is information or knowledge about the project. By exchanging information, knowledge bonds are formed in the network. The actors that are actively involved in developing the activities for SAIL know things about each other and the project and are well-aware of what is going on at a local scale. Organizational stuff, such as the availability of financial resources is only shared between project leaders. Limited information exchange and knowledge bonds exist between the stakeholders only present during the first two phases (the explore and design and develop phases) and those that are involved in the testing phase as well. Stakeholder meetings took place in which several stakeholders from the tourism and leisure industry and experts in health, wellbeing or tourism were invited for round table discussions. As a starting point for finding respondents, the reports of these meetings were used to contact possible respondents. However, in quite some interviews it became clear that stakeholders were only present during these meetings and were not involved in the project. They did not know a lot about the project or about which activities were going on now. Some expressed surprise that I invited them for an interview, because they felt like they could not tell me much about the project. A few of them also refused to do an interview, because they spent time on SAIL but did not get anything out of it and were therefore not willing to speak to me. This also tells something about the social bonds made in the project, as people were asked to get involved in the stakeholder meetings but apparently did not feel involved as much. As the project is now in its testing phase, these stakeholders may not be important now, but they may be of later importance, and they might not be willing to invest time at that moment if they do not feel connected to the project now. Especially since several follow-up projects are planned, it could be useful to maintain these bonds. Since not all activities and services that have been thought of in the stakeholder meetings are tested right now but may be tested in the future, these stakeholders are very much needed. Communication may be key in keeping these stakeholders close.

Another important resource that plays a role in the project, is time and the time-related bonds. As described above, there is a need for more time to build social bonds. But there has also been indicated that a lot of time went into finding sponsorships and subsidies, and that it would have been better to invest that time in something else more related to executing activities and developing services. Also, the project leaders invest a lot of time while the project ultimately aims for independent and active elderly. The elderly could be involved more already in the execution of the project. Currently it is not happening as it should according to the co-creation approach described by the project application.

Network: forming bonds and creating trust

Social bonds play an essential role in the success of the project. Mutual trust and confidence are important for responsibility and fulfilment of obligations. People are not wanting to start a project together when they think the other partner may not take responsibility to fulfil their obligations. When partners trust each other, the exchange of resources runs more smoothly as well. The project partners both point out the importance of creating bonds with the local elderly who have access to the local network to be able to work together. The project partners contact people in charge of the organization and invite them to join stakeholder meetings. This is done to understand what the elderly residents want and need in their village. Next to that, they also visit the organizations and activities carried out by them to understand what they do and to create a bond by showing interest in the already existing activities and to get to know the people in the organization. Both partners indicate as well that creating these bonds requires a large time investment, especially in the starting phase of the project. Mutual trust is essential for cooperation. To create this mutual trust, the project partners had a lot of meetings and discussions with the local residents, and they would come and look at the activities organized by the local organizations as well. A problem with this approach is that it is not in line with the tight schedule in which a project runs. One project partner explains:

“There is a set time in which the explore phase takes place, but that exploration phase was not ready yet. (...) Building relationships cannot always be planned in a strict project planning working with phases, it takes time. That is a very important condition and important towards the elderly, because they are sometimes a little bit shy.”

Here it is also important to note that elderly people are described as a shy or timid, and therefore a target group to invest even more time in than in other partners. Creating trust and confidence can take a bit more time than planned but is essential to get the pilots starting.

Perspectives: innovation

For innovation networks to function it is important that actors within the network understand the different modes of ordering of the actors involved. The results show that the perspectives of stakeholders involved in the SAIL project are not in line with each other and that they are not united very well. Different perspectives exist on the meaning of innovation for the project, the target group of the project and the aim of the project.

Economical or social innovation

The aim of the project is social innovation. This includes providing new activities and services for elderly residents and tourists to improve and regulate their health and wellbeing. Next to that, the project also aims to provide business opportunities for entrepreneurs, especially those within the tourism and leisure sector. However, it can be questioned whether addressing social needs can form a positive business case for entrepreneurs. One of the project partners said the following about the cooking workshop:

“They learn how you can use the leftovers when you buy a cauliflower in the local supermarket. That will definitely contribute to the wellbeing of the residents. But it is not a positive business case for an entrepreneur. I think that is still a challenge.”

Another interviewee said:

“You cannot really earn money from loneliness. It is a societal problem as well.”

The focus lays with addressing the societal needs of the elderly residents, but that does not result in new business opportunities for entrepreneurs. It is hard to transform social needs into a revenue-gaining idea. Next to that, as discussed earlier, elderly people may not need new activities and services to address their social needs.

It is also an issue that the project application and general description give different aims of the innovation in the project. Where the project application states that it is not about developing new products or technologies but merely developing an extension of already existing services and businesses, on the general Interreg SAIL project page the objective is stated as developing new business and services models that encourage active ageing. When new business and services models are developed, the project may be a lot more interesting for entrepreneurs to invest in.

Interesting is that the application to get Interreg funding for the project was rejected at first, because the first proposal was too economically focused, looking at businesses and entrepreneurial opportunities. When the proposal was changed aiming more at social innovation, the financing was approved. The financing is approved by the organisation of Interreg 2 Seas, which has social innovation as one of its objectives, however on their page it is also stated that new business and services models should be developed.

