

Beitske Boonstra, MSc

Planning Strategies in an Age of Active Citizenship

A Post-structuralist Agenda for Self-organization
in Spatial Planning



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Planningsstrategieën in een tijd
van actief burgerschap

*Een poststructuralistische agenda voor zelforganisatie
in ruimtelijke planning*

(met samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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Planning Strategies in an Age of Active Citizenship

**A POST-STRUCTURALIST AGENDA FOR
SELF-ORGANIZATION IN SPATIAL PLANNING**

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SUMMARY

Civic initiatives in spatial development are on the rise. Whereas for a long time they were just a fringe movement, sometimes even a stand in the way of planned urban development, civic initiatives today are increasingly seen as valuable strategies for urban development.

Chapter 1 illuminates the motivation for this research on civic initiatives. It describes how many European governments, including the Dutch, speak eagerly of “active citizenship”. They wish for citizens to be involved in public policy processes and in “civic initiatives.” So far, spatial planning mostly focused on strategies for citizen involvement through participatory planning. In participatory planning, citizens can exert influence on goals set by governmental agencies, through procedures and frameworks that are set by the same governments and planners. This results in disciplinary processes of thematic, procedural, and geographical inclusion. Civic initiatives differ from this prevailing participatory practice. They are issue-oriented projects serving a specific but dynamic community interest, which are often not at all related to any ongoing public policy. Civic initiatives can be undertaken by residents, entrepreneurs, artists, etc., in loose and informal structures, and differ fundamentally from initiatives in the private (individual), public and business sphere. They are spontaneous, dynamic, multiplicit and hard to fit within any disciplinary constraints. Civic initiatives are thus often at odds with participatory planning. Other planning approaches, such as framework planning or participatory budgeting, or planning as close as possible to citizens’ life world, seem to be in line with the ideas of active citizenship, but nonetheless stay within the same premise of a disciplinary role of government and planners. Together with an ongoing diversification in society, decentralization, dispersion of power, and increasing resource interdependency (e.g. land, property, knowledge, competences, capital, authority), the emerging practice of civic initiatives in spatial development, therefore poses serious challenges to contemporary spatial planners. Planning strategies that answer to the dynamics of civic initiatives, meeting the complexity of an age of active citizenship, have so far been seriously underdeveloped.

This thesis focusses on the emerging practice of civic initiatives in urban development. Reasoning from the perspective of civic initiatives themselves, three research questions are addressed:

- 1 Under what conditions do civic initiatives in spatial development emerge?
- 2 How do such initiatives gain robustness and resilience?
- 3 What planning strategies are developed in, and in response to, these initiatives?

Answers to these questions are used to explore potential and adequate strategies in dealing with civic initiatives – beyond the inclusionary and disciplinary confines of participatory planning approaches.

To operationalize this civic initiative's perspective the notion of “self-organization” is used. Coming from complexity theory, self-organization stands for the spontaneous emergence of order out of unordered beginnings. Following this general definition the concept of self-organization can be applied to spatial planning in various ways. This depends on the way “systems” are understood: As existing systems that maintain or gradually change their self through feedback loops; as existing systems in phase transition; and/or as emerging networks that constitute a self and a not-yet-existing structure.

Chapter 2 highlights these different understandings of self-organization, and elucidates which insights are generated on civic initiatives in spatial development when following these understandings. The first and second understanding of self-organization provide insight in the spatial patterns that emerge when a multitude of civic initiatives take place within a certain geographical area. The planner is meant to overlook these ongoing emergences, and intervene when outcomes of a self-organizing process head in an undesired direction. Though valuable insight can follow from these understandings, they still uphold a distance between professional planners and civic initiatives. The dynamics of individual civic initiatives remain thus unrevealed. The third understanding of self-organization emphasizes exactly this. It sees civic initiatives as individual, performative, interventionist, seeking to make a difference in the world operating upon them, and creatively transforming their environments. As such their focus is on adding new activities, new uses, new physical objects to an existing spatial configuration. When looking for planning strategies that are developed in, and in response to, civic initiatives, the latter understanding of self-organization (emergence of actor-networks) fits best. It allows a close look at the drivers and interactions within the individual civic initiatives and it overcomes the dichotomy between professional, public planners and planners in civic initiatives. More than just participatory planning, this understanding of self-organization opens up for a diversity of strategies developing in the practice of civic initiatives.

Chapter 3 builds upon this third understanding of self-organization. The chapter elaborates on the resonances between complexity-thinking and post-structuralist thinking, for instance the denial of transcendence and representation and a focus on relational becomings. This combination enables an understanding of self-organization as a non-representational becoming, an individuation of the self of an initiative that is actualized through a process of differentiation. The notion of self-organization from complexity theory, is complemented and further articulated by the notions “translation” from actor-network theory and “individuation” from assemblage theory. From the mixture of these different, but complementary, ways to describe “processes of becoming”, an understanding of civic initiatives as emergent actor-networks is developed.

Relational notions are not new in spatial planning, but have been developed profoundly over recent years. Relational approaches acknowledge the multiplicity and openness of space. Space is seen as an open ongoing production in a constant process of becoming. And planning is seen as a thoroughly performative practice, with planners pro-actively engaged and entangled in these heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming. These theoretical approaches have so far, unfortunately, had a hard time finding their way through the fixed institutions and procedures of planning practice. This thesis shows how civic initiatives, seen through the lens of self-organization, are actually manifestations of such heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming.

Chapter 4 extends the theoretical hybrid of complexity theory (self-organization), actor-network theory (translation), and assemblage theory (individuation) toward a framework with which the becoming of individual civic initiatives in spatial development can be traced. First, this framework enables a focus on the internal drivers of a civic initiative in relation to its external environment, by adding the notion of a self to the loose and fluid interactions of actor-networks. This self is not precisely defined beforehand, but formed along the way, becoming more detailed and known over time. Secondly, this framework deals with the question of intentionality. Translations can be a mix between an intentional sequence of proactive, purposeful, and deliberate actions, and a collateral sequence of incidental and unintentional events at the same time. The theoretical hybrid thus explains how a civic initiative can be purposeful and non-linear at the same time. As such, three intentionalities are distinguished as the drivers of the initiative. Thirdly, this theoretical framework enables to distinguish four forms of behavior that reveal how emerging civic initiatives create meaning, identity and interventions in the non-linear and uncertain world they inhabit. Together, these behaviors and intentionalities form a “diagram of processes of becoming” to be used in tracing the civic initiatives. It consists of the following elements:

- Three intentionalities: (i) Interfering for change (highly situated interferences in time and space, directed toward changing the environment); (ii) networking for a fit (a search to achieve an optimal fit between the initiative and a physical environment); (iii) assemble to maintain (a more continuous intensity, found in more or less stable networks focused on maintenance, homogeneity, and coherence).
- Four forms of behavior: (i) Decoding (a disassociation from the usual, a desire to try something new, a step into a new direction); (ii) expansion (a widening orientation, open boundaries, exposure, an exploration of new actors in new constellations); (iii) contraction (a closing off and narrowing down, a consolidation and stabilization through self-reproduction, articulation of boundaries, and setting internal hierarchy and order); (iv) coding (turning the initiative into something familiar, something common that fits existing schemes in the outside world).

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 apply this diagram of processes of becoming to actual civic initiatives. Through multiple case study research, empirical insights are gathered in three different contexts. These contexts were chosen because, despite their internal drivers, civic initiatives still take place in an institutional environment. Three sets of cases (in total fourteen) were selected: fields in which civic initiatives manifest themselves, and in contexts that offer presupposed enablers for civic initiatives. They cover Denmark (housing), England (urban renewal) and the Netherlands (general).

The Danish cases are co-housing initiatives, distributed over Sjælland. Such civic initiatives consist of groups of future residents who collectively commission (plan, design, and build), and maintain their housing estates. Compared to the Netherlands, where government has been promoting such self-commissioning for years, Denmark has a much stronger tradition of self-build housing, cooperative forms of living, and planning through negotiation and consensus. This tradition of “do-it-yourself, together” is a presupposed enabling condition for civic initiatives in housing.

The English cases are business improvement districts (BIDs) in Birmingham. In these civic initiatives, local entrepreneurs form a collective to maintain, enhance, develop and regenerate their business environments. The BID legislation provides a legal framework for such collective action. This legislation was introduced earlier in England than in the Netherlands, and thus England provides a longer and more profound experience of BIDs and urban regeneration. Other enabling conditions for civic initiatives in England are presupposed in the English

planning practice of public sector-led land use regulation and evolutionary private sector-led development, and policy efforts to stimulate community-led development (Big Society).

The Dutch cases are located in Almere. In this city, the local municipality is experimenting with new planning approaches and policy to put citizens in the lead. Civic initiatives have emerged in Almere, related to housing, urban regeneration, and public space. These initiatives provide insight into whether a local authority actively looking and experimenting with new planning approaches to facilitate civic initiatives in spatial development, is also an enabling condition.

Building upon the outcomes of these case studies, the final 9 elaborates on planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship. The application on the diagram of processes of becoming supports the answering of the three research questions of the thesis.

- 1 The first conclusion is that planning strategies in an age of active citizenship should create conditions that do not constrain, but open up possibility spaces. Conditions that set initiatives in motion, that provoked agency, inspired or invited. Such conditions often emerged unintentionally and could only be created intentionally to a certain extend (f.i. in planning legislation). As important as the conditions that set initiatives in motion, were situational conditions that enable local actors to follow and pick up the ideas and dynamics of a civic initiative.
- 2 The second conclusion is that planning in an age of active citizenship needs planners that not just facilitate, but rather “navigate” between planning initiatives. From the cases it became evident that the actors who contributed mostly to the robustness and resilience of an initiative, were people who continuously established connections. Not just as boundary spanners – people with the ability to think beyond their own self-interest and empathize with other interests – but also with a strong sense of self and the direction in which to guide their actions. Hence the term “navigator”: People heading for a certain end goal, but in a complex and every changing environment without fixed paths or known endpoints.
- 3 The third conclusion is that planning strategy in an age of active citizenship has a flat ontology. The combination of the three intentionalities and four forms of behavior identified in the theory, brings in twelve ontological archetypical planning strategies. In the cases, it showed that all twelve planning strategies were equally performed by all actors – including

professionals and lay, public, civic or business actors. Distinctions between professionals working for planning authorities and the case initiators become blurred, as both try to create meaning and reasoning in a non-linear and uncertain world. This symmetry in strategy opens up for a flat ontology. In a flat ontology, no transcendent principles or essences exist, only unique, singular individuals who can differ in spatio-temporal scale but not in ontological status.

Based on these conclusions, the thesis sees planning in an age of active citizenship as: The art of creating consistency. Consistency not in the sense of coherence and sameness, but in the sense of moving in the same direction. This consistency does not follow from disciplinary frameworks or inclusionary procedures, but much more from the ability to relate, to empathize, to build upon the performances of others, and by making strategies as open and known as possible (the twelve archetypical planning strategies can be instrumental in this). The art of creating consistency comprises that planners are able (i) to recognize the potentials of specific and detailed projects of civic initiatives for longer-term futures, (ii) to scan the various becoming selves and explore what potentials there are for consistency between them, (iii) to think on how civic, public, and private interventions in space can add up to each other, (iv) to argue what areas could benefit from additional impulses for and by civic initiatives. By opening the spectrum for many others, navigating between these emerging others, and empathize with the behaviors and strategies of these many others, potentials for consistency can be recognized and acted upon.

When this art of creating consistency is mastered by spatial planners, a practice can grow in which heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming evolve in synergy and consistency with each other. A form of baroque harmony, in which different and independent voices are brought together through reciprocal reference, interacting with each other and harmonically interdependent, but never losing ones individuality and independency in rhythm and contour. In these processes of becoming, professional planners are not the director or orchestra leader – but just one of the many performers.

SAMENVATTING

Burgerinitiatieven zijn populair. Waar ze lange tijd slechts een marginale beweging waren, soms zelfs een sta-in-de-weg voor geplande stedelijke ontwikkeling, worden burgerinitiatieven tegenwoordig steeds vaker als een waardevolle strategie voor stedelijke ontwikkeling gezien.

Hoofdstuk 1 belicht de aanleiding voor dit onderzoek. Het beschrijft hoe verschillende Europese overheden, inclusief de Nederlands, enthousiast spreken over ‘actief burgerschap’. Daaruit spreekt de wens dat individuele burgers meedoen in planvormingstrajecten en actief zijn in ‘burgerinitiatieven’. Tot nu toe richtte ruimtelijke planning zich echter voornamelijk op participatie. In participatieve planning kunnen burgers invloed uitoefenen op doelen en plannen die door overheden worden voorgesteld, middels formele procedures die door diezelfde overheden worden geleid. Daarom zijn participatieve processen vaak niet zo open als gedacht, want beperkt door thematische, procedurele en geografische afbakeningen. Burgerinitiatieven verschillen van deze participatieve benadering. Burgerinitiatieven zijn gerichte projecten waar een specifiek, maar dynamische gemeenschapsbelang voorop staat. Initiatieven worden genomen door bewoners, ondernemers, kunstenaars, enz., in losse en informele structuren. Burgerinitiatieven zijn vaak spontaan, dynamisch en meervoudig en voegen zich liever niet naar allerlei afbakeningen. Ze staan daarmee vaak op gespannen voet met participatieve processen. Planningsbenaderingen zoals participatieve budgetten, raamwerken waarbinnen de invulling vrij is, of planningsbenaderingen die zo dicht als mogelijk op dagelijkse leefwereld staan, lijken in lijn te zijn met de ideeën van actief burgerschap. Toch blijven ook deze net zo goed binnen dezelfde beperkende afbakeningen van door overheden en professionele planners geleide ontwikkelingen. Tegelijkertijd met een toenemende diversificatie in de maatschappij, decentralisatie, verspreiding van macht en toegenomen onderlinge afhankelijkheden qua middelen (land, eigendom, kennis, competenties, kapitaal, autoriteit) stelt de opkomst van burgerinitiatieven ruimtelijke planners voor een serieuze uitdaging. Planningsstrategieën die een antwoord bieden op de dynamiek van burgerinitiatieven, en in staat zijn om te voldoen aan de complexiteit van een tijd van actief burgerschap, zijn tot nu toe sterkt onderbelicht gebleven.

Dit onderzoek gaat in op de praktijk van burgerinitiatieven in ruimtelijke ontwikkeling. Redenerend vanuit het perspectief van deze initiatieven zelf, worden drie vragen gesteld:

- 1 Onder wat voor een condities ontstaan burgerinitiatieven in ruimtelijke ontwikkeling?
- 2 Hoe worden deze initiatieven robuust en veerkrachtig?
- 3 Welke planningsstrategieën worden door, en in reactie op deze initiatieven ontwikkeld?

De antwoorden op deze vragen leiden vervolgens tot de definitie van een aantal adequate strategieën die voorbijgaan aan de beperkende kaders en afbakeningen van participatieve planning.

Om dit perspectief op burgerinitiatieven te operationaliseren, wordt het begrip 'zelforganisatie' gebruikt. Afkomstig uit de complexiteitstheorie, staat zelforganisatie voor het spontaan ontstaan van structuur uit ongestructureerde situaties. Vanuit deze algemene definitie kan het begrip zelforganisatie op verschillende manieren in ruimtelijke ontwikkelingsprocessen worden toegepast, afhankelijk van de manier waarop 'systemen' worden gezien: als bestaande systemen met een structuur die door zelforganisatie in stand blijft dan wel geleidelijk verandert; en/of als bestaande systemen in transitie, waarbij er door zelforganisatie plotseling een heel andere structuur ontstaat; en/of als nog-niet-bestaande systemen die juist door een proces van zelforganisatie structuur krijgen.

Hoofdstuk 2 gaat in op deze verschillende toepassingen van zelforganisatie, en licht toe welke inzichten er ontstaan als ze worden vertaald naar burgerinitiatieven. De eerste en tweede toepassing van zelforganisatie maakt bijvoorbeeld zichtbaar welke (nieuwe) ruimtelijke patronen ontstaan als een veelvoud aan burgerinitiatieven opkomen in een bepaald gebied. De ruimtelijke planner volgt deze ontwikkelingen en grijpt in als er ongewenste effecten optreden. Ondanks dat deze perspectieven waardevolle inzichten opleveren, houden ze dus ook een zekere afstand tussen de ruimtelijke planner en de maatschappij in stand. De dynamiek van individuele initiatieven blijft onderbelicht. De derde toepassing van zelforganisatie richt zich daarentegen wel op het ontstaan van individuele initiatieven. Burgerinitiatieven zijn daarin individueel, performatief, interventistisch, gericht op het maken van een verschil en creatieve transformaties van hun omgeving. Als zodanig voegen ze nieuw gebruik, nieuwe activiteiten en nieuwe fysieke objecten toe aan een bestaande ruimtelijke context. Bij de zoektocht naar planningsstrategieën die in, of in reactie op, burgerinitiatieven ontstaan, past de derde toepassing op zelforganisatie (het ontstaan van nieuwe actor-netwerken) dus het beste. Deze toepassing maakt een gedetailleerde kijk mogelijk op de motivaties en de interacties van een individueel burgerinitiatief. Het gaat daarmee voorbij aan de tegenstelling tussen professionele planners en burgerinitiatieven, en maakt een diversiteit van strategieën in de praktijk van burgerinitiatieven zichtbaar.

Hoofdstuk 3 werkt de derde toepassing van zelforganisatie verder uit. Het hoofdstuk belicht de verwantschap tussen complexiteitstheorie en poststructuralisme, bijvoorbeeld op onderwerpen als het ontkennen van transcendentie en representatie en de focus op relationele wordingsprocessen. De combinatie van complexiteitstheorie en poststructuralisme maakt het mogelijk om zelforganisatie als een individueel, non-representatief wordingsproces te zien, waarbij het initiatief zichzelf materialiseert door een proces van differentiatie. Dit begrip wordt verder uitgebouwd met de begrippen ‘translatie’ uit actor-netwerk theorie en ‘individuatie’ uit assemblage theorie. Vanuit deze verschillende, maar complementaire, manieren om ‘wordingsprocessen’ te omschrijven, ontstaat een beeld van zelforganisatie als emergente actor-netwerken. Een beeld dat zeer bruikbaar is bij het volgen en in kaart brengen van burgerinitiatieven als emergente en relationele ‘zelfs’.

Relationeel denken is niet nieuw in de ruimtelijke planning, maar heeft zich juist in recente jaren sterk ontwikkeld. Relationele benaderingen van ruimte, plek en planning gaan uit van de openheid en meervoudigheid van ruimte, en zien ruimte als voortdurend in productie. Ruimtelijke planning wordt daarmee een sterke performatieve praktijk, waarbij planners actief betrokken en verstrengeld zijn in meervoudige ruimtelijke wordingsprocessen. Deze vooralsnog vooral theoretische benaderingen van planning hebben echter nog slechts moeizaam hun weg kunnen vinden door bestaande instituties en planningsprocedures heen. Dit onderzoek laat juist zien dat burgerinitiatieven, wanneer bestudeerd door de bril van zelforganisatie, als een manifestatie van zulke meervoudige ruimtelijke wordingsprocessen gezien kunnen worden.

Hoofdstuk 4 bouwt de theoretisch hybride van zelforganisatie uit complexiteitstheorie, translatie uit actor-netwerk theorie, en individuatie uit assemblage theorie verder uit. Zo ontstaat een theoretisch raamwerk waarmee de wordingsprocessen van individuele burgerinitiatieven ook daadwerkelijk in kaart gebracht kunnen worden. Ten eerste maakt dit raamwerk een focus op de interne drijfveren van een burgerinitiatief in relatie tot de omgeving mogelijk, door een ‘zelf’ toe te voegen aan de verder losse en fluïde interacties van actor-netwerken. Dit ‘zelf’ is niet op voorhand gedefinieerd, maar vormt zich gaandeweg, en wordt steeds gedetailleerder en ‘bekend’. Ten tweede gaat dit raamwerk in op de vraag van intentionaliteit. Translaties zijn een mix tussen intentionele reeksen van proactieve, doelgerichte en weloverwogen acties enerzijds, en een zijdelingse opeenvolging van incidentele en onbedoelde gebeurtenissen anderzijds. Daarmee wordt duidelijk hoe een burgerinitiatief tegelijkertijd doelgericht en non-lineair kan zijn. Het raamwerk onderscheidt drie intentionaliteiten als drijver van een initiatief. Ten derde maakt dit theoretische raamwerk een onderscheid mogelijk

tussen vier vormen van gedrag waarmee het initiatief-in-wording betekenis, identiteit en interventies definieert in een complexe, onzekere, dynamische en non-lineaire wereld. Samen vormen de intentionaliteiten en vormen van gedrag een 'diagram van wordingsprocessen', Dit diagram wordt vervolgens gebruikt om individuele burgerinitiatieven mee in kaart te brengen. Het bestaat uit de volgende elementen:

- Drie intentionaliteiten: (i) ingrijpen voor verandering (kleine en kortstondige ingrepen gericht op het veranderen van de omgeving); (ii) netwerken voor een klik (het zoeken naar een optimale aansluiting tussen een initiatief en een fysieke omgeving); (iii) het handhaven van een assemblage (het in stand houden of versterken van een bepaalde configuratie).
- Vier vormen van gedrag: (i) de-codering (dissociatie van het gebruikelijke en bestaande, een stap in een nieuwe richting zetten); (ii) expansie (een verbrede en naar buiten gerichte oriëntatie, een verkenning van nieuwe mogelijkheden); (iii) contractie (een oriëntatie naar binnen gericht op afsluiting, consolidatie en stabilisatie door zelf-reproductie, stellen van grenzen, en het bepalen van interne hiërarchie en orde); (iv) codering (het initiatief wordt normaal en maakt gebruik van bestaande regelingen die door de buitenwereld als bekend en normaal wordt gezien).

Hoofdstuk 5, 6, 7 en 8 past dit diagram op daadwerkelijke burger-initiatieven toe. Middels meervoudig casusonderzoek is empirisch materiaal verzameld in drie verschillende institutionele contexten. Deze contexten zijn gekozen omdat, ondanks hun interne drijfveren, initiatieven tot stand komen in een institutionele omgeving. De drie verzamelingen van casussen (veertien in totaal) zijn gekozen in velden waar burgerinitiatieven zich manifesteren, en op basis van institutionele condities die een voordeel voor burger-initiatieven zouden kunnen zijn.

De Deense casussen zijn initiatieven voor collectief particulier opdrachtgeverschap (CPO), verspreid over Sjælland. Dergelijke initiatieven worden genomen door toekomstige bewoners die gezamenlijk opdracht geven aan de ontwikkeling van hun nieuwe woonomgeving. In vergelijking tot Nederland, waar dergelijke vormen van opdrachtgeverschap al jaren veel aandacht krijgen, heeft Denemarken een veel sterkere traditie in CPO. Collectieve woonvormen en particulier opdrachtgeverschap zijn daar veel normaler dan in Nederland. Deze Deense traditie van 'doe-het-zelf, samen' is een voorondersteld voordeel voor burgerinitiatieven.

De Engelse casussen zijn business improvement districts (BIDs) in Birmingham. In dit soort burgerinitiatieven nemen lokale ondernemers het voortouw in het collectief onderhouden, promoten en verbeteren van hun bedrijfsomgeving. De

BID wetgeving (BIZ in Nederland) maakt deze organisatievorm mogelijk. Deze wetgeving werd eerder in Engeland ingevoerd dan in Nederland. Daarmee biedt Engeland een langere ervaring in hoe zulke initiatieven kunnen bijdragen aan stedelijke ontwikkeling. Daarnaast is het Engelse planningsstelsel, met zijn focus op landgebruik en private ontwikkeling ook een vooronderstelde randvoorwaarde voor burgerinitiatieven, net als de beleidsaandacht voor de rol van burgers in maatschappelijke ontwikkeling (Big Society).

De Nederlandse casussen bevinden zich in gemeente Almere. In Almere experimenteert de lokale overheid al jaren met beleid dat een veel centralere en initiërende rol van de burger moet faciliteren. Er zijn ook inderdaad burgerinitiatieven tot stand gekomen in Almere, variërend van initiatieven in de publieke ruimte, stedelijke herontwikkeling en collectief particulier opdrachtgeverschap. Deze initiatieven geven inzicht in de vraag of een lokale overheid die actief experimenteert met nieuwe planningsbenaderingen, ook daadwerkelijk burgerinitiatieven faciliteert.

Voortbouwend op de uitkomsten van deze casuïsonderzoeken, wijdt het laatste en **9e Hoofdstuk** uit over planningsstrategieën in een tijd van actief burgerschap. De toepassing van het diagram van wordingsprocessen ondersteunt de beantwoording van de drie onderzoeksvragen.

- 1 De eerste conclusie is dat planningsstrategieën in een tijd van actief burgerschap gericht moeten zijn op het bieden van condities die niet zozeer kaderstellend zijn, als wel openingen bieden. Condities waardoor de burgerinitiatieven in beweging komen, die mensen tot actie zetten omdat ze iets wilden veranderen, ze inspireren of uitnodigen. Zulke condities ontstaan echter vaak onbedoeld, en kunnen maar tot zekere hoogte generiek worden gecreëerd (bijvoorbeeld het planningsstelsel). Van even groot belang ten opzichte van condities die burgerinitiatieven in beweging zetten, is of er lokale (ruimtelijke of bestuurlijke) condities en actoren zijn die vervolgens ook in staat zijn om mee te bewegen met de ideeën en dynamiek van een burgerinitiatief.
- 2 De tweede conclusie is dat planningsstrategieën in een tijd van actief burgerschap planners nodig hebben die niet alleen faciliteren, maar juist ook pro-actief 'navigeren' tussen burger- en andere ruimtelijke initiatieven in. Uit de casussen blijkt dat de actoren die het meeste bijdragen aan de robuustheid en veerkracht van het initiatief, mensen zijn die voortdurend verbindingen leggen. Niet alleen als bruggenbouwers die in staat zijn om voorbij hun eigenbelang ook vanuit het belang van de ander te denken –

maar juist ook mensen met een sterk zelfbewustzijn en richtingsgevoel voor hun acties. Vandaar de term ‘navigator’: mensen die in een bepaalde richting en een bepaald einddoel bewegen, maar dat doen in een complexe en veranderende wereld, zonder dat ze een precies eindpunt of bepaalde route voor ogen hebben.

- 3 De derde conclusie is dat planning in een tijd van actief burgerschap uit moet gaan van een platte ontologie. De combinatie van de drie intentiona-liteiten en vier vormen van gedrag levert twaalf archetypische plannings-strategieën op. Uit de cases blijkt dat deze strategieën door alle actoren worden toegepast – zowel de initiatiefnemers, als lokale overheden, als derden – onafhankelijk of deze een professionele achtergrond hebben of niet. Alle betrokken actoren plannen als zodanig, en proberen betekenis en identiteit te winnen in een onzekere en non-lineaire wereld. Deze symmetrie in strategie is de strekking van een platte ontologie: er bestaan geen transcendente principes of essenties van wie een planner is of niet, maar alleen unieke, enkelvoud individuen die weliswaar verschillen in positie en capaciteiten, maar niet verschillen in hun ontologie. In andere woorden: iedereen die een ruimtelijk initiatief neemt, is in wezen een ruimtelijke planner. En al deze ruimtelijke planners vertonen verschillende schakeringen van vergelijkbare strategieën.

Vanuit deze conclusies komt dit onderzoek uiteindelijk tot de belangrijkste planningsstrategie in tijden van actief burgerschap: de kunst van het creëren van consistentie. Consistentie niet in de zin van samensmelting en gelijkheid, maar eerder als een beweging in dezelfde richting. Deze consistentie ontstaat niet vanuit kaderstellende raamwerken, maar uit het vermogen van actoren om relaties te zien, empathisch te zijn, om voort te bouwen op de ideeën en acties van anderen, en het vermogen om strategieën zo zichtbaar en open mogelijk te maken (de twaalf archetypische planningsstrategieën kunnen daaraan bijdragen). De kunst van de consistentie betekent dat planners in staat moeten zijn om (i) de potenties van initiatieven te herkennen voor de langere termijn, (ii) de mogelijkheden voor consistentie tussen verschillende initiatieven te zien, (iii) na te denken hoe initiatieven elkaar kunnen versterken en (iv) te beredeneren welke gebieden mogelijk zouden kunnen profiteren van een impuls voor burgerinitiatieven. Door het spectrum voor ruimtelijke ontwikkeling te openen voor vele anderen, door tussen deze anderen te navigeren en de vaardigheid om andermans strategie te begrijpen, kunnen potenties voor consistentie herkend worden, en kan men er ook naar handelen.

Wanneer planners de kunst van het creëren van consistentie beheersen, kan er een planningspraktijk ontstaan waar meervoudige ruimtelijke wordingsprocessen zich in synergie en samenhang met elkaar kunnen voltrekken. Een soort van barokke harmonie, waarin verschillende en onafhankelijke stemmen samenkomen tot wederzijdse referenties, in interactie met elkaar en harmonieus samenhangend, maar zonder verlies van individualiteit en onafhankelijkheid in ritme en omlijning. In dergelijke ruimtelijke wordingsprocessen zijn ruimtelijke planners niet de dirigent of orkestleider – maar slechts één van de vele uitvoerders.

The Challenge of Civic Initiatives in Spatial Planning

Civic initiatives are “en vogue” – quite literally, as the Dutch *Vogue* in its May 2012 issue identified “initiatives based on the strength of community” as a major upcoming trend (Vogue Nederland, 2012: 192). Indeed, civic initiatives for spatial development seem to be growing and spreading like ground alder. What for a long time appeared to be just a fringe movement, perhaps enlivening space but mostly getting in the way of planned urban development, civic initiatives are now starting to appear as valuable strategies for urban development in their own right. They take place against a background of governments speaking eagerly of “active citizenship” and “participatory society,” and spatial planning communities brooding over new planning practice. Word on active citizenship has gotten round, but that does not necessarily mean that things are simple (cf. Derrida, 1988; Hillier, 2002; 2007).