Co-creation: an innovative process?

Involving the elderly residents in the co-creation process would ideally lead to new ideas for services and activities that are carried out. In general, involving end users through co-creation should lead to innovative results. However, within the pilots that is currently not the case. Several interviewees commented on the co-creation process:

“We take a bottom-up approach to see what people (elderly residents) need. The ideas that come out of this process, are maybe not always super innovative. (...) For example, people want to meet each other and to eat together. That is not very innovative of course. But it is what they wish for and it fulfils a certain need.”

“The central aim of SAIL is social innovation and not innovation in itself. When you speak about innovation, you expect highly innovative outcomes. However, social innovation entails product development based on the needs and wishes of the target group. That is a new way of product development (...) If you ask me whether the outcomes are innovative, I would say no. It is the process that is innovative.”

These two examples show the perspective on the co-creation process. The emphasis is put on the fact that the process is an innovation and not so much the outcomes of this process. This is a notable difference with the project application, in which an emphasis on innovative solutions and project outcomes is stated.

The fact that the outcomes are not innovative, can also be linked to the perspectives on the target group. Making elderly people do something new is perceived as difficult and the co-creation process shows that they do not need new, innovative activities and services but rather activities like eating and spending time together, which are not innovative but needed. That the target group does not need new ideas seems to be a problem for involving entrepreneurs as well, as new ideas for business should be delivered to make them interested in investing in the project.

Perspectives: different stakeholders, different perspectives

In every interview, the respondents were asked to tell what the aim of the project is, and whether they thought that every stakeholder had the same project aim in mind. The respondents mostly mentioned a project aim similar to the aim as described in the project summary. However, there were a lot of differences between respondents in terms of their focus: some focused more on the societal problems in an ageing population, whereas others focused more on the business cases for entrepreneurs. Of course, each stakeholder has their own perspective which may lead to that they make the project aim 'their own', something that fits with their own organisation or interests, however when interpreted too much it may cause large differences between the aims of different stakeholders. The modes of ordering are too different and are hard to unite to lead to a shared goal and an outcome that is suitable for the target group as well for entrepreneurs.

The different visions on the project aim may also correlate with the fact that a lot of respondents were not so sure who the project leader was. They knew about the two project partners, but they were not sure who has responsibility. The lack of this clear responsible person may also explain the lack of one project aim, as a clear leader could convey their vision to the stakeholders.

Perspectives: target group

Results also show that different perspectives on the target group of the project exist as it is not clear who should be involved and who should not. 'Elderly' is a frequently used but vague concept in the project as the target group consists of elderly residents, tourists and second home owners. In the project application the direct target group is defined as: "babyboomers, 70-80, 80+, (second) residents and short- & long-term visitors that live in the 2 Seas coastal area". It is also recognized that this group is not easy to reach by the project interventions, especially the less active and vulnerable elderly. Some question whether SAIL is focusing on the right target group, as they see more opportunities to involve the younger group of elderly instead of the current target group. This concerns those who just retired and are still active. It is hard to activate people that have lived an inactive lifestyle for the last years and who are not involved in the community. One interviewee commented:

"I think that you should focus on the group that is ageing now, and make sure that they can use the facilities early and ensure that they continue to do so for the length of time. But to 'transplant old plants' and to make them do something new, I do not necessarily believe that that will happen."

Another issue here is that the stakeholders speak a lot about loneliness and lonely elderly, but they also remark that it is difficult to involve people who are lonely. A contact person for elderly explains:

"We are talking about loneliness, lonely people, but it is difficult to find out who are lonely. And once you find out, it is difficult to make them involved."

People are often lonely for a reason, or they do not feel the need to get involved in the community and the existing informal networks. They are not in the picture of the active elderly, since they are lonely, so they do not get asked to join activities, enforcing their loneliness. Using the informal networks is therefore potentially excluding a group of 'lonely' elderly, those who may need the interventions of SAIL the most. One interviewee mentioned:

"I think the people who were not there (at the stakeholder meeting) are the people you design these interventions for."

Loneliness is not something that is explicitly stated in the project application, leading to the lack of a view on what loneliness is. This makes tackling loneliness more complicated, because it is unsure what should be done to include these lonely elderly people. In the project application is stated is the following: “10 pilots based on specific needs of the elderly and by looking at local potential in the region.” It seems that tackling loneliness is a need of Dutch elderly and something that has come out of the stakeholder meetings with residents. This can be related to Dutch culture and its way of dealing with elderly people. One interviewee theorizes:

“Look at Belgium, France, Spain. Elderly people are actively involved in daily life and stay active. That is not happening in the Netherlands. If you are old and retired, you start to live in a different manner in some way. You are less involved in daily life and reality.”

He believes strongly that this cannot be changed by only the interventions of SAIL but is part of a bigger cultural change

Having residents present at stakeholder meetings and investigating their needs and wishes is a good first step towards co-creation. It helps with user-driven innovation and it may increase the suitability of the pilots. However, within the project co-creation is used not only to identify needs and wishes, but also to coach elderly in social innovation processes, leading to more independence and durability. This is partly done by involving existing networks and having them in charge for some things. However, this only involves the people that are already highly active in the community. The co-creative approach does not reach those who may need it the most. As the pilots are in the testing phase it is hard to say whether the social innovative coaching has worked, but it is of concern that those who need it more may not get the coaching.