1

WANTED! ACTIVE AND INVOLVED CITIZENS

It is undeniable that in our current network and information society, people are more assertive and independent than before. Combined with the need for governmental retrenchments, this means that the traditional welfare state is slowly but surely turning into a participatory society. Anyone who is able to take responsibility for his or her own life and environment, may be asked to do so. When people shape their future by themselves, they add value not only to their own lives, but also to society as a whole (Min AZ, 2013, translation by author).

Introducing active citizenship

The above is an extract from the first annual King's Speech given in September 2013 by the newly crowned Dutch king. It was not the first time that a Dutch head of state had spoken of "active citizenship." The term made its first appearance in the Queen's Speech in 1999, and during the 2000s, political and policy attention to civil society, active citizenship, citizen involvement, and civic initiatives increased (Dekker et al., 2007; Van de Wijdeven et al., 2013; Veldheer et al., 2012; VROM Raad, 2004; WRR, 2005; 2010). During these years, the national coalition governments led by Jan Peter Balkenende talked about "good citizenship," addressing citizens who were involved in civic initiatives in their neighborhoods and in public policymaking (Hurenkamp & Tonkens, 2011; Hurenkamp et al., 2011; ROB, 2012). Nowadays, the national coalition government led by Mark Rutte promotes a so-called Do-Democracy. Various national advisory boards in the Netherlands back up this policy by speaking of "active citizenship," "a vital society," "participatory society," "civic strength," "self-strength," "the energetic society," "self-reliance" and "shared-reliance," "self-guidance," "self-organizing capacities," "do-it-yourself" and "do-it-together society," "civic initiatives," "participatory governments," and so on (Min BZK, 2013; ROB, 2012; WRR, 2012). All these terms, in one way or another, address citizens and civil society. Civil society then, stands for the sum of voluntary organizations and associations, initiatives, movements, and networks in a social space, with a primary focus on specific partnership interests and social struggle for hegemony, characterized by non-violence, discourse, self-organization, and a recognition of plurality (Gosewinkel & Kocka, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2005).

The Dutch government and Dutch policymakers are not alone in paying attention to civil society. Under the influence of the depreciated dichotomy between state and market, “Third Way” thinking and the European breakup of welfare states (Giddens, 1998; Hirst & Bader, 2001), interest in civil society has increased in recent years in a number of western European countries, for example, Ireland, Sweden (Powell, 2013), Germany (Keane, 2006), Denmark, and the United Kingdom. In Denmark, the Thorning–Schmidt Cabinet speaks of “*aktiv borger*” to address the sense of responsibility for societal challenges among Danish citizens (Lund & Meyer, 2011; Thorning–Schmidt, 2011). In the United Kingdom, the coalition government introduced the notion of Big Society as an umbrella term for active citizenship, citizen involvement, and civic initiatives in once government-led domains (Cameron & Clegg, 2010; Blond, 2012). Even the European Union is showing an increased interest in civil society (Curtin, 2003), using the term “social innovation” to address civic initiatives that try to solve societal challenges that state and market actors are unable to meet (European Commission, 2013; Moulaert et al., 2013). “Active citizenship” can be seen as the umbrella term for all this attention to civil society.

The concern for active citizenship exists in a number of domains, including social welfare, integration, security, care issues (e.g., mental health and child welfare), economic issues (e.g., labor rights, microcredit, crowdsourcing, and social entrepreneurship), ecological issues (e.g., energy savings or the use of renewable energy), and spatial issues (e.g., environmental care, nature, food, mobility, neighborhood management, housing, and private commissioning). These are all domains in which national governments traditionally held strong positions (Veldheer et al., 2012; Ossenwaarde, 2006; Van de Wijdeven et al., 2013; Van der Heijden et al., 2011). It is hoped that, by decentralizing state powers to a more local and individual level (Van de Wijdeven & Hendriks, 2010; Van de Wijdeven, 2012), and creating a society in which government is supportive toward personal responsibility, self-reliance, self-motivation, and voluntary work (Min AZ, 2007; Dekker et al., 2007; De Boer et al., 2013), citizens will be stimulated to take not only personal responsibility, but also responsibility in these domains and for the common good in general (Van de Wijdeven et al., 2013; Veldheer et al., 2012; Ossenwaarde, 2006; Van der Heijden et al., 2011).

Active citizenship implies that individual citizens participate in public policy processes through “citizen involvement” and that they promote and participate in “civic initiatives.” Civic initiatives are issue-oriented projects that have an assignable social and geographical origin, often in loose and informal structures, serving a specific community interest that can change while the project expands socially and geographically (Gosewinkel & Kocka, 2006; Van Meerkerk, 2014). Civic

initiatives differ from initiatives in the private sphere (individuals), public sphere (governmental initiatives with a primary focus on representational vote-winning), and business sphere (with a primary focus on profit-making) (Gosewinkel & Kocka, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2005; Boelens, 2009). Civic initiatives also differ from citizen initiatives, which are democratic processes by which citizens can force a public vote, set the political agenda, and address questions that elected representatives fail or refuse to address (Setälä & Schiller, 2012). Civic initiatives are, however, not limited to residents, but can also be undertaken by entrepreneurs, artists, etc., as long as the initiative pursues a community purpose and not a direct business purpose.

Pleading for active citizenship

The plea for active citizenship and policy directed at accommodating civic initiatives is backed up by a range of arguments supporting the view that active citizenship is urgent and desirable for both governments and civil society. These arguments can be clustered around three perspectives: A social, a political, and an economic one.

The first perspective is a social one, arguing from the emergence of a network and information society. During the 1990s, Manuel Castells (1996, 1997) argued that under the influence of network technologies, society would become more and more horizontally organized around collective, but changing, actions and identities, replacing vertically integrated hierarchies as the dominant form of social organization. This argument was soon picked up and amplified by others. On the one hand, it was said that increased accessibility of information and improved technical means for social organization and exchange of ideas advanced empowerment, the self-organizing capacities of civil society, and active citizenship (Uitermark, 2012; Min BZK, 2013; SCP, 2000). On the other hand, it was argued that under the influence of network technologies, civil society became increasingly complex, heterogeneous, elusive, and individually fragmented due to its organization along temporary, changing, and multiple lines (Koffijberg & Renooy, 2008; Van de Wijdeven & Hendriks, 2010; Veldheer et al., 2012; SCP, 2000). The latter development, combined with globalization, increased cultural diversity and neoliberal tendencies, and was also said to undermine social cohesion (Putnam, 2007), induce anti-social behavior and social exclusion (Tonkens, 2006), and erode the capacities of civil society to organize (Rucht, 2006; De Moor, 2013).

The emergence of a network and information society thus led to empowerment and active citizenship for some, and to social exclusion for others. Active citizenship was expected to be instrumental in tackling this exclusion, as it

would stimulate civic capacities and social cohesion (Tonkens, 2006; 2011; Van de Wijdeven & Hendriks, 2010; Hurenkamp & Tonkens, 2011; Min BZK, 2013). It was argued that, by becoming involved and by taking initiatives, citizens would develop a sense of responsibility for social conditions and spatial conditions, a sense of belonging, and a sense of community. Various social groups would meet in new settings, forming new social networks and creating trust among citizens (WRR, 2005; Tonkens & Verhoeven, 2011; Tonkens, 2006). Moreover, it was argued that citizen involvement would increase social, bureaucratic, and democratic capacities among citizens (Tonkens & Verhoeven, 2011; Tonkens, 2006; Van de Wijdeven & Hendriks, 2010), include and empower disadvantaged citizens (Fung & Wright, 2001), increase people's capacities to articulate views and desires (Hazeu, 2008), and reduce their reliance on state bureaucracies (J. Bakker et al., 2012).

The second perspective on the urgency and desirability of active citizenship is a political one. This perspective also builds on the emergence of the network and information society, emphasizing how it changed and challenged the relationship between civil society and public governments. It argues that as the horizontal organization of civil society clashed with the retained vertical organization of public government, a gap grew between the two (ROB, 2010; 2012). Representative democracy was argued to be unable to address the complexity of 21st-century challenges, and that the central idea of democracy – namely the active involvement of citizens and consensus through dialogue – had been eroded by decades of either market domination or state-centrism (Fung & Wright, 2001). Active citizenship was seen as a way to create new balance between government and civil society, and to restore the essential vibrancy of democracy (Tonkens, 2006; Van de Wijdeven & Hendriks, 2010; WRR, 2012; Van de Wijdeven, 2012; Putnam, 2007). This was argued for two reasons. Active citizenship would counter the erosion of social life, public life, and political engagement (Putnam, 2000; Hurenkamp et al., 2011; Hurenkamp & Tonkens, 2011; Fung & Wright, 2001) and increase the ability of governments to deal with critical and disaffected attitudes among citizens (Norris, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Pharr & Putnam, 2000 in Geurtz & Van de Wijdeven 2010). Secondly, active citizenship, and especially citizen involvement, would bring governments and citizens more closely together. As governments and citizens would come together to deliberate issues at stake, large governmental associations would acquire a more human and local dimension, policy issues would become focused, specific, tangible, more informed with unique intimate and local knowledge, more effective, and better matched with citizens' priorities (Tonkens, 2006; WRR, 2010; Hurenkamp et al., 2011; Fung & Wright, 2001; ROB, 2010; Fung & Wright, 2001). Citizens would also develop more realistic expectations of governmental actions and the sense of accountability, trust, legitimacy, and support for governments would

increase (Fung & Wright, 2001; Van de Wijdeven & Hendriks, 2010; Veldheer et al., 2012; Min VROM, 2007b). In other words, citizen involvement would improve the democratic legitimacy and problem-solving capacity of public policies, by improving the interaction between government and citizens and broadening support, thereby accelerating the policy process and creating new relations and more partnerships between citizens and government (Edelenbos, 2000; Hirst & Bader, 2001; Tonkens & Verhoeven, 2011; Fung & Wright, 2001). With regard to spatial development, it would increase the embeddedness of spatial interventions in the local community and therefore improve the support for and the commitment to such spatial interventions (Min VROM 2007a, Van Hulst et al. 2008, Koffijberg & Renooy 2008).

The third perspective on the urgency and desirability of active citizenship is an economic one. This argument emphasizes the effect that a vibrant civil society has on the overall economic performance of a city, region, or country. Citizen involvement is said to stimulate the social and economic participation of individuals in society, thus improving their capacities and connectivity (Min VROM 2007a, WRR 2012). Some economists even argue that a vibrant civil society is of crucial importance for economic growth (Putnam, 2007), and that through a diversity of initiatives and self-employment, a well-functioning civic society with economic robustness will emerge (Adriaansens & Zijdeveld, 1981; Reverda, 2004). The economic perspective is also used in relation to the global economic downturn of the early 21st century. In the Netherlands, this downturn had a major effect on spatial policy. Following the crash of the financial markets in 2008, developers started to avoid risks, housing corporations refocused on maintenance, and governments ran out of money. As a result, governments became forced to retrench (Min BZK, 2013; Huygen et al., 2012), the production of new housing decreased significantly, and many plans for urban transformations were put on hold (Manshanden et al., 2012; Van Joolingen et al., 2009). However, it was not only the economic downturn that caused this shift: A trend toward governmental withdrawal from spatial policy had been unfolding for years. In 2010, policy aimed at urban transformations was declared more or less finished (Boeijenga, 2011; Van der Krabben, 2011; De Zeeuw, 2011), and financial means for urban renewal had seen a gradual decrease since the 1990s. Altogether, in recent years government-led developments have become increasingly difficult to finance (J. Bakker et al., 2012; Veldheer et al., 2012), and the position of planning within local, regional, and national governments has weakened (VROM Raad, 2004). It was argued that active citizenship, especially civic initiatives, showed the willingness of citizens to invest in and improve their neighborhoods (VROM Raad, 2006; 00:/ Architects, 2011). Active citizenship thus became regarded as the counterbalance to these developments, and a valid alternative to costly

governmental urban development programs (J. Bakker et al., 2012; Veldheer et al., 2012).

These social, economic, and political perspectives in favor of active citizenship are, of course, interrelated. Shifts in society empowered citizens, but also created a gap between citizens and government. Governments invite citizens to participate in their policy processes, but also withdraw in the hope that citizens will take over in the form of civic initiatives. Governments realize that their room for maneuver and their legitimacy for unilateral actions have decreased, and that they simply can no longer act on their own. Particularly within spatial development, partnerships between government agencies, entrepreneurs, and civic organizations, or between public, business, and civic stakeholders, are now commonplace (WRR, 2008; Min VROM, 2007b; Min I&M, 2011; Min BZK, 2011). In its latest “Vision of Infrastructure and Spatial Development” (2011), the Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment even states that national government should no longer formulate any spatial policies at all. According to the ministry, governments, including local ones, should not independently plan for spatial developments, but should aim at creating opportunity, choice, control, and responsibility for spatial investment among non-governmental actors such as citizens and businesses (Min I&M, 2011). Spatial developments are thus no longer the exclusive domain of professional actors such as housing associations, developers, and design firms, but are more and more reliant on the “resolving powers of civil society” (WRR 2005, see also WRR 1998). Many civic initiatives are indeed focused on improving the physical conditions and quality of life within neighborhoods (Tonkens & Verhoeven, 2011; Specht, 2012; Veldheer et al., 2012; Van der Zwaard & Specht, 2013; VROM, 2007a). Small businesses, residents, artists, and other individuals are developing all sorts of initiatives in varying networks and partnerships, out of their own interests and with their own resources. And regardless of their small size and relative autonomy in relation to policy processes, they make important contributions to the development and maintenance of spatial quality, generating new investments where the traditional planning agencies close their eyes.

But despite the profound arguments in favor of active citizenship and the multitude of emerging civic initiatives around spatial issues and projects, active citizenship gives rise to controversies. Governments assign great value to active citizenship, but realize that it also forces them to take up a new role (VNG, 2013). They feel a responsibility to create the “right” conditions for active citizenship, but little is known about such conditions. They feel the need to be receptive and facilitative, but little is known about how such government performance should look like (WRR, 2012; Min BZK, 2013; Van de Wijdeven et al., 2013; ROB, 2012).

They wonder whether active citizenship means they should abandon public tasks, leave them to others, and welcome all civic initiatives regardless of what they are about or whether they fit existing policies (ROB, 2012; WRR, 2012). These questions are paramount, especially in the practice of spatial planning.

2

A SHORT HISTORY OF PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

Involving citizens in spatial planning is not new, as citizen involvement in spatial planning has grown ever since the 1960s. This section looks back on that history and the evolution of participatory planning, both in the Netherlands and in international planning theory, to see what lessons can be learned from these planning strategies concerning citizen involvement. In this history, three generations of participatory planning are discerned: That of public hearings, that of legitimacy enhancing deliberation, and that of participatory budgeting (cf. Fung, 2006).