Co-creation: residents and tourists

Similarly, the project also aims to include elderly tourists next to elderly residents. In general, it seems that it is easier to involve residents in co-creation compared to involving tourists or second-home owners. In both Cadzand and Domburg residents have joined the discussion in stakeholder meetings or other activities where they could give their opinion. These residents were mostly contacted through the informal networks already existing in the villages. This means that the people who came to the meetings, were already involved in the network somehow. It is easier to contact these people because the project partners know them already. However, as already mentioned before the people that need the interventions provided by SAIL the most may not even be present at the stakeholder meetings due to the use of the informal networks. These elderly residents are not involved in the network and less active, and may therefore need it the most to increase their social contacts and physical activity.

Where it is already difficult to have the less active elderly residents join the co-creation process, the whole group of tourists and second home owners is hard to get involved in co-creative activities. A reason for this is that they visit the villages on an irregular basis: in contrary to the local residents, they are not always there to join for a meeting. Especially tourists are irregulars and may visit the area only once. A common perception is that tourists do not want to join a stakeholder meeting while on holiday. Tourism entrepreneurs feel unease by asking their guests to join such an activity: they do not want to disturb them. To get some insight in tourists' wishes and needs, passer-by interviews were used. These passer-by interviews were conducted on the boulevard in Domburg and Cadzand, both places that are often visited by tourists. A disadvantage with passer-by interviews in this case is that

one cannot get an insight that is as elaborate as the insights gained from stakeholder meetings with residents.

Including tourists is also difficult because no central tourist organization similar to the organization for residents exists. Not having one clear point on where to start contacting people makes it harder to do so. There is limited possibility to create a network with tourists according to this interviewee:

“What we can reach with the elderly residents is much more (compared to tourists) as we built a network with residents and we meet regularly. You can only ask a tourist some quick questions in an interview, and then you often cannot involve them in a follow up activity for co creation, because they are back home already. “

One tourist group that returns often to the same place is the second-home owners and this may provide opportunities to network. However, second home owners may be only in Zeeland during the weekend, and not during the week when most co-creative activities take place. Therefore, it is also difficult to involve them. Still, in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (the island on which Cadzand is situated) the second home owners are united in an association. The president of this association was interviewed and noting that this network of home owners already exist may provide some co-creative opportunities for future ventures.

While tourists are not involved in creating new activities and services, they could potentially still join in the developed activities. However, the activities that have been currently provided by SAIL may not have been of interest for tourists. It is possible to organise activities for both groups, but it seems to be complicated as the wishes and needs of both groups are not always the same. An interviewee comments:

“We try to provide a mix of activities that are interesting for both tourists and residents. But it is not easy, these two groups do not mix very easily. (...) And if I am honest, some activities that are provided now are not suitable for tourists, for example the cooking workshop.”

An important need that elderly residents experience, is to connect with other people in their environment, for example through cooking and eating together. The cooking workshops are therefore an important output for the project and it helps elderly to connect. However, tourists may not experience the need to connect with residents, as they are staying temporarily. Also, a tourist must be present at the time and be aware that the cooking workshop is taking place.

The cooking workshop may also not be interesting for tourists as it addresses a need for social contacts, which may not be relevant for someone who only stays in the area for a short amount of time. Therefore, most interviewees mentioned the need to develop different activities and services for tourists than for residents. Some activities are not suitable for both groups. Things that were mentioned as activities that could be interesting for tourists are the Domburgs menu, which is a healthy menu developed with local products and served in restaurants, or culinary walks to show the beauty of Zeeland in combination with learning more about healthy local products. Certain events that SAIL wants to organize can also attract tourists, such as markets with healthy foods and activities. However, within SAIL it was aimed for that tourists and residents would use the same services, for example tourists using a sports club that is mainly aimed at residents or residents using wellness facilities aimed at tourists. These ideas are currently not executed yet, except for the development of the beach wellness in Cadzand, which will be aimed at both tourists and residents. Somehow, these ideas that were very prevalent at the start of the project, have disappeared in the project execution.

The perspective that tourists are difficult to involve, may cause this. If it is expected that tourists are difficult to involve and not interested in the activities, there does not seem use in creating activities for them. Also, not speaking to them or only in shallow passer-by interviews, does not perfectly show the needs and wishes of tourists in co-creation. Lastly, the focus on social innovation instead of innovation aimed at business cases for entrepreneurs may cause the lack of tourists' involvement.

5. Conclusion and discussion

In this research I examined the workings of co-creative networks aiming for an innovative product in the tourism and leisure industry, that aims to address social needs as well. By doing so I aimed to contribute to the upcoming research subject of co-creation by investigating the implications of a co-creation project including multiple stakeholders and target groups with different interests. Next to that, I also aimed to provide a more practical approach for the use of network theories in tourism research and to show the importance of interpretation, perspectives and interests when working with a broad, complex concept as innovation. Lastly, this research is an exploration of the dynamics of social innovation. My main research question focused on the most important similarities and differences between the co-creative networks of case studies of the Stay Active and Independent for Longer (SAIL) project, and how this influenced social innovation.