The first generation

The first generation of participatory planning, the practice of public hearings, gained momentum in the late 1960s, under the influence of two developments. One was a growing aversion to the technical rationality and comprehensive planning approaches that had become dominant in the two decades following the Second World War. At the time, planning was considered an important tool for social progress. Planners would make rational and objective analyses, and by following scientifically proven rules based on certainty and all-inclusive models of society, define what an optimal physical environment should be. These objectives would then be secured by means of blueprint planning and planning procedures focused on steering society toward that future (Klijn & Snellen, 2009; Sandercock, 1998; De Roo, 2012). However, as planners were increasingly confronted with a reality that was not as controllable and unambiguous as expected, and was much more complex than expected, criticism of these rational approaches grew during the 1960s–1970s. It was acknowledged that the technical rationality worldview was losing its relevance in dealing with the societal challenges that planners faced (De Roo, 2010).

The other development that increased the attention paid to participatory planning

was the emergence of emancipatory and democratic movements around Europe and in the United States as a result of student revolts and societal unrest. Ideas of advocacy planning emerged, urging planners to not only focus on the physical side of planning, but to turn planning into a practice reasoning from different value systems and open to minorities, protest groups and the political (Davidoff, 1965). In the Netherlands, this development was mirrored from the mid-1960s by the Social Democrats, who had become concerned with the general rejection of and disinterest in politics in society on the one hand, and unstructured protest movements and critical social voices on the other hand. The Social Democrats therefore introduced policy directed to the empowerment and participation of citizens in governance, management, and communal responsibilities (Reijndorp et al., 1981). The Spatial Planning Act of 1965 had anticipated these democratic tendencies, by introducing participatory legislation such as objection and appeal procedures, enabling citizens to criticize and react to spatial proposals made by governmental agencies. Participatory planning became primarily exercised in the large-scale urban renewal processes of the time, which had suffered from years of protest and conflict. In order to fit the new political and administrative culture of that era, spatial planning had been transformed from a practice based on analysis and forecasting spatial claims, into a practice of “process planning” (Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 1999). Public hearings, at which trained experts asked for feedback on proposed plans and decisions (Fung, 2006), had become a common planning practice, demarcating the first generation of citizen involvement in planning. Later on, participatory ideas were also adopted by regional and national spatial planning agencies, for instance in the Third Report on National Spatial Planning (1972–1983). Instead of blueprint planning, this spatial policy report focused on a procedural and flexible plan with new facilities for the participation of stakeholders and adjustments along the way.

The second generation

Process planning that consisted only of public hearings, however, soon came under fire. Planning processes were still considered to be hardly open to criticism and evaluation (Faludi, 1987), unable to address a heterogeneous, fragmented, and changing world, and unable to deal with conflicting interests. Process planning turned out to be too procedural, structured, and systemic, and still too oriented toward comprehensive and technically justified goals (Boelens, 1990). This criticism was heard not only in the Netherlands, but also internationally. Davidoff, in his plea for advocacy planning, already compared participatory planning with citizens’ parades in totalitarian regimes, inviting citizens to merely react and agree on already existing plans (Davidoff, 1965: 334). Later planning theorists also criticized the mere “policy implementation” of the 1970s and the

persistent dominance of technical, engineering, scientific, and comprehensive planning practices at arm's length from politics (Forester, 1984; Healey, 1999; Friedmann, 1993; Innes, 1995; 1996; Healey, 1992a; 1992b). These planning theorists argued that public hearings were mere acts of duty under law, legally required procedures that were part of formal responsibilities (Forester, 1984; 1999; Innes, 1996), that did not meet basic goals of participation and were even counterproductive, and compromised the development of a democratic attitude and failed to deliver their goals (Healey, 1992a; 1992b). “[Public hearings] do not achieve genuine involvement in planning or other decisions; they do not satisfy members of the public that they are being heard; they seldom can be said to improve the decisions that agencies and public officials make; and they do not incorporate a broad spectrum of the public” (Innes & Booher, 2000: 419). Process planning and public hearings at which planning professionals still used their own technical expertise to make decisions for which they were authorized (Fung, 2006), did not counter, but rather strengthened the technical dominance of planning experts.

Not surprisingly, when philosopher Jürgen Habermas presented the view that unity would only be possible when justice was done to the multitude of beliefs, opinions, and arguments of those affected (Habermas, 1981), he instantly became a major influence on the planning theorists of the time. According to Habermas, the problem was not rationality as such, but its narrow interpretation. In addition to technical rationality, focused on knowledge and truth (which had so far dominated planning), Habermas introduced three other rationalities: Normative rationality, focusing on justice and fairness (dominated by politics); dramaturgic rationality, focusing on esthetics and identity (dominated by designers); and communicative rationality, focusing on creating shared and mutual understanding based on exchange between the three other rationalities. Only within communicative rationality could argumentation be broadened, explicated, and assessed without letting one rationality dominate the others. Such communicative interaction would not come without effort, though, as it could only be achieved through an “ideal speech situation.” In the ideal speech situation, Habermas argued, all those affected should be able to start a discourse and criticize and express themselves in ongoing discourses. A shared life world and knowledge background had to ensure that there would be no differences in power among those involved, that communication would happen symmetrically, and that subcultures of experts would be overcome. Then, a genuine discussion and reaching undistorted consensus would be possible, as long as the discourse were prolonged long enough. Should the ideal speech situation fail, however, communicative interaction would change back to strategic action, meaning that people would try to realize their personal goals not by true mutual understanding,

but by convincing others (“openly strategic”) or perhaps even manipulating them (“hidden strategic”). Therefore, an ideal speech situation would be worth pursuing, Habermas argued, even though it would not always be entirely feasible (Habermas, 1981; Boelens, 1990).

For planners, recognizing planning as a place where such integrality was aimed for, and where people and discourses would meet in performative settings (Boelens, 1990), this view on rationality and communicative action opened the way to a participatory planning beyond mere legal obligations. In the “communicative approach” to spatial planning, planners would be able to pay more attention to process and normative knowledge, and engage much more in collectively reasoning, debating, and agreeing (Healey, 1992a; 1992b). Differences between people could now be made explicit, critically reflected upon, and collectively negotiated (Hillier, 2002), and attention could be paid to plurality and multi-actor perspectives, institutional contexts, different frames, and interpretations of problems. Policy theories were no longer seen as scientific assumptions, but as pictures of reality negotiated among parties in a political context (Klijn & Snellen, 2009; De Roo, 2010; Van Wezemael, 2012). Planning theorists thus engaged in translating the concept of the “ideal speech situation” into planning theory and practice. They saw it as the responsibility of spatial planners to create and safeguard ideal speech situations, to ensure true consensus-building around spatial issues. On the one hand, the planner had to ensure that the entire affected population would be part of the communicative interactions (Innes, 1998), both encouraging citizens to participate and democratizing planning processes accordingly (Forester, 1989; Friedmann, 1987; 1993; Healey, 1992b). To do this effectively, planners had to be able to think independently of their own institutions, agendas, and organizations, and dare to take informal initiatives and challenge existing power relations (Forester, 1984), turning planning into a much more political, innovative, empowering, inclusive practice, based on equality, than it had been before (Friedmann, 1993). On the other hand, spatial planners would have to ensure that all those involved in a discourse would be equally informed and empowered, so that communication could happen symmetrically, right in the face of inequalities of power, political voice, and conflicting parties (Forester, 1984). Planners would therefore almost become mediators (Susskind & Cruikshank, 1987), engaged in listening, storytelling, and negotiating (Forester, 1999), to ensure discussions would be carried on in good reason and move toward consensus (Innes, 1998). It would then also be the planners’ task to promote and create opportunities for mutual learning, dialogue, and understanding, in order to achieve shared knowledge and collective meaning (Innes, 1998; Friedmann, 1993; Forester, 1999; Hillier, 2002).

To summarize, “the role of planning should be to engage in ‘respectful discussion within and between discursive communities, respect implying recognizing, valuing, listening and searching for translative possibilities between different discourse communities’” (Hillier, 2002: 42), as the “most democratic way to search for an acceptable solution” (ibid.: 25). Planning had to become an interactive, communicative activity deeply embedded in the fabric of community, politics, and public decision making (Innes, 1995). Its main focus should be on shaping attention and arguments, consensus building, and future seeking, instead of on plans, implementation, and future defining (Forester, 1984; Healey, 1992b; Innes, 1996; Hillier, 2002). Meeting fertile ground within planning practice, politics, and society, where attention for civil society was already growing, the communicative rationality grew into a dominant theoretical paradigm in planning theory, especially during the 1990s (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Forester, 1999; Healey, 1996; Sandercock, 1998; De Roo, 2010a). This demarcated the second generation of participatory planning, in which public hearings made way for more inclusive and communicative, legitimacy enhancing deliberations (Fung, 2006), based on the principles of communicative planning.

Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, process planning gradually evolved into something known as collaborative stakeholder planning. This kind of planning referred less to the ideas of Innes, Healey, Friedmann, and Forester, and much more to the successful inner-city and urban revitalization processes in the United States of the 1980s, where stakeholders were able to build common strategies despite fragmented and conflictual local governance (Forester, 1999; Kreukels, 1985; Fainstein et al., 1986; Altshuler & Luberoff, 2003). During the 1980s and 1990s, a USA-inspired entrepreneurial style of planning with public-private partnerships became popular within Dutch planning practice (Boelens, 1990). Local and regional governments, and even the national government, opted to collaborate with major stakeholders in business, in order to develop embedded and realistic plans in which each of those stakeholders would share responsibility. This market-based approach gave a large role to developers and housing corporations, with national government holding the reins in the form of extensive subsidies and the allocation of specific areas for development in deliberation with local governments (Boelens & Wierenga, 2011). Notions from the communicative planning approach were applied, but only in relation to the major governmental and business stakeholders, and occasionally interest groups. Local planning authorities, ministerial departments, consultancies, interest groups, and universities did pay attention to communicative planning, but focused mainly on administrative innovation and process renewal, and not on actually including citizens (Van der Arend, 2007).

Despite its seemingly successful application, collaborative stakeholder planning did not evolve into an embedded, robust, and indisputable planning strategy, and frequently left the civic and public community with the environmental burdens, reaped of their benefits (Boelens et al., 2006; Van der Cammen & Bakker, 2006). It rather became criticized for being a kind of undemocratic decision-making in back rooms, and for inducing a hit-and-run mentality among project developers (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Sartori, 1991; Imbroscio, 1998). This was the case in, for instance, the pilot projects that Patsy Healey (2007) described in her book on urban complexity, and those in the afterword to the second issue of *Collaborative Planning* (Healey 2006). It also happened in the Blauwestad development in the north of the Netherlands. When this award-winning public-private partnership stagnated due to the financial crisis, developers ended the partnership and left the regional government with huge financial burdens (Rauws et al., 2014). Urban renewal, once a major playing field of citizen involvement, also remained government-led, with only a marginal role for residents (Schuiling, 2007; Wallagh, 2006). Urban renewal programs sometimes even stimulated protest groups and inertia, rather than commitment, involvement, and support. This happened in, for instance, the urban renewal program of Crooswijk, Rotterdam. Although the program won national recognition as a best practice for collaborative planning due to the excellent working partnership between various governments and housing corporations, protest groups against the plans for large-scale demolition and new construction emerged within the neighborhood, as residents felt they had been hardly involved in the decision making process. Their alternative proposals for a different approach were deliberately excluded from the process (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

So even though participatory planning and the communicative approach to planning developed profoundly in planning theory, the results in planning practice remained meager and heavily criticized. The communicative planning advocated by Innes, Healey, and Booher was increasingly criticized as a mere “public support machine” (Hendriks & Tops, 2001). Participatory and communicative planning approaches were said to be used only instrumentally to create support for and legitimize decisions already taken by existing administrations, rather than to promote a democratization of the planning process (Woltjer, 2002). That instrumental use thus came to overshadow the idealistic aspect of those planning approaches, transforming them into the opposite of what was originally intended (Van der Arend, 2007). Thus, the application of communicative planning in collaborative stakeholder planning and consensus-seeking process planning became increasingly regarded with distrust. The ideal speech situation as described by Habermas and pursued by Innes, Healey, Friedmann, Forester, and Hillier, seemed – despite the sophisticated arguments – far from realistic.

Instead of striving for genuine discussion and undistorted consensus, perhaps “openly strategic” persuasion would be all that was attainable.

The third generation

More recently, a third generation of participatory planning – namely community self-management and participatory budgeting – has attracted attention. This form of participatory planning aims even more at direct citizen involvement in the interventions and the operational side of policies for cities and urban areas, often targeting a specific group through structural incentives (Fung, 2006). Its main focus is to create institutional arrangements for community self-management and provide funds for civic initiatives (Hurenkamp et al., 2006; Tonkens, 2009; Tonkens & Kroese, 2009). It creates a “space” governed by regulations to ensure equal access for every citizen, rather than permitting access only to the strongest socioeconomic organizations, as in more traditional forms of planning and negotiations (Allegretti & Herzberg, 2004). Through participatory budgeting, citizens can have a direct influence on the spending priorities of public administrations, on the allocation of resources, the prioritization of social policies and public works, and the monitoring of public spending (Wampler, 2000; Allegretti & Herzberg, 2004; Lerner & Secondo, 2012).

Internationally, reference is often made to the famous experience in Porto Alegre in Brazil, where participatory budgeting was introduced to utilize an urban conflict between a disadvantaged community and a dysfunctional local authority, broadening the political environment after the military dictatorship of the early 1980s. From there, the approach gradually spread around Brazil and beyond (Wampler, 2000; Cymbalista & Nakano, 2005; Fung & Wright, 2001). Due to globalization, and the desire to localize and decentralize responsibilities and create a more structural involvement of citizens, the approach found fertile soil throughout the world. It fits a growing complexity of social demands, cuts in public investments, and a desire to rebuild trust among citizens, to involve individuals instead of their representatives, to promote active citizenship, to achieve social justice, and to reform the administrative apparatus (Wampler, 2000; Allegretti & Herzberg, 2004). During the 2000s, the approach took root in France, Germany, Spain, Italy (Allegretti & Herzberg, 2004), Canada, the USA (Lerner & Secondo, 2012), and even China (Friedmann, 2005).

Many examples of participatory budgeting can also be found in the Netherlands, often in the form of civic initiatives that are backed up and enabled by governmental budgets (IPP, 2006). An example is the neighborhood budgets that became part of urban renewal schemes targeting deprived neighborhoods during

the 2000s. The aim was to involve residents in targeting the main problems in their neighborhood, to increase social cohesion, and to involve residents in the execution of interventions and improvements. The national government provided these budgets and gave residents vouchers with which they could “vote” for certain projects, which were selected and implemented in close deliberation with local authorities (Oude Vrielink & Van de Wijdeven, 2008; Tonkens & Kroese, 2009). Examples are the “Bewoners Initiatief Gelden” in Den Bosch, “Een Steentje Bijdragen” in Den Haag, “Gouda Initiatievenfonds,” “Rotterdam Idee,” and “Groene Duimen” in Rotterdam, “Mooi Zo Goed Zo” in Den Bosch, Tilburg, Almere, and Hoogeveen, “Experiment Wijkbudgetten” in Zwolle, “Delftse Duiten,” and “Deventer Wijkaanpak” (Min BZK, 2007; Tonkens & Verhoeven, 2011). Some of these budgets were targeted at specific issues, such as “greening space” or “improving social cohesion;” others were more open to interpretation. But in general, the projects involving vouchers mainly concerned small interventions like refurbishment, activities in community centers, or public art, rather than major planning strategies or overall policy schemes.

Because this third form of participatory planning is quite new, it has so far received little criticism. Question can be raised, nonetheless. Also in this form of participatory planning, governments remain in control in order to oversee spending and to step in if the residents’ collective management fails. Participatory budgeting only seems to work when it has an accessible design and is targeted at specific groups, including grassroots leaders. But it often attracts the usual suspects (Lerner & Secondo, 2012) and is only able to mobilize a limited number of people (Allegretti & Herzberg, 2004). Moreover, local authorities offer citizens space for government and decision making, but in exchange try to obtain their commitment and that of their organizations (ibid.) and only seek an optimization of the decisions that they, the local authorities, have already taken (ibid.). So although participatory budgeting allows citizens to take a lead in interpretations and actions, in line with the emerging ideas of active citizenship and the desire for a reconfiguration of state–economy–civil society relationships (Healey et al., 2003), the outcomes still need to fit the general regimes, outlines, and therefore path-dependencies of national, regional, or local administrations.

Looking back on this short history of participatory planning, it can be seen that in the past 50 years, citizen involvement in spatial planning changed profoundly: From consultation in public hearings, via the communicative planning approach and collaborative stakeholder planning, toward self-management through participatory budgeting. This development corresponds to a climb up the “ladder of participation” presented by Sherry Arnstein (1969). In this ladder, Arnstein introduced a typology of citizen participation, with each rung corresponding to

the citizens' power in determining a plan or policy program. The eight rungs of the ladder are (1) manipulation, (2) therapy, (3) informing, (4) consultation, (5) placation, (6) partnership, (7) delegated power, and (8) citizen control. The lowest rungs are levels at which citizens do not influence planning in any way; rather, they are influenced by planning. As citizens climb the ladder, the influence they have on the plan and its process grows toward actual degrees of decision making (ibid.). The first round of participatory planning, the one of public hearings, corresponds to "informing and consultation;" the second round is more or less positioned between "consultation" and "placation" and sometimes relates to "partnership;" and the third and latest round of community self-management and participatory budgeting more or less corresponds to "partnership," "delegated power," and "citizen control." However, this short history of participatory planning also shows, that whatever the form of participation chosen, it continued to receive criticism throughout the years.

3

AN INCLUSIONARY PRACTICE

In an ideal situation, citizen involvement and participatory planning would be empathetic, egalitarian, open-minded, and reason-centered. As such, it would theoretically produce positive democratic outcomes, increase tolerance and empathy, create understanding of different perspectives, and resolve conflicts in democratic decision making (Hillier & Van Wezemael, 2012: 311-312). However, the short history of participatory planning shows that such ideal situations hardly ever exist in practice. Time and again, there seems to be a significant gap between the theory and rhetoric of empowerment, communicative and participatory planning, and citizen involvement, and a practice in which democratic promises are hardly ever fulfilled. In each of the forms of participatory planning discussed above, input from citizens is either strictly guided along predefined formal-organizational procedures, or streamlined into an "inclusive" plan that nicely fits existing objectives and planning proposals. Planners, as expert professionals, use their power to frame and organize participatory processes "according to habit, to suit their own desires, and eventually prevent an uncontrollable emergence of strategic agency" (ibid: 324). Planners set the objectives for citizen involvement, and in the subsequent process, citizens become subjected to these objectives. Citizens are often preselected, either intentionally by invitation or unintentionally, as time and, for example, knowledge are required to participate (Pløger, 2001).

Participatory planning therefore mostly improves relations between government officials, public servants, and “professional citizens” (citizens familiar with governmental procedures) (De Graaf, 2007). Only citizens who behave in conformity with some ideal picture are included (Verhoeven & Ham, 2010). Not surprisingly, governments have great difficulty dealing with the diversity that surfaces in dialogues with “civil society” (Frissen, 2007). Participatory planning and planning professionals are struggling to meet the fragmentation and dynamics that are an inevitable part of civic network society, especially now that governments are no longer the sole leaders of spatial development.

What is more, participatory planning is repeatedly framed within the regimes and confines of government. Precisely this phenomenon seems to be persistent. As long as planners mainly work under public authority serving governmental interests, including political ones, and ensuring that governmental objectives are delivered (Flyvbjerg, 1996; Pløger, 2001), governmental objectives will be leading in participatory planning, and citizen involvement will remain government-led. And although the intentions behind government-led participatory planning can be described as “noble,” many examples have shown that it does not work, partly because of the government’s failure to accept its outcomes or to translate it into legitimate policy actions (cf. Frissen, 2007). Citizen involvement in planning therefore merely results in a kind of advocacy planning, while government agencies expect the participating actors to execute government policies in the way these were broadly outlined beforehand (Schaap & Van Twist, 1997). The plea in policy for active citizenship is therefore often nothing more than an attempt to make citizens, communities, and organizations responsible for what is actually public policy (Schinkel, 2012). Governments still set out frameworks and objectives, promote individual responsibility, and leave it up to citizens to realize these objectives. But at the same time, they keep a close eye on the outcomes, keeping the results under strict supervision. Citizens are asked to do more, but usually do not have any more say. Swyngedouw (2005) warns us that even the latest forms of participatory planning are often just new techniques to further strengthen the governmental power of regulation and control in a changed society.

Building on this criticism, and on the philosophies of Michel Foucault, Jean Hillier (2007: 35) theorizes participatory planning as disciplinary. According to Foucault (1979), struggles over power take place continuously, manifesting themselves by producing knowledge and discourse. The result of power struggles is a stabilization in laws, buildings, infrastructure, habits, norms, etc. (Hillier, 2002: 49), which then become internalized by individuals, guiding their behavior and leading to efficient forms of social control (ibid.: 54-56). Discipline is a technique or

mechanism with which this stabilization is maintained, and it is exercised not only by government, but also by disciplinary institutions such as schools, hospitals, and psychiatric institutions. Discipline is exercised by cellular, self-contained units in space (e.g., the administrative boundaries of a neighborhood or city), control of activity within these units (e.g., legal land use plans, building applications, and statistics), processes of training (e.g., teaching planning students, learning in practice, and training for professionals), and by a precise system of laws, regulations, procedures, control mechanisms, instruments, etc. The ultimate goal of discipline is normalization: Creating an idea of the “general” that oppressively objectifies and homogenizes all. The governmental planner’s tendency to control is nicely expressed by the following: “The government does not trust individual actants to perform in a ‘correct’ manner and in order to avoid unpredictable immanence or emergence, which may not be in its (or other actants’) best interests, it will attempt to impose predictive control” (Hillier, 2012: 59)

The tendency to control and discipline through participatory planning is enacted by three major inclusionary processes that prevail in all three generations, from the traditional public hearings to the most profound form of self-management. These inclusions relate to process, content, and place, leading to the exclusion of people, issues, and developments that do not fit the set objectives, procedures, and target groups.

- Firstly, concerning process, participatory planning is based on an opposition between the *powerful and the powerless*, in which the former determine the procedures by which the latter may participate. Although new participatory planning approaches like collaborative stakeholder planning or participatory budgeting rank high on Arnstein’s ladder (1969), and appear to go beyond an opposition between the powerful and powerless, they still allocate a leading and deciding role to government and professional planners. Public planning authorities decide who is invited to contribute and when, and determine the procedures along which influence is allowed, or on which rung of the participation ladder the process is placed. This can be described as *procedural inclusion*. The framework for activities remains within the premises of the political system, its decision hierarchy, and its structures of formal influence. No democratic distribution of authority and responsibility to local people takes place during the process, as the democratic space in which the participants are allowed is predetermined (Pløger, 2001). Ideas and initiatives that develop autonomously outside these procedures, and people who are for whatever reason not able to meet the procedural conditions, remain on the outside.

- Secondly, concerning content, planning processes are often also a result of a *problem definition* from a governmental or professional perspective. This was the case in, for instance, the participatory budgets for deprived neighborhoods in the Netherlands. These neighborhoods were identified as having “low social cohesion,” according to generic indicators. Residents were informed about these problems and then asked to help counter them by making use of the participatory budgets. They were not involved, however, in either selecting the neighborhoods that were in need of regeneration, or in defining the best policy to counter the deterioration. This also applies to participatory planning processes that address “international competitiveness,” “climate robustness,” “urban regeneration,” etc. Most of the time, when participatory processes are set out by public planning authorities, the thematic objectives are more or less predetermined. Therefore, one can speak of involvement through *thematic inclusion*. Participatory planning is often initiated to create support for such themes, and not for an exploration of possible themes, and it is rather a means to achieve goals set by public authorities, such as social cohesion. Consequently, initiatives that are critical toward these goals, or initiatives that aim at objectives that differ from those set out by the public planning authorities (Verhoeven & Ham, 2010), remain on the outside.

- Thirdly, concerning place, planning actions are mostly *area-based policies*, targeting specific areas delineated by administrative boundaries. It is often taken for granted that administrative boundaries delineate spatial social communities, although this has long been contested (Van Doorn, 1955; Gans, 1962; Doevendans & Stolzenburg, 1988; Reijndorp et al., 1998). Restricting the focus to a neighborhood, a city, a region, a small plot of land, or any geographical entity, repudiates the idea that processes and network formations take place across spatial barriers and at different levels of scale, transcending such administrative boundaries. As long as participatory planning is set up according to administrative boundaries in their geographical representation, one can speak of involvement through *geographical inclusion*. This means that initiatives and ideas that connect people across various places, or initiatives and ideas that are in the spatial proximity of the targeted area but not within its exact borders, remain outside and excluded from the process.

Participatory planning is thus both inclusive and disciplinary. Inclusive not in the positive sense of the ideal speech situation, where everyone affected is involved, but in a more negative sense that all those who do not fit the predetermined frameworks, remain excluded from the process. And participatory planning is

disciplinary, as it underscores existing power relations rather than challenges them (Hillier, 2007: 35; Hillier & Van Wezemaal, 2012: 322). The aim to reach consensus is disciplinary as well, as discordant viewpoints are either excluded from the process or forced to conform to its outcomes. In the words of Bruno Latour (2004: 120-121), in public participation in decision making, “the public is not asked to go into the laboratory and become perplexed in its turn. If it is told about institutions, the purpose is to lock it up in the prison of its own social representations.”

Moreover, the short history of participatory planning shows that planning strategies related to citizens have so far mostly been focused on citizen involvement in government-led processes. For this, the disciplinary and inclusionary side of participatory planning appeared problematic, as it left planners unable to meet the complexity and dynamics of civil society. Hillier and Van Wezemaal (2012) therefore proposed that the planner should move away from the professional and institutional world, and get as close to society and civic actors as possible. Participatory processes should not take place within existing governance structures, but at places that are part of people’s everyday life. However, this strategy will still not prevent the rejection of citizens who do not conform to the governmentally set ideals, who do not participate in the government-led participatory procedures, who go against government, or who put forward issues that they consider important.

The other aspect of active citizenship – civic initiatives – has remained largely unaddressed. For civic initiatives, the inclusionary and disciplinary side of participatory planning is even more problematic. When citizens support a specific initiative, this is not due to an institutionalized context or a predetermined framework. Civic initiatives rather evolve from a specific context, and they often cut across institutional frames and boundaries, policy lines, and domains (Verhoeven, 2009; Van Meerkerk, 2014). Whereas in citizen involvement, the initiative is still taken by government agencies, in civic initiatives the initiative comes from members of civil society, and is thus organized around specific, collective interests. Civic initiatives that propose alternative or additional plans and visions for spatial interventions, thus confront governmental planners with serious questions about their role in an increasingly fragmented and dynamically changing environment (Swyngedouw, 2005; Healey, 2008; Van der Stoep, 2014).

Planning strategies that are being developed in the Netherlands in response to active citizenship and civic initiatives, unfortunately still have the disciplinary and inclusive character of government-led planning. Maarten Hajer (2011), for instance, arguing from a policy sciences perspective, pleads for a lighter form

of planning, one that has a radical incrementalism and is organized around specific topics. Government should not be in the lead, but should connect to civic initiatives, guarantee collective decision-making, represent the public interest, and provide open data and the accessibility of information. Hajer (ibid.) also argues that in order to guarantee a qualitative spatial development, governments need to set out frameworks and visions for future developments. Individuals and businesses can then shape and implement their ideas within these predefined settings. Hajer's argumentation thus remains governmental and very close to the Habermasian idea of the ideal speech situation. Arguing from an urban design perspective, Urhahn Urban Design (2010) also plead for a spatial planning in cooperation with residents and businesses; a flexible urban development that is built upon civic initiatives, on never-ending change, growth, and adaptation. In their view, planning professionals should build bridges between individual needs and common interests, and deploy the ideas and creative power of end-users, and their subsequent investments. Like Hajer, Urhahn argues that urban designers and spatial planners should thus engage in shaping the spatial conditions and frames in which freedom for initiatives can be found (ibid.). In a joint publication (PBL & Urhahn Urban Design, 2012), Hajer and Urhahn frame this type of spatial policy as "organic area development:" Civic initiatives take an incremental lead in area development, but within the lines of frameworks set out by government (PBL & Urhahn Urban Design, 2012; Platform31, 2012). Justus Uitermark (2012), arguing from a sociological perspective, also holds the vision that central authority's main task is to provide frameworks in which individual actors can develop their initiatives and ideas. From a spatial planning perspective, Rauws et al. (2014) state that regulatory structures are a precondition for self-organization, as these define spaces that allow freedom of action but also frame physical structures or reservations for specific land uses.

All of the above approaches still put the framework first. They all propose a planning in close cooperation with civic initiatives, and propose ways in which to support these initiatives, but they all maintain the divide between civic initiatives and the professional planner working on behalf of government. Therefore, these approaches keep close to the disciplinary and inclusionary mindset that was so characteristic of participatory planning. When frameworks are predetermined, the focus is still on a predefined organizing structure, as it differentiates between initiatives that do or do not fit the envisioned content, the selected area, and the predetermined procedures, and a framework does not necessarily need to respond to any dynamics that occur. All of these authors, despite their varying perspectives, seem to remain within the traditional set-up of an inclusionary design and/or a government-led approach, disciplining civic initiatives into a government-led and governmentally controlled spatial development.

And although they provide valuable suggestions and insights for planning practitioners, in my view they do not challenge existing planning practitioners, they do not challenge existing planning practices enough to make them fit an age of active citizenship.