5.1 Conclusion

What are the most important similarities and differences between the co-creative networks of case studies of the Stay Active and Independent for Longer (SAIL) project, and how does that influence social innovation?

Several issues in the project have a negative influence on the social innovative outcomes of the project. Currently, the output of new ideas is very limited and little connections are being made between the health and tourism or leisure sector.

The networks rely highly on the project partners and the informal networks for elderly in both towns. The lack of involvement from other stakeholders, such as entrepreneurs and tourists results in project outcomes that are only relevant for one target group. As financial resources are scarce and informational resources are exchanged between a limited number of actors, the network lacks strength which makes it doubtful the pilots will form a sustainable resource for elderly residents in the future. The role of the university of applied sciences is unclear, which leads to tasks not being carried out as well as limited application of research during the pilots when certain things could be improved. The perspective on social innovation as a process rather than an outcome, results in outputs that are not innovative. The outputs are not new ideas, while the project aims for new activities and services created through unexpected connections between the health and tourism sector. The pilots are not interesting for tourism entrepreneurs as a sustainable business case. The activities address social needs but do not form a positive business case, as it seems difficult to earn revenue from activities addressing a social issue or need.

It is unclear whether the right target group is involved in the project, as less active elderly residents and tourists are not involved in the co-creation process. The outputs are therefore not addressing their social needs. Also, elderly people involved in co-creation do not need new ideas or connections to address their social needs, but prefer simple solutions, such as eating together. Lastly, addressing social needs on holiday may not be relevant for tourists, since building social contacts or eating healthily may not be their priorities in a holiday destinations.

To answer the main research question, two case studies were chosen: Cadzand-Bad and Domburg. In Chapter 3 a description of selection criteria for the case studies can be found.

Three sub research questions were formulated to ensure the answering of the main research question.

1. What is the composition and functioning of the network during the different phases of the pilots, in respectively Cadzand-Bad and Domburg and how are resources shared within this network?

The composition of the networks in both Cadzand-Bad and Domburg show similarities. The two project partners are the centre of the networks and they ensure the execution of the project. The project partners sought connections with existing local networks of elderly people and invested a lot of time in building mutual trust for cooperation. They started cooperating with those networks to include elderly in the co-creation process and to invite them to activities. The project partners are mainly responsible for the success of the pilots. For both pilots HZ University of Applied Sciences provides scientific support.

A difference between these networks is that Domburg has one main organization for elderly people, whereas Cadzand has three different groups in which the elderly residents are involved. Another difference is in the geographical composition of the towns: the tourism industry in Domburg is interwoven in the village and residents use the facilities; whereas residents of Cadzand-Dorp perceive Cadzand-Bad as a place for tourists and therefore make limited use of facilities provided by tourism.

The functioning of the network is limited, which is partly caused by the limited access to financial resources. Financial resources enable stakeholders to provide activities and services and are therefore vital for the output of the project. The lack thereof is a problem in achieving results, and even now the budget is tight since it is largely dependent on incidental, one-time finances such as subsidies and sponsoring. Due to a focus on social innovation it is difficult to get entrepreneurs involved for a sustainable, long-term investment in the project, which makes the project dependent on these one-time finances.

The functioning of the network is also limited because information and knowledge are not shared with stakeholders other than the local informal networks. Informational resources and knowledge were available for all stakeholders in the starting phase but were not shared with everyone during later phases. As a result, stakeholders, such as entrepreneurs, do not feel connected to the project. The project is currently also highly dependent on the work of the project partners in cooperation with the local informal networks, which may result in problems when the project ends.

2. Which perspectives and understanding occur in the networks of Cadzand-Bad and Domburg and how does that influence social innovation?

Different understandings of innovation influence social innovation negatively. First of all, two perspectives on innovation occur in both networks and the project as a whole. The classical, economical perspective sees innovation as new ideas that should provide entrepreneurs with business opportunities. Social innovation also focuses on the development of new ideas, but these are developed to meet social needs and on establishing new social relationships between the public and private sector and not only for positive business cases.

The idea of social innovation as new ideas to address social needs comes from the project application that is funded by the European Commission, which describes social innovation like so. However, the project partners see social innovation as a process of co-creation. The importance here is that the end-users are included in the whole process, and whether this process delivers new ideas or not is of less importance. This approach influences the outcomes of the social innovation process, as new ideas are not delivered and therefore it is not interesting for entrepreneurs to invest financial resources in.

What also influences innovation negatively is the different perspectives on the target groups. The target group is defined as 'babyboomers, 70-80, 80+, (second) residents and short- & long-term visitors that live in the 2 Seas coastal area' but is mostly focused on the older age groups by using

informal networks. Some believe that it is difficult to encourage behavioural change in 'older' elderly and that the interventions would work better when aiming at a younger, target group of freshly retired elderly, who are able to be more active. Also, by targeting elderly residents through existing networks, those who are lonely and not involved in social networks are barely reached by the interventions, while those lonely elderly may be the ones needing the intervention the most. However, the stakeholders understand that involving non-active elderly is very difficult. In short, those who need the interventions the most are not involved in the co-creation process, resulting in less effective social innovation. Also, the younger elderly that are most likely to adapt to the social innovation, are not involved as well, which limits the adaption of the innovations.