4

RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

Thus, although governments and planners express a desire for active citizenship, so far they have only been able to develop strategies for one part of “active citizenship,” namely citizen involvement. Under the name of participatory planning, this planning strategy has developed profoundly over recent decades. However, interaction with citizens remains constrained by the inclusionary and disciplinary tendency of those same governments and planners. In citizen involvement through participatory planning, citizens can exert influence on goals set by governmental agencies, through procedures and frameworks that are set by the same governments and planners, resulting in disciplinary processes of thematic, procedural, and geographical inclusion. A strange situation thus arises: Although the legitimacy of unilateral government actions in planning has decreased and governments seek citizen involvement and shared responsibility, governments hold on to instruments that keep them in central and disciplinary positions. Strategies that propose to move as close as possible to citizens’ life world, to provide frameworks delineating the freedom in which civic initiatives can create their projects, or enable civic initiatives through governmental budgets, all seem to be in line with the ideas of active citizenship, but still premise a disciplinary role of government and planners. Planning strategies that answer to the dynamics of civic initiatives, and are able to meet the complexity of an age of active citizenship, have so far been seriously underdeveloped.

Therefore, the main question of this thesis is:

What planning strategies fit an age of active citizenship?

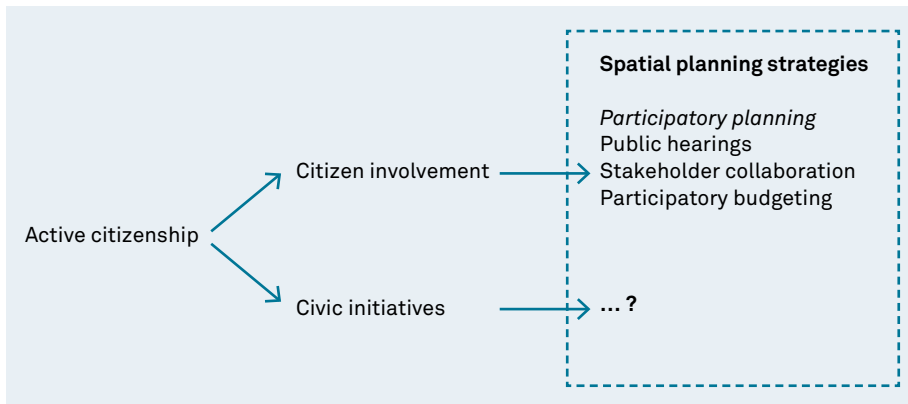


FIGURE 1.1 Visualization of problem statement and research question

To find out what planning strategies do fit the complexity of an age of active citizenship and the dynamics and diversity of civic initiatives, this thesis moves beyond the above-described path dependencies of spatial planning. Instead of starting within the safe confines of a government-led, disciplinary, and inclusive planning practice with its frameworks and procedures, the focus should be on the emerging civic initiatives themselves. This thesis therefore argues from the civic initiatives themselves, and follows their processes of becoming, their motivations, and their interests. Even though such initiatives more or less aim at the self-interests of the community, and build and form strategies for spatial interventions on their own behalf, they sooner or later encounter government or governmental planners. The planning strategies developed within the civic initiatives themselves, by the various civic, professional, and public actors involved, and the way in which these initiatives interact with planning professionals, make them valuable objects of learning when looking for planning strategies that fit active citizenship.

Arguing from this civic initiative perspective, the research question is divided into three sub-questions:

- a *Under what conditions do civic initiatives emerge?*
- b *How do civic initiatives gain robustness and resilience?*
- c *What planning strategies are developed within and in response to civic initiatives?*

In order to elaborate on these research questions, use is made of the notion of self-organization, which is derived from complexity theory. Complexity

theory allows for a vision in which society continuously changes in unforeseen, non-linear, and spontaneous ways due to the endless and continuous movement and interaction between its different elements (people, places, institutions, etc.), without being controlled by one central or external agent (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984; Heylighen, 2001; Teisman et al., 2009; Van Wezemaal, 2012; Urry, 2005a, 2005b). The complexity perspective thus also allows for the conviction that governments or their agencies are not the only actors who plan in space, but that various actors in civil society, including residents and entrepreneurs, also plan their actions in space, beyond the confines of government for reasons of more or less self-interest (Boelens et al., 2006; Boelens, 2010).

The complexity perspective also corresponds with recent shifts within planning theory toward a post-structuralist view. In this view, spaces and places are not closed and contained, but open and relational. The planner in this view does not stand outside of societal developments, trying to steer them (as in the post-war rational comprehensive planning approaches) or trying to discipline them (as in participatory planning approaches). A post-structuralist perspective rather sees the planner and the planned continuously, reciprocally entangled in heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming (Hillier, 2007; Boelens, 2009; Murdoch, 2006). This allows for a fundamentally different view on active citizenship, beyond the centralized control of participatory planning and the dichotomy between professional, public planners, and civic initiatives. Applying the notion of self-organization to civic initiatives, allows for an understanding of these initiatives as emerging spontaneously from local interactions, being intrinsically driven by community self-interests, lacking centralized control, and undergoing non-linear development. Understanding civic initiatives as being self-organized puts the emphasis on the actual motives, networks, communities, processes, and objectives of the initiatives themselves, at least intrinsically independent of governmental planning policies and participatory planning procedures. In this respect, the notion of self-organization brings forward a new perspective on the planning strategies that are developed in, and in response to, civic initiatives in spatial development.

Three research objectives lie behind the main research question. The first objective is to find an adequate vocabulary for civic initiatives, to address their emergence and interactions with their environments. The second is to gain more insight into what the role of government can or should be in relation to self-organized civic initiatives. The third objective is to learn about the planning strategies developed in civic initiatives, and to develop from there possible ways for planning to act in a world in which spatial planning is no longer the sole domain of professionals working under governmental supervision, and

provide a suitable perspective to act in an increasingly fragmented, multiple, and networked world.

Organization of this thesis

Chapter 2 elaborates on the origins of complexity theory and some of its key features, including self-organization. The chapter also shows that divergent trajectories in complexity theory provide different ways of applying the notion of self-organization in spatial planning and governance. It is argued that the notion of complexity and self-organization as the emergence of networks is highly suitable for understanding the emergence of civic initiatives. This understanding of complexity is deeply rooted in post-structuralist thinking, and the shared ontology of complexity theory and post-structuralism enables the development of a post-structuralist and spatial understanding of self-organization in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides a diagram of processes of becoming, based on this post-structuralist understanding of self-organization as the emergence of networks. This diagram distinguishes four forms of behavior in processes of becoming and three intentionalities behind this behavior. Chapter 5 presents an operationalization of this diagram and an introduction to the empirical chapters. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 (the empirical chapters), discuss various examples of civic initiatives in diverging contexts as case studies. Each case study provides its own lessons on the planning strategies used. The final chapter (9) reflects on planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship and suggests possible implications of active citizenship for planning professionals, including a future research agenda.

The Emergence of Complexity

This chapter elaborates on the theory of complexity, how it emerged in science and in governance and planning studies. It explains some key features of complexity, the divergent readings of complexity, how the notions of complexity can be instrumental in studying the emergence of civic initiatives, and the road to take concerning civic initiatives in spatial development.

1

TURNING TO COMPLEXITY

Roots in thermodynamics

Complexity theory emerged from an awareness in the physical sciences that the traditional mechanical Newtonian paradigm – movement governed by deterministic laws of nature – was no longer able to explain certain phenomena that scientists were dealing with. During the 1950s, Belgian scientist Ilya Prigogine and his “Prigogine group” set out the first lines of what later would become known as complexity theory. Before that, the traditional way of studying phenomena in science was to first reduce them to a collection of atoms or particles, and then review each of these particles in isolation until some underlying law would be discovered. This law would then function as a master key or basic principle that could explain the phenomenon as a whole. Systems were regarded as “complicated:” Rather closed and static, constituted of parts that could be analyzed separately and then be put back together again, without any loss of information (Cilliers, 1998: 4; Prigogine & Stengers, 1984; Teisman et al, 2009).

While studying thermodynamics, however, scientists discovered that by breaking up a system into individual particles and atoms, crucial information was lost. These systems could not be grasped as a whole nor broken down into particles, because there were just too many interactions, too many flows and movements running through and around the system. And it was exactly those movements, flows, and interactions that constituted these systems. In other words, systems existed because of their relationships. By breaking the system up in an attempt to find its basic principles, this relational information would get lost. And what was more, no laws could be discovered that explained some of the inherent creativity and spontaneity of the appearance of novel structures, and the autonomous adaptations that these systems made to a changing environment (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984; Prigogine, 1979; Cilliers, 1998; Heylighen, 2001). While they were seeking “general, all-embracing schemes that could be expressed in terms of eternal laws” (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984: 292), they ran into irreversible processes, far-from-equilibrium situations, events, evolving particles – an indeterminism that Prigogine most dramatically called “the end of certainty” (Prigogine, 1979). In line with these discoveries, researchers started to apply the word “complex” to these systems (Cilliers, 1998: 2).

Notions of complexity did not remain limited to the study of thermodynamic systems or physics. General system theory, which was developed by the American Society for the Advancement of General System Theory in the 1950s, had made it possible to translate the notion of “system” from one science to another. Under the leadership of Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, this society explored the implications of the new discoveries in physics for other sciences. They were looking for a generalized theory across scientific specializations that would focus on the organizing relations that result from dynamic interaction between elements, defining such organizing relations and interactions between elements as “systems” (Von Bertalanffy, 1956: 1) – “A set of objects together with relationships between the objects and between their attributes” (Hall & Fagen 1956: 18) – and the environment of systems as “The set of all objects a change in whose attributes affect the system and also those objects whose attributes are changed by the behaviour of the system” (ibid.: 20). The use of the term “system” enabled complexity theory to grow into a general science, primarily seeking abstractions with meanings within various disciplines, presenting theories, concepts, and ideas that cut across scientific disciplines and help to understand questions a discipline deals with from an abstract point of view (De Roo et al., 2012: 13). Work by researchers associated with the Santa Fe Institute in New Mexico, USA, made an important contribution to the development of complexity theory, especially during the 1980s. These researchers introduced the notion of “complex adaptive systems,” emphasizing dynamics, time, non-linear behavior, and out-of-equilibrium situations, in addition to the earlier, and rather static, general system theory. They did so in order to understand the dynamic behavior and patterns of change in complex systems, and to understand the commonalities connecting artificial, natural, and human systems (Lewin, 1993; Kauffman, 1993; Waldrop, 1992). These researchers extended and generalized the notions of complexity even further, into a “major new theory that unifies all sciences” (Lewin, 1993: cover page). While physicists and mathematicians such as Ilya Prigogine and Hermann Haken continued to work on complexity within their disciplines, researchers from other backgrounds and disciplines started to study complex phenomena as well. Complexity found its way into domains such as biology, ecology, geography, economy, sociology, brain sciences, cognitive sciences, psychology, sociology etc. By gathering and sharing their observations, methods, concepts, and principles, a theory of complexity gradually emerged during the second half of the twentieth century (Heylighen, 2001: 1).

Some key features of complexity

Key features of complexity have been extensively described in a variety of ways, and from this literature, an understanding is derived of complexity as a process

of constant movement between ambiguous polarities, leading to irreversible change. Seemingly contradictions such as “open systems with boundaries,” “from disorder to order to disorder,” and “in between being and becoming” express the ambiguity of complexity: Complex systems are never entirely in one state or the other, but are constantly moving toward states, being both states at the same time. This continuous movement leads to irreversible and non-linear change, to be described herein as emergence and self-organization, and adaptation and co-evolution.

- 1 *Open systems with boundaries.* In contrast to complicated systems that are usually closed, complex systems are regarded as fundamentally open (Cillier, 1998: 4). According to Luhmann (1997), already a mere distinction between system and environment is a reduction of complexity. However, Luhmann argues, such reductions are unavoidable as in society, functionally differentiated subsystems do exist. Subsystems that tend towards closure and boundaries, in order to differentiate themselves and to remain operational in an even more complex environment. Such operational closure does not imply autonomy and independency though, as it does not involve causal, informational or environmental closure (Luhmann, 1997; Assche & Verschraegen, 2008). So even if complex systems are said to have boundaries, they still have a high level of interaction with their environment. External dynamics are as influential as internal dynamics, and matter and energy will constantly flow through (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984).
- 2 *From disorder to order to disorder.* With the notion of complexity, the more deterministic laws of mechanics were left behind, but at the same time complexity scientists acknowledged that simply stating that everything was random and happening by chance, did not lead to any fruitful explanations either (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984). Thermodynamic systems seemed to inhabit universal, deterministic laws (order) and spontaneous and creative behavior (disorder) simultaneously. This principle meant that disorder increases while a system evolves, but that from disorder new order can emerge as well, in turn creating more disorder etc. (Heylighen, 2001:2).
- 3 *In between being and becoming.* In complexity theory, systems are not regarded as stable and fixed entities, but as dynamic entities that continuously evolve. In that sense, their “being” stands for the initial conditions of a system at a certain moment in time and more or less stable conditions within a certain period. Their “becoming” stands for all the

movements and changes in and around the system. A system cannot “be” without “having become,” and “becoming” implies the system has moved away from its initial conditions. A system is thus always in both a state of “permanence” (being) and “change” (becoming) at the same time. Being and becoming are thus not opposed to each other, but express related aspects of reality (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984: 292, 310).

This continuous movements between states, from order to disorder to order, from being to becoming to being, and between openness and boundaries, is irreversible (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984: 310): “Whatever the number of transformations, we never return to the original state” (ibid.: 270). A system therefore never reaches its “perfect,” “destined” state, or equilibrium – simply because no such state exists. Instead, a complex system is constantly evolving between states and systems are never at equilibrium. Even if a system seems to be in equilibrium, it will only be a temporary situation (Cilliers, 1998: 3-5). To stress once more the difference between classical mechanics and the new science of complexity, Prigogine and Stengers (ibid.: 310) stated that:

Both classical and quantum mechanics are based on arbitrary initial conditions and deterministic laws [...]. In a sense, laws made simply explicit what was already present in the initial conditions. This is no longer the case when irreversibility is taken into account. In this perspective, initial conditions arise from previous evolution and are transformed into states of the same class through subsequent evolution.

Processes of irreversible change, or of irreducibility and non-linearity, refer to the direction in which a system is evolving, to the idea that processes are always subject to dynamics and unforeseen change (Morçöl, 2005; 2010). An incentive given to the system may result in a certain kind of behavior at a certain time, but this incentive may result in quite a different response if given to another system at another time (Teisman et al., 2009: 8). “Non-linear systems [...] have typically several solutions, and there is no a priori way to decide which solution is the “right” one.” (Heylighen, 2001: 12).

Self-organization is one of the key features of complex systems. It concerns the emergence of a complex structure or pattern out of fairly unstructured beginnings, due to the history and the local interactions between elements within the system itself. Self-organization develops spontaneously and autonomously, without external agents imposing it (Cillier, 1998; Heylighen, 2001). In physics, this relates to, for instance, molecules that arrange themselves into an ordered pattern without incentives from outside the system (Heylighen, 2001: 2). While

self-organization and emergence refer to the internal dynamics of a system, adaptation and co-evolution refer to the reactions of a system to changes or challenges coming from the external environment. Adaptation concerns a system's capacity to adjust to changes in the environment without endangering its own essential organization (ibid.: 4). This means that a system has to be able to produce a sufficient variety of actions that can cope with possible perturbations, and be able to select the most adequate counteraction for disturbances (ibid.: 15). As complex systems have both open and closed properties, self-organization and adaptation are interlinked: It is the ability to self-organize that enables a system to change its internal structure spontaneously, in order to adapt to a changed environment (Cilliers, 1998: 90). The development of an internal structure of a system is thus "neither a passive reflection of the outside, nor a result of active, pre-programmed internal factors, but the result of a complex interaction between the environment, the present state of the system and the history of the system" (ibid.: 89).

Summary

To summarize, non-equilibrium, irreversible change and non-linearity, self-organization and adaptation, are the result of an endless number of interactions between the various components of a system. These interactions can be both internal (the system reproduces itself in self-referentiality) and external (the system reproduces itself in reaction to changed conditions in its environment), and what is internal and external to the system may change over time. Even if a complex system tries to move toward closure, being, order, and equilibrium, its intrinsic openness makes the system adaptive and dependent on its environment, leading to and creating new becoming and complexity. De Roo (2010) summarizes this as follows: Firstly, open systems evolve from order toward disorder due to growing complexity; secondly, new, complex but orderly systems emerge from this disorder; thirdly, new, orderly systems emerge on top of existing complex systems, again increasing complexity (ibid.: 30-31). Complex adaptive systems are thus not fixed or static entities with given nodes and interactions, like systems in general system theory. Instead, they are in a constant state of being "out of equilibrium" – a system that functions well will never reach a steady state at equilibrium (De Roo, 2012: 163). The complexity of a system comes from the continuous interactions with its environment, neighboring systems, interactions within the system, and between the various subsystems (ibid.: 151). A complex adaptive system continuously searches for the best fit, or best configuration, within a given moment and context (De Roo & Rauws, 2012: 213). Complexity exists because of the interdependence of heterogeneous elements and agents or systems that can learn and adapt (MacKay, 2008). Complex adaptive systems are

considered to be robust and flexible at the same time, and constantly in motion as a consequence of being out of equilibrium. “Rather than descending into a ‘dead’ situation or into chaos, complex adaptive systems show emergent behavior and co-evolve, while maintaining a proper level of ‘fitness’, that is, the ability of a system to survive between extremes – between order and chaos, coherence and diversity” (De Roo, 2012: 152-153).

So what is complexity? Multiplicity and temporality are perhaps its most fundamental principles. Temporality because order is created, but over time turned into multiple orders. Multiplicity because different modes of ordering coexist, which can join together, interfere, and create even more new modes of ordering (Mol & Law, 2002). Binaries like the ones mentioned above are helpful in understanding the multiplicity of complexity, but it is:

... too simple to work with binaries. Addition, or not. Linearity, or not. A single space, or not. But in a complex world there are no simple binaries. Things add up and they don't. They flow in linear time and they don't. And they exist within a single space and escape from it. That which is complex cannot be pinned down. To pin down is to lose it” (ibid.: 20-21, original emphasis).

Complexity is there “if things relate but don't add up, if events occur but not within the processes of linear time, and if phenomenon share a space but cannot be mapped in terms of a single set of three-dimensional coordinates” (ibid.: 1).

2

COMPLEXITY IN GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING

Within spatial planning and governance, a complexity vocabulary appeared in the 1990s (Thrift, 1999), especially in the relational approaches to space and planning. The relational approaches emphasized the importance of taking into account the relationships among stakeholders *and* the relationships of the stakeholders with their environment (Graham & Healey, 1999: 638-640). Influences from complexity theory became even more explicit during the second half of the 2000s, when several contemporary planning theorists started to explore its potential in, for example, “Stretching Beyond the Horizon” (Hillier, 2007), “Managing Complex Governance Systems” (Teisman et al., 2009), “A

Planner's Encounter with Complexity" (De Roo & Silva, 2010), "Complexity and Planning – Systems, Assemblages and Simulations" (De Roo et al., 2012), and "Complexity Theories of Cities Have Come of Age" (Portugali et al., 2012). Whereas cities and society had always been complex already, these theorist argued that complexity theory enabled them to recognize and acknowledge this complexity. Moreover, these theorists recognized that existing planning approaches were no longer fully able to meet contemporary societal challenges. Processes of globalization had led to an increase in the diversity and multiplicity of processes relating to localities, regions, nation-states, environments, and cultures, processes that by themselves became more networked, "at a distance," overlapping, mobile, globally constituted, and operating at various levels or scales (Urry, 2005b: 243-245; 2006: 111-112; 2005a: 11). Globalization had not evolved from centralized hierarchical directions set by rational-legal bureaucracies, but rather from the multiple and multi-scalar interactions of economic, social, political, cultural, and environmental processes that developed in open, unpredictable, and non-linear ways (Urry, 2005b). Globalization had led to a growing functional differentiation of institutional orders, a dramatic intensification of societal complexity, and a widening and deepening of interdependencies across various social, spatial, and temporal horizons of action (Jessop, 1999: 1).

For spatial planning, this meant an increased resource interdependency, an increased interrelatedness of places and actors, and a diversification of the material and social worlds (De Roo, 2010). Relevant power and resources – such as land, property, knowledge, procedural, and legal competences, funding and investment capital, authority, and key positions in networked power – became spread among a diverse range of actors, leading to ever more resource interdependence and interrelatedness (Booher & Innes, 2002: 3; Van Wezemael, 2012: 94; Zuidema, 2012: 2). Formal governments, often leading actors in planning processes, were "facing more eloquent, fragmented, dynamic and interdependent societies and issues. Whilst having to cope with the vast coordinative efforts that follow[ed], formal governments [were] also facing a decrease in their power base compared to private parties and a decrease in societal support" (Zuidema, 2012: 3). Planning became more and more entangled within a plurality of governing agencies, including but not limited to those within the state, and often manifested as partnerships or networks across public, private, and voluntary sectors (Hillier, 2007: 10). Such complexity and resource interdependency thus asked for new modes of governance, modes that acknowledged non-linearity, fuzziness, and multiplicity (Hillier, 2007; Jessop, 1994; Van Wezemael, 2010; 2012; Zuidema, 2012).

The two most prominent rationalities in planning – technical rationality and communicative rationality – are now considered incapable of addressing this increased social complexity (De Roo, 2010; 2012; Klijn & Snellen, 2009). In order to distinguish what planning issues would fit which rationality, De Roo (2003; 2004) and Zuidema (2012) discerned issues that addressed single fixed goals under central guidance on the one hand, for which technical rationality (a single, proven solution) would be appropriate. Communicative rationality, on the other hand, would be more suitable for situations in which instead of a single fixed goal, there were composite and multiple interdependent goals coupled with participative interaction (De Roo, 2003; 2004; Zuidema, 2012). But even though communicative rationality recognized the complexity, ambiguity, and plurality of multi-stakeholder processes (Klijn & Snellen, 2009; De Roo, 2010; Van Wezemaal, 2012), it still focused mostly on reaching *one* shared, negotiated, and deliberated outcome of a planning process, on fixing and stabilizing networks and settings, rather than on the emergence and change of relationships (Klijn & Snellen, 2009: 22). Whereas technical rationality provided single and *proven* solutions, communicative rationality would provide single, *agreed upon* solutions. Both rationalities therefore seemed to still be rather linear, striving toward one, most optimal solution for a certain problem. And whereas technical rationality disregarded complexity altogether, communicative rationality appeared to be unable to meet contemporary societal complexity due to its governmental-led disciplinary and inclusionary premises (see Chapter 1). Complexity theory enabled planners to acknowledge uncertainty both regarding cause and effect relations, and regarding the perceptions, interpretations, and ambitions of various actors (Zuidema, 2012).

What was more, the move from a technical to a communicative rationality had turned planners away from their technical, material worlds toward a world dominated by process, procedures, and perceptions-to-be-constructed. This had made planning relatively detached from the material environment, incorporating spatial imaginaries, but failing to incorporate space itself and failing to engage with and to affect the processes of becoming that emerge from heterogeneous materialities of space. Instead of changing the physicality of their environment, planners became preoccupied with changing the understanding of the environment, leading to a loss of spatial (or material) focus (cf. Murdoch, 2006). As complexity theory stressed the importance of objects and nature as part of our social worlds (Urry, 2003; 2005a; 2005b; 2006), such a division between nature, objects, people, social systems was no longer made. Complexity theory intrinsically addressed processes of spatial ordering (Thrift, 1999), but also related to the dynamics of a rapidly changing environment, urban life, and changing societal opinions (Van Wezemaal, 2012: 93-94; De Roo et al., 2012: 2). Complexity would thus reunite the material world with the social world that planners deal with.

Due to an increased social complexity and resource interdependency, and awareness of the uncertainties of cause and effect relations in planning issues, the mentioned planning theorists argue that the choice to acknowledge complexity is growing ever more inevitable (Zuidema, 2012: 17; Van Wezemael, 2010; De Roo, 2010). Planners will often find themselves in situations that are surprisingly different from what they expected (Teisman et al., 2009: 1), and the outcomes of public policy decisions often do not match the policy goals or actions of agents at all (Morçöl, 2010: 57). As such, governance and planning are complex by definition – “characterized by interrelatedness between constitutive parts, where the whole is different than can be expected from the sum of the parts because of the emergent characteristics of the coevolution and self-organization within and between systems” (Teisman et al., 2009: 5). Applying notions from complexity theory to the domain of governance and planning “falsifies the idea that governance processes are stable and that deviation from this stability is ‘abnormal’” (Boons et al., 2009: 233). Instead, complexity means that realities are continuously evolving, and that there is no such thing as a static world in which planners or policymakers operate. From a complexity perspective, situations, including spatial ones, cannot be seen as unchanging, a-temporal, and independent of their context.

Irreducibility and non-linearity are thus appealing notions for planners, as are the notions of self-organization, adaptation, and co-evolution. Self-organization in planning and governance implies that the ability to steer is limited, due to the autonomy of actors and their inability to control or oversee the dynamics that evolve from governance actions (Klijn & Snellen, 2009: 26). In governance, self-organization concerns every performing system, as it addresses both the governance systems – actors who are busy constituting a new order (Morçöl, 2010; Klijn & Snellen, 2009; Teisman et al., 2009; Boons et al., 2009). Self-organization indicates the ability of actors and systems to behave in a self-chosen way, to maintain or change their structure and strategy by themselves, without external control, and to resist or adapt to externally induced change (Teisman et al., 2009; Boons et al. 2009). By emphasizing the influence of local interactions and the history of the system, self-organization in governance evidences that the internal dynamics of a governance system can influence policy outcomes as much as external interferences can (Morçöl, 2005: 314). Adaptation occurs in governance when a system experiences a disconnection between its internal order and its environment, and experiences a need to adjust its internal order to this new situation. When several governance systems adapt to each other in a non-linear way, through either competition or synchronization, one can also speak of co-evolution (Teisman et al., 2009; Morçöl, 2005: 314). For instance, in complex policy processes, there are many cases in which the strategic choices of

sets of actors in one system or network are influenced, sometimes quite unexpectedly, by sets of strategic choices by other actors (Klijn & Snellen, 2009: 29-30). In complex social systems, every agent is a planner at a certain scale, and because of non-linearity it is uncertain how far the influence of any action (whether taken by an individual or a collective) might reach (cf. Portugali, 2011).

Notions from complexity theory, and its highly metaphorical vocabulary, can thus help planners to address some of the irreversible, irreducible, and non-linear changes they are dealing with, and to understand the interrelatedness, interdependency, diversity, and multiplicity of contemporary society (Thrift, 1999; De Roo, 2010). Complexity theory is a relevant starting point for the study of civic initiatives, too, mainly due to the notion of self-organization. The first chapter of this thesis already highlighted how civic initiatives emerge autonomously from governmental and participative planning procedures, and develop in self-chosen ways, following their own logic and drivers. This is in contrast to participatory planning, the aim of which is to reduce complexity by giving central control to one agent (government or the planning professional), defining strict preconditions for these processes through participatory procedures, and aiming at reaching consensus on a singular plan (see Chapter 1). As such, a civic initiative can be understood as a process of emergence, and thus of self-organization, of new structure, or new order.

3

DIVERGENT READINGS OF COMPLEXITY: ROMANTIC AND BAROQUE

So far, this chapter might have given the impression that there is one general way of describing complexity. Nothing could be further from the truth, however. Theories of complexity have been applied to such a variety of professions and sciences, each contributing in its own way to complexity theory's further development, that the emergence of complexity theory is indeed a complex and non-linear story in itself. The travels and pathways of complexity are multiple, as several and different schools of thought have developed over time (Hillier, 2007: 42). Also in spatial planning, complexity and self-organization are used in a variety of ways, strongly reflecting the different pathways in which complexity theory has developed over the years. The remaining parts of this chapter now argue toward an understanding of complexity, and especially the notion of self-organization, that can serve the main objective of this thesis: To find planning strategies that fit

the dynamics of civic initiatives. To do this, diverging perspectives on complexity are elaborated upon. The first divergence concerns the distinction between a romantic and a baroque view on complexity (Kwa, 2002; Law, 2004; Hillier, 2007). The second divergence concerns the understanding of complex adaptive systems, in three different system classifications. At the end of this chapter, it is argued which of these views and understandings are most relevant in the study of civic initiatives and their related planning strategies.

The first divergence is based on a shift of focus by Prigogine and his group. At first, they focused on systems that were initially out of equilibrium, but that nonetheless moved toward steady states, definite features, closure, and equilibrium. In the late 1960s, however, the group shifted its focus to systems in full interaction with their environment. From that moment, systems were seen as intrinsically open, exchanging matter, energy, and entropy with their environment, and necessarily out of equilibrium. Chunglin Kwa (2002: 36-40) describes this as a switch from a romantic to a baroque reading of complexity.

In a romantic reading of complexity, the aim is to discover unifying principles and higher-order laws that can explain the non-linear, adaptive, and self-organizing behavior of complex systems. The key methodological principle of scientific romanticism is “looking up,” seeing things as a whole and finding the global (Law, 2004: 16-18). Its focus on holism, generality, homogenization, abstraction, and creation of unity is a historic continuity of romanticism that has run through art and sciences for the last two hundred years. In a romantic view, systems move toward and strive to maintain their equilibrium. Emergent wholes can be delineated from their environment and recognized as such. They are described in terms of hierarchy in different levels of organization: Heterogeneous elements at a low level, and a functional whole, a unifying principle that binds the heterogeneous elements at a higher level (Kwa, 2002: 24-25). Reality is understood by looking at this whole, and revealing the parameters or driving forces of a certain emergence (Law, 2004: 14). To reveal this romantic “truth” or binding principle, the focus is on homogenization and abstraction of the component parts of a system. A system is freed from its direct physical form and surroundings so that its abstraction can be found (Kwa, 2002: 46). A romantic view thus lends itself to mathematical modeling, in which indicators define a finite set of dimensions, criteria are delineated and measured, and general laws are expressed in every single local instance or event (Kwa, 2002: 46; Law, 2004). This modeling is used to simulate and predict the system’s attributes and patterns, as well as to exercise control over the behavior of the system (Kwa, 2002; Hillier, 2012: 57). Many practical applications of complexity theory have been focused on this kind of modeling of artificial self-organizing systems, both in real-time modeling and

in computer modeling (Heylighen, 2001: 20-24). The romantic view on complexity is thus both descriptive and representational. Structuralist features are recognizable in this reading of complexity (see Chapter 3).