3. What is the level of involvement (co-creation) of residents, tourists and second-home owners and how does that influence social innovation?

The residents that are active in the informal networks in Cadzand and Domburg, are involved in the co-creation process by giving their ideas and opinions about activities and problems as well as carrying out activities related to SAIL. The elderly that need the inventions the most, are not reached by the interventions as they are not involved in the informal networks. The outcomes of social innovation, defined as the development and implementation of new ideas to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations, is influenced by this target group in the sense that they do not need new activities or services as much but are rather focused on simple activities aiming at spending time together and eating healthily. The social needs are addressed, but not by new activities or services, which also makes it difficult to establish new, sustainable relationships as the residents are not a business model for entrepreneurs.

Tourists and second-home owners have a low involvement in the co-creation process, because the stakeholders perceive that tourists do not want to join the co-creation process. This influences the social innovation as the current project outputs are not very interesting for tourists to join in. This shows that target group involvement is important if aiming for co-creation. Also, as tourists are not involved in the co-creation process, entrepreneurs are less willing to invest in social innovation as tourists are the group they earn most revenue from compared to residents. Lastly, as social innovation is aiming to address social needs it can be questioned whether holidays are appropriate for addressing these needs, as they revolve around establishing social contacts and a healthy lifestyle. Tourists may have different needs compared to residents. Building social contacts is not very relevant in a place where they stay temporarily.

5.2 Discussion

In this discussion, I will reflect on the theory and the developed conceptual framework of Chapter 2 considering the research findings. I will focus on the relation between my research findings and innovation theories, network theory and the literature on co-creation

5.2.1 Innovation theories

Considering the three definitions of innovation of Gopalakrishnan & Damanpour (1997), this research project has been looking at innovation from a sociological perspective and not from an economical or technological perspective. Its aim was to understand the network (the organization) and its characteristics that fuel or limit innovation. This may be a first step in a better understanding the characteristics of the organization of co-creative networks and how this influences the innovativeness

of the results. For the aim of this study it was a useful approach. However, it only provided an understanding from a sociological perspective on innovation, whereas this project might benefit from a multidisciplinary approach to innovation, as multiple definitions and perspectives on innovation play a role.

As innovation can be defined broadly, I extracted three important factors or ingredients for innovation from several definitions during the literature research, resulting in 1. A new idea, that solves a problem; 2. Adapting and change within target population; 3. Value creation for target population s (Hjalager, 2010; Assink, 2006; Schumpeter, 1961). When applying these three definitions to the project, the project is currently not completely succeeding in innovating. The outputs are not new ideas, however they do address social needs. Whether the target population is adapting and changing to the innovation is not clear yet, but it is important to note that the project may not target the right population at the moment. Lastly, as some target populations (lonely elderly and tourists) have had limited involvement in the co-creation process, one can question whether value is created for these populations.

Two definitions of innovation were encountered that are crucial for the project and how stakeholders view it. One focused on social innovation, which is seen as an innovative process of co-creation with the end users to address social needs. The other definition focused on providing business opportunities for entrepreneurs, which is a classic innovation perspective. These two definitions are hard to unite in the output of SAIL, as the current output addresses social needs but does not provide business opportunities. The definitions that are used can be related to the definitions found in literature. The classic definition of Schumpeter (1961), that describes innovation as an activity that creates economic development, seems important for the idea that SAIL should provide business opportunities for entrepreneurs. However, another definition used within the project leans more to social innovation, with a focus on an innovative process and not so much on innovative outcomes. It is unclear how these two modes of ordering should be united to provide a clear idea on how innovation should be practiced in the project. As a result of the unclarity, the modes of ordering found in the practices of innovation currently focus mostly on social innovation and little on classic innovation or connecting different industries. Practically it means that there is focus on activities for residents with no revenue, and no output for tourists that could result in revenue. Providing one activity for both groups is complicated. The low involvement of tourists and tourism entrepreneurs can also explain the lack of attention for innovation as a business case. In short, one of the biggest questions that is posed by this research is whether innovation aimed at economic development and social innovation can go together in one project. This is both a theoretical and practical question.

5.2.2 Network theory

The research gap that became evident after studying the theory on networks in tourism for innovation, was the question whether networks can be used as an innovative process on a local scale. To understand whether this is possible, I will highlight the most important findings in relation to the literature, which are innovations as a product of a network, the research themes for this network study (actors, relationships, exchange of resources, perspectives and co-creation) and the global-local paradox and advantages of local networks and clusters.

In network research, an implicit link between networks and innovation is often assumed (Sørensen, 2004). In this thesis research it was tried to make this implicit link more explicit to understand which factors influence (social) innovation in a network. The research showed that these factors of networks are indeed a part of determining the (un)successful innovative outcomes of a network. It became clear

from the interviews that information and knowledge are important resources for the functioning of a network. The exchange of information is important to ensure stakeholders are aiming for the same output. Swan, Newell, Scarbrough and Hislop (1999) point out that knowledge must be constantly created and recreated within the network to ensure actors have a common frame of reference. In the case of the pilots some stakeholders were not creating and recreating knowledge resulting in the lack of a common frame of reference and therefore a disconnection to the project. This also limits innovation within the network as less partners are involved, and less information exchange takes place, especially information exchange with tourists and tourism entrepreneurs was lacking. The view of innovation as a result of interplay between actors (Håkansson, 1987; as cited in Sørensen, 2004), and a product of a network (Sørensen, 2004) is highly relevant for this research. The innovation is seen as the process of co-creation that takes place in the network. The interactions between the actors of the network form the main base of innovation. However, in this project these interactions do not result in innovation from a classic perspective.

The emphasis that Novelli et al. (2006) put on the combination of networks and clusters is also relevant for this research. Clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a field, linked by commonalities and complementarities, in the case studies formed by the tourism entrepreneurs in both towns. These clusters of tourism entrepreneurs are underused in the project whilst this was one of the objectives. Currently, the network of SAIL is very loosely tied to the cluster of entrepreneurs, which means that the entrepreneurs are not involved in the pilots and here potential is lost. Especially in Cadzand where entrepreneurs are cooperating a lot already and want to develop sustainable tourism innovations, the cluster has strong innovative potential that is unused now.

5.2.3 Co-creation

Crucial for co-creation is the process of communicative self-steering, leading to dialogues between equal partners (Binkhorst & Ten Dekker, 2009). Co-creation is supposed to be a bottom-up process that leads to user-driven innovation. Within SAIL, the objective is to coach elderly in this process to make them more independent and to use co-creation to identify new possibilities and opportunities. However, when looking at the theory about co-creation a strong focus on the end-user and a bottom-up process is evident. Within the project it is hard to reach a truly bottom-up process, Shyness and loneliness amongst elderly form a barrier for them to engage in this bottom-up process. The other target group of tourists is also difficult to include in a co-creative process. In short, the project is not meeting the level of co-creation that could be expected based on the literature and was aimed by the project.

Hjalager and Nordin (2011) discuss co-creation as a process to reach user-driven innovation. However, within the pilots co-creation does not deliver these innovations. Several factors may have caused this. This can be related to the elderly residents not wanting new activities and services; but it may also be caused by the low inclusion of lonely elderly residents as well as tourists in the co-creation process. As entrepreneurs are also not involved that much, this could also be an issue to reach innovation. What becomes clear, is that co-creation is not a method that reaches innovation without failure.

5.2.4 The future of the project

The future of the project is uncertain, which is caused by three factors, First of all, it is uncertain if the project tasks are taken over by the end-users once the project ends. The aim of SAIL is social innovation, which requires that end-users of the pilots should take over the SAIL is aiming for social

innovation by the elderly residents and tourists themselves. They should be provided with tools and techniques for the continuation of the project even after the pilots have ended. The use of informal networks may help in the continuing of the project, not only because they already existed before the project started, but also because they consist of people who are already experienced in bottom-up organising of activities. However, in all interviews it became clear that the project partners have an essential role in organising the project. The elderly residents and tourists should take over this leadership when the project is ending, but it is questionable whether they will acquire the required skills to do it. The shift to this bottom-up approach, self-organizing leadership might have to take place before the project ends, to ensure it does not stop once the project partners are out of service. Also, the project partners point to the large time investment they are making in the project, and it may be possible that no one is willing to do that on a voluntary basis.

A second threat for the future of the project is the willingness of entrepreneurs to contribute, as some of them only contributed in the pilot phase and others do not feel very connected to the project as they only were involved in stakeholder meetings. Also using sponsorship as a method means that flow of money and other material resources is not continuous, making it difficult to provide activities that take place regularly. Entrepreneurs, especially those operating on small- and medium-scale, may not have the time and means to contribute regularly even if they wanted to.

Lastly, the subsidy of the project will end which limits the financial means and therefore possibilities even more. Financial resources are needed and therefore it would be helpful if a continuous subsidy of some sort could be found for when the pilots end, as the subsidy from Interreg will end as well when the project ends.

5.2.5 Recommendations

Research

Further research is needed to understand how different domains can collaborate, and especially domains that have different aims, such as economic profit (tourism industry) versus health and wellbeing or economic innovation versus social innovation. This project used case studies which linked between the health care and tourism industry and this showed two major issues in the collaboration.

First issue is the existence of different perspectives in different domains, which leads to different understandings of the project aim. The second issue is combining the different target groups and their needs and wishes in one intervention. Whereas intersectional projects become more normal as a way of complex problem solving, it is useful to understand how one can link different domains and different target groups. The problems that occur in these case studies may not occur in other linkages of sectors, or different issues may occur in those cases. Multidisciplinary research is needed to understand the complex problems and solutions that intersectoral collaborations deal with.

Innovation also forms a multidisciplinary research topic in which it is useful to use different research disciplines and perspectives. The definitions of research disciplines that consider innovation as economical, technological and sociological by Gopalakrishnan & Damanpour (1997) show that innovation can be viewed from different perspectives. Next to this sociological research, both an economic and technological approach could provide their own understanding of innovation projects. One of the research questions of this research aimed to understand the level of co-creation in the project. However, my research has only superficially addressed possible success factors of co-creation. Co-creation is increasingly employed as a method of innovation, but research provides limited understanding on factors that make this method (un)successful. Further research into this is recommended as this research shows that co-creation does not automatically lead to innovation and

innovative outcomes. Next to a general understanding of co-creation, a specific research recommendation for SAIL or similar project are the target groups. Both the target groups of elderly residents and (elderly) tourists have posed several issues that hinder the co-creative process and the achievement of innovative outcomes. To include residents and tourists in the development of tourist destinations, activities and experiences, an understanding on how to include less active residents and non-permanent tourists in this process is important. It would also be important to understand whether co-creation with an elderly target group can lead to new ideas in general, since in this research that was not the case. It could be that a research with a different theme can stimulate elderly people to come up with new ideas.

As HZ University of Applied Sciences aims to be a scientific partner in the process, monitoring the progress and outcomes of the project is useful in understanding what goes well and what does not. By monitoring the project closely from the beginning on, it also gives opportunity to adjust where necessary during the project, and not only evaluating after the project. With this thesis, I hope to give some recommendations that are useful to execute now, but a recommendation for HZ for future projects is to monitor the project more closely. This was difficult due to the switch of project managers, since there was no project manager for an extended period of time, but it is important to signal problems early on and to adjust things where necessary. For example, the involvement of the target groups and entrepreneurs is a problem that could have been tackled earlier.

Practice

An important outcome of the research showed the clash between the two different modes of ordering on innovation. The emphasis of this project is on social innovation. To be able to provide business cases for entrepreneurs, it is important to focus on innovation resulting in new business ideas as well. First of all, it is crucial that stakeholders are aware of this. The next step could be to focus more on those stakeholders that focus on the economic definition of innovation, aiming to make more connections with clusters of tourism entrepreneurs and others, and to better connect these organizations with the social organizations.

Connected to this is the need to improve the information exchange between stakeholders. Stakeholders lose their sense of connection when they are not informed. From the research results it seems that the willingness to contribute to the project decreases as a result of lack of information as well. Therefore, keeping the stakeholders informed at least ensures their engagement with the project. Simple measures such as a newsletter or an information presentation once in a while may already encourage project involvement amongst stakeholders.

Third, the role of the university of applied sciences in the network and the project should be clarified. The different roles that HZ has on paper are not carried out fully in practice, leading to confusion amongst stakeholders. Next to communication at the start of the project on what stakeholders can expect of each other, it is also important to consider what HZ is aiming for in projects similar to SAIL. It is important to consider before starting projects, that HZ makes clear whether it is merely interested in insights and data for research, or if it is interested to function as executive partner as well. Appointing different persons for different roles, such as a researcher or an executive leader, could help as well to achieve different goals within one project.

The research has shown that both elderly not involved in organizations (also lonely elderly) and tourists are underrepresented in the co-creation process. This is especially an issue with lonely elderly,

as they seem to be the people needing the interventions the most. A recommendation would be to include this group more when working with an older target population in the future. However, this is easier said than done. One important factor in here is to overcome the shyness of both the lonely elderly and those already involved in the community or organization. This problem can partly be tackled by focusing more on the younger elderly residents who are still active and more probable to adapt and change. Involving all residents, including the less active ones, is very difficult but as the villages are small, it may be possible to motivate other elderly residents through the network.

The project also aimed to include tourists in the process of co-creation, which turned out to be difficult because tourists do not stay permanently at the destination. Including tourists in co-creation programmes will never be easy. Involving more entrepreneurs as stakeholders can also lead to a need to investigate tourists' wishes and needs, which may motivate entrepreneurs to stimulate their guests to give their opinion in stakeholder meetings. Zeeland has a lot of older guests that return on a regular basis. Especially these guests may be interested in developing activities and services that they can use each time they are visiting. These guests can be reached by looking into accommodations with many repeat visitors or by approaching second-home-owners. Next to that, to make co-creation more attractive the format of the meetings could be changed. For example, organising walking tours with tourists, at the same time giving them information about the surroundings and having them chat to a stakeholder about their wishes and needs, could attract more tourists to join the process.

Also motivating the entrepreneurs themselves to invest time and other resources in the project is important. Keeping them connected with information is a first step. It is important to strengthen the connections with the tourism clusters, for both more innovative potential in the region as well as a stronger focus on the entrepreneurial, profitable side of the business cases instead of only social innovation.

The project application has been developed using a town with no year-round tourism as an example, but has been carried out in Domburg and Cadzand, which both have a year-round tourism season. As Cadzand and Domburg have informal networks and a booming tourism industry, a town without these networks and a lower influx of tourists may achieve results that are more expected based on the assumptions of the project application, such as more interest of entrepreneurs in business cases, which also might make it easier to unite social innovation processes with economic profit and business.

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Appendix A Interview guide and list of interviewees

In this appendix the questions I asked during the interviews can be found. I used a Dutch item list since the interviewees were all Dutch. A list of interviewees is attached as well, only using a general description of their function to ensure anonymity.

Interview list

Introductie

Ik ben een student van Wageningen University & Research aan de master Leisure, Tourism & Environment. Ik onderzoek het Stay Active and Independent for Longer (SAIL) project. In dit project wordt door verschillende belanghebbenden (voorbeelden noemen?) samen gewerkt om activiteiten en services voor lokale ouderen en toeristen te bieden. De ouderen (de eindgebruikers zelf) worden ook in dit proces betrokken. Dit is interessant omdat het een relatief nieuwe aanpak is om eindgebruikers te betrekken in het ontwikkelen en ontwerpen van een interventie. Ik vraag me dus af hoe die samenwerking tussen belanghebbenden gaat en hoe dat de vernieuwende resultaten van het project beïnvloedt. Aangezien u meewerkt aan het project, kunt u mij hier meer inzicht in geven. Er zijn geen goede of slechte antwoorden, ik ben benieuwd naar uw mening en perspectief over de onderwerpen die we gaan bespreken.

U blijft anoniem maar ik zou graag in mijn rapport uw functieomschrijving benoemen (geef voorbeeld van hoe het benoemd wordt). Heeft u hier bezwaar tegen?

Ook zou ik graag dit gesprek opnemen zodat ik dit later kan terugluisteren. Vindt u dit goed?

Het liefst zie ik dat u alle vragen beantwoordt, maar mocht u bezwaar hebben kunt u altijd weigeren te antwoorden. Het interview zal tussen de 45 minuten en 1 uur duren. Tijdens het interview mag u altijd vragen stellen, bijvoorbeeld als iets niet duidelijk is.

| Onderwerp | Vragen |
|-----------------------|---|
| Introductie | <p>Wat is uw functie/rol binnen het project?</p> <p>Hoe bent u bij het project betrokken geraakt?</p> |
| Innovatie binnen SAIL | <p>Wat is volgens u het doel van het project?</p> <p>Hoe vernieuwend zijn de ideeën binnen het project?</p> <p>Waarom zijn deze ideeën vernieuwend of juist niet?</p> <p>Hoe ontstaan de nieuwe ideeën binnen het project?</p> |
| Innovatie: definitie | <p>Nieuw idee dat probleem oplost</p> <p>Welk probleem moet worden opgelost door het project?</p> <p>In hoeverre doet het project dit daadwerkelijk?</p> <p>Wat moet er nog meer gebeuren om dit probleem op te lossen?</p> <p>Adaptie en verandering in doelgroep</p> <p>Hoe passen de oplossingen van het project volgens u</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| | <p>bij de doelgroep? Waarom passen deze wel/niet?</p> <p>Hoe reageert de doelgroep volgens u op het project?</p> <p>Zijn er problemen in het afstemmen van het project op de doelgroep? Zo ja, welke?</p> <p>Waardecreatie Welke waarde levert het project op voor haar gebruikers?</p> <p>Wat is hierin het verschil met huidige voorzieningen en services voor ouderen?</p> |
| Netwerk: relaties | <p>Met welke mensen en organisaties werkt u samen?</p> <p>Kunt u beschrijven welke relaties (wat er wordt uitgewisseld) u met die partners heeft?</p> <p>Hoe verloopt de communicatie binnen het project?</p> <p>Wat gaat goed in de samenwerking en waarom?</p> <p>Wat gaat minder goed in de samenwerking en waarom?</p> <p>Wat is de meerwaarde van de relaties voor het project?</p> <p>Wie is verantwoordelijk voor het proces en de uitkomsten van het project? Waarom?</p> <p>Zijn de ideeën uitvoerbaar met de huidige groep belanghebbenden?</p> <p>Zijn er mensen/organisaties die niet bij het project betrokken zijn en die dat volgens u wel hadden moeten zijn?</p> |
| Netwerk: shared perspective | <p>Hoe draagt u bij aan het project?</p> <p>Wat is voor u/uw organisatie het belang van meedoen aan het project?</p> <p>Wat is voor de betrokkenen het belang van meedoen in het project?</p> <p>Heeft iedereen volgens u dezelfde projectdoelstelling voor ogen? Waarom wel/niet?</p> <p>Hoe wordt door de samenwerking het doel gehaald?</p> |
| Netwerk: co-creatie | <p>Wat is de betrokkenheid van doelgroep in het</p> |

| | |
|--------|--|
| | <p>ontwerpen en uitvoeren van het project?</p> <p>Is de doelgroep volgens u een gelijkwaardige projectpartner? Waarom wel/niet?</p> <p>Wat gaat goed in het betrekken van de doelgroep? Waarom?</p> <p>Wat gaat minder goed in het betrekken van de doelgroep? Waarom?</p> <p>Draagt het betrekken van de doelgroep bij aan de projectuitkomsten? Waarom wel/niet?</p> |
| Anders | Heeft u nog dingen die ik tijdens het interview niet heb gevraagd, maar die volgens u wel van belang zijn voor mij om te weten? |

Afsluiting

Audiorecorder afsluiten. Bedanken voor de tijd. Mochten er vragen of opmerkingen zijn dan kunt u mailen naar lotte.hendrikx@wur.nl.

List of interviewees

Project partner GGD (municipal health services)
 Project partner Impuls Zeeland
 Tourism entrepreneur
 Tourism entrepreneur
 Tourism consultant
 Researcher HZ University of Applied Sciences
 Representative organization for elderly Domburg
 Representative organization for elderly Cadzand
 Policy officer municipality
 Sport professional

Two interviewees that I invited, refused to be interviewed.

Through attending meetings I was able to gather more background and insight from several tourism entrepreneurs, researchers from HZ University of Applied Sciences, policy officers and European project managers.