The aim of baroque complexity is diametrically opposed to that of romantic complexity. Instead of looking up and finding the overarching logic of systems as a whole, baroque complexity is “looking down” to explore all the complexities that exist within a certain system (Law, 2004: 19). The analogy with baroque is derived from Baroque art, the art of the counterpoint. This is a form of harmony in which different and independent voices are brought together through a web of reciprocal references, interacting with each other and harmonically interdependent, but never losing their individuality and independency in rhythm and contour (Kwa, 2002: 29). In a baroque reading of complexity, one does not search for the broader picture, but instead for endlessly more details, variety, and diversity. It concerns specificity and material heterogeneity, differences between all the various components, and variety of interactions. In a baroque view on complexity “everything is connected and contained with everything else” (Law, 2004: 22), and therefore almost no distinction can be made between the individual, the system, and the environment. If any “wholes” such as a system are delineated, this delineation depends on situational rather than abstract criteria, and is highly influenced by the perspective of the describer (Kwa, 2002: 46-47; Law, 2004; Hillier, 2012: 43).

In a baroque reading of complexity, systems are not defined by theorists standing outside the system, but are performed, operated, or constructed by the actors that make up the system themselves – actors who are themselves in turbulent, unstable motion, acting in multiple networks simultaneously, moving in folds and infinitely varied patterns (Hillier, 2007: 45). Even if boundaries or patterns are discerned, they tend to be short-lived, and are never exactly repeated (Hillier, 2007: 47-59). The baroque perspective sees a constant production of novel combinations, an instability that opens up the possibility for new complexity to emerge (Kwa, 2002: 43). Instead of seeing a system as a whole whose logic can be described in representational laws and rules, the baroque view on complexity regards systems as *performative*, with outcomes that are unpredictable and emergent (Hillier, 2007: 47). This perspective of complexity is more concerned with creating narratives than with discovering underlying principles (Hillier, 2012: 43). Moreover, a baroque reading of complexity is not only performative, but also interventional. It does not just describe the world; it also seeks to make a difference, it is about shaping the world operating upon it, and formatting it one way or another (Law, 2011: 13). Baroque complex systems “*creatively transform their own environments*” (Kwa, 2002: 29 – original emphasis). Post-structuralist

features are recognizable in this view on complexity (Cilliers, 1998; Hillier, 2007, see Chapter 3).

The different views of romantic and baroque complexity are not mutually exclusive; rather, they represent two different perspectives of looking (Kwa, 2002: 26). Law argues that romantic complexity is about convergence, and baroque complexity about divergence, but that both are present in reality. Although the idea of “reaching equilibrium” has been abandoned, romantic tendencies are still very much alive within the complexity of complex adaptive systems. Trying to unite all sciences that make use of the terminology of complexity into one general, holistic, and general science is romantic in itself (Kwa, 2002: 24). Defining boundaries of systems and subsystems before studying their interactions is a romantic tendency too. And moreover, as the Santa Fe pioneered an approach that aimed mostly at the computer simulation of living systems, in order to understand more of their underlying logics (Heylighen, 2001: 4; Lewin, 1993), the romantic tendency to represent complex systems in models and simulations is often dominant. At the same time, a baroque view on complex adaptive systems is possible too. The emergent behavioral patterns have limited predictability; they do not respond to changes in continuous or linear manner. Complex adaptive systems are comprised of so many interconnected elements across various time scales that interactions are difficult to understand, resulting in surprises, or even “tipping points,” when a rather continuous state is suddenly interrupted by a large-scale change. Descriptions of complex adaptive systems are always arbitrary, and can never be objective, as the observer is always somehow part of the system too, and the interconnectivity and adaptive transformations of the system are always pervasive (Hillier, 2012; Portugali, 2012c). By themselves neither direction will ever lead to a full system understanding. The unity of romanticism will never be fully discovered as there will always remain exceptions and unexpected changes. As Law (2004: 24) stated, “[T]here is no final convergence. There is no system, global order, or network. These are, at best, partially enacted romantic aspirations.” Neither can the discovery of ever more detail of the baroque continue endlessly. This means that on complex matters, both views are possible, and even complementary.

However, concerning planning strategies in an age of active citizenship, the baroque reading of complexity would be favorable. Romantic tendencies have been paramount in both the technical and the communicative rationality of spatial planning, in their aim to reach an optimal proven or socially accepted, agreed upon solution. The first chapter of this thesis argued how both technical and communicative rationality have been unable to deal with or be receptive to the diversity and dynamics of civil society, due to their inclusive and disciplinary

tendencies. Thus, these rationalities do not provide any sufficient planning strategies that could deal with civic initiatives. A romantic reading of complexity focuses on the underlying logics of a system, with which both the system as a whole and every element within the system have to comply. Such a reading of complexity is thus as inclusionary and disciplinary as participatory planning approaches are. A baroque reading of complexity, however, opens up for diversity, specificity, and dynamics, and would fit the dynamics of civic initiatives much more.

4

DIVERGENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS

The second divergence in complexity relates to three ways in which complex adaptive systems are understood and used (De Roo, 2012: 142), namely understanding such systems (1) as feedback loops within the system, (2) as being in phase transition due to changes in the internal structure or the environment, or (3) as emerging actor-networks, in full interaction with their environment. This section elaborates how these understandings of complex adaptive systems relate to spatial planning and governance, how the romantic and baroque readings of complexity are present in these understandings, how these understandings lead to different ways of applying the notion of self-organization to civic initiatives, and how these understandings relate to the research objective of finding planning strategies in an age of active citizenship.

Complex adaptive systems with feedback loops

The first way to understand complex adaptive systems is as coherent and robust (though adaptive) wholes with well-defined (though open) boundaries. These systems self-organize through feedback loops that either stabilize or disrupt the system. Feedback loops can be positive, when they reinforce and amplify initial changes, and lead to dynamism (also called feed-forward loops (De Roo, 2012)). Feedback loops can also be negative, when the reaction of the system is opposite and suppresses the initiated change. Such feedback loops lead to stability (Teisman et al., 2009: 12; Heylighen, 2001: 8-9). The theory of such feedback loops has been profoundly applied to cities, as examples of such self-organizing complex adaptive systems. When a city and its development is solely explained by a technical rationality, and planners intervene in the system through object-

oriented blueprint planning, the complexity of such a city system is disregarded (De Roo, 2012: 142). However, when cities are seen as complex adaptive systems, the understanding of feedback loops can especially be used to explain, for instance, the emergence of urban form (Thrift, 1999: 32).

Well-known examples can be found in the work of Peter Allen (1997; 2012), Paul Krugman (1996), Michael Batty (Batty, 2005; Batty, 2013; Batty & Marshall, 2012), Bill Hillier (2012), and Juval Portugali (2000; 2006; 2011; 2012a; Alfasi & Portugali 2007). What their work has in common is that it concerns the emergence of large-scale, macro-structures from the interactions between individuals and collective entities. For instance according to Allen (who was, for a time, part of the Prigogine group in Brussels (Thrift, 1999: 32)): “Spatial structures of cities, regions, and urban networks emerge from the continuous interaction between individuals, their goals, their aspirations and the macrostructure that they have allowed to emerge” (Buijs et al., 2009: 97). According to Portugali (2000), the city is a reciprocal product of the initiatives of actors, influenced by personal/individual motives (caused by their environment) versus spatial developments that are in their turn the product of collective actions. The outcomes of such self-organizing processes manifest themselves in specific urban forms and patterns (morphological or functional), physical growth, the emergence of new socio-spatial groups as a result of geographical settings or characteristics such as houses, lots, and housing blocks (Portugali, 2000), or the spontaneous emergence of economically specialized districts (Krugman, 1996). In this understanding of complex adaptive systems, the incentives for feedback and feed-forward loops are seen as part of the system, and can come from both individual citizens and professional planners. Professional planners, and their predictions and plans, can make the plan and reality bend toward each other (Portugali, 2012b: 231), and intervene when self-organizing processes head in an undesired direction (Krugman, 1996). According to Krugman, such processes – which are often market-led – especially take place in cities that do not have planning or zoning entities (Krugman, 1996).

Within this understanding of complex adaptive systems, romantic tendencies are paramount, as the focus often lies on finding underlying logics and rules. Here, the work on synergetics, a theory of steering systems, by Hermann Haken (1981; 2006; 2012) has been influential. According to Haken, complex systems are dominated by one or a few order parameters. These order parameters emerge out of the behavior of individual components of the system; however, once emerged, they enslave the individual components into organized behavior. This explains the highly ordered structure that can emerge out of the process of self-organization (ibid., 2012). Also the use of fractals and cellular automata can be seen as a romantic reading of complexity. According to Michael Batty (2005),

who applied these notions to explain spatial patterns in cities, fractals refer to similar patterns at various scales. Cellular automata are a decomposition of physical space into cells, which can explain how cities fashion their local rules of land development in such a way that global patterns emerge (Batty, 2005; Batty & Marshall, 2012). And romantic *par excellence* is the notion of Bill Hillier (2012), who states that urban development is often much simpler than thought when the universal principle or “genetic code” for a city is found, something he applies to the interaction between the physical infrastructure network within a city and the movements of individual agents through space (“space syntax”). Such an understanding of complex adaptive systems is often applied in models explaining, simulating, or predicting urban form. Kwa (2002: 23) wrote that: “Models seek to bring conceptual unity to what otherwise would not easily be put together. And in a mathematical model several basic laws can be made to work together to ‘mimic’ nature.” Such an understanding of complex adaptive systems is thus both descriptive and representative: Romantic through and through.

A baroque awareness in this understanding of complex adaptive systems becomes apparent in the criticism of such simulation and prediction models. These models presuppose centralized control of a designer and algorithms, pre-scripted behavior, and that each member of a given population can be taken as the equivalent of any of the others. Moreover, such models are based on averages and not on precise, specific situations (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984: 204). Modeling based on notions of complexity is therefore a very risky undertaking for systems that cannot be simulated in laboratories, such as cities. In contrast to particles in thermodynamic systems, populations and individuals in urban systems seek optimization through problem definitions, but due to continuous transformations of the environment and ideas about this environment, problem definitions and solutions sought are under constant change as well. The development of cities can therefore, according to Prigogine and Stengers, never be considered as a coherent story of global process, but should be regarded on its fundamental uncertainty (Prigogine & Stengers 1984: 207).

Models that explain, simulate, and predict urban form, especially if they regard cities as simple, classical, and closed systems, are therefore criticized for avoiding their complexity (cf. Cilliers, 1998; Portugali, 2012a: 53). Moreover, according to Portugali (*ibid.*: 57), such models often forget that cities are formed by “human beings that unlike sand grains can think, learn, plan, forget, change their mind...” and whose “actions and behavior are products of intentions, plans, social and cultural norms, political pressure and the like.” In response to such criticism, models of complex adaptive systems have become more and more agent-based, emphasizing the complexity of multiple agents acting in the same

system simultaneously, only looking for but never reaching optimization (Batty & Marshall, 2012: 41-42). This is where the baroque reading of complexity and of complex adaptive systems and their feedback loops, comes into perspective. Such models are no longer explaining and predicting the development of a system, but have become performative and interventionist themselves. Possible futures are modeled for policy and decision evaluation, allowing a better insight into the wide range of possible consequences of policies and actions, as well as teaching that reality can evolve very differently from its representations (Allen, 2012). By showing how many different spatial configurations or outcomes are possible, such models can be used in training people to deal with uncertainty (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984; Cilliers, 1998; Allen, 2012).

When cities, societies, regions, and neighborhoods are understood as complex adaptive systems with feedback loops, self-organization can be used as a concept explaining the emergence of urban form, regardless of the difference between a romantic or baroque reading of complex adaptive systems with feedback loops. Self-organization in this view addresses the uncontrollable emergences that lay outside the reach of managers. It allocates certain characteristics to individuals who subsequently start behaving accordingly, unintentionally creating new patterns in space. Individual actors, including active citizens and civic initiatives, create a system of which they are unaware. This understanding of self-organization could provide insight into the spatial patterns that could emerge when a multitude of active citizens and civic initiatives emerge within a certain geographical area. Computational models could simulate these civic initiatives and make policymakers aware of their impact, and train policymakers to deal with the complexity and unpredictability of civic initiatives within the system that they too are part of. The application of these understandings of complexity and self-organization to the emergence of urban form remain faithful to the original – mainly physical and mathematical – theories of complexity. They therefore provide valuable insights for planners, professionals, and public policymakers into how to deal with civic initiatives and create insight into the possible consequences of the emergence of specific initiatives.

However, in this understanding of complex adaptive systems, a certain distance exists between the professional planner and society. A distinction is made between the planned and the unplanned (Krugman, 1996), or between deliberate planning interventions and fundamental uncertainty in spatial development processes (Batty, 2013). Even though the professional planner is seen as part of the system, the planner is still meant to intervene in the system when the outcomes of self-organizing processes head in undesired directions. The focus lies on the outcomes of processes and the evolution of the spatial system, not the

evolution of the interactions between the agents themselves. Moreover, the focus lies on individuals, not on whether these individuals cooperate. In other words, although this understanding of complexity addresses the individual behavior of citizens, it does not address their behavior in and toward civic initiatives. Therefore, this understanding of complex adaptive systems does not help to overcome the distance between professional planners and civic initiatives, or the contrast between disciplinary and inclusionary tendencies in planning on one hand, and the complexity and diversity of civil society on the other. The actual dynamics of individual civic initiatives remain unrevealed. Based on these applications of self-organization, Alfasi & Portugali (2004; 2007; see also Portugali, 2011) propose an interesting planning approach that focusses on rules or laws regarding qualitative relations between different activities and factors in the built environment (Alfasi & Portugali, 2004: 32). But by and large, the alternative strategies for planning in an age of active citizenship that these new conceptualizations of urban systems offer remain overall meager (Rauws, 2015).

Complex adaptive systems in phase transition

A second way of understanding complex adaptive systems concerns systems in phase transition. According to De Roo (2012), these systems generate semi-open feedback and internal evaluation, and when extrapolating their past and present into the future, they can help planners to explore alternatives to and the possible effects of interventions. When such extrapolation happens in a linear way, the complexity of such systems is disregarded. But when the notion of non-linear progression (becoming) is added, phase transitions come into perspective.

Phase transitions are non-linear movements or radical leaps from one stable level to another, as a result of feedback/feed-forward loops within the system and interactions with its environment (Rotmans et al., 2012: 180-181). Transitions take place when there is no longer a fit between a system and its environment due to, for instance, economic, cultural, technological, ecological, or institutional developments at different levels of scale (Rotmans et al., 2001). Then, the symmetry between system and environment is broken, and bifurcations take place – tipping points or moments in time at which the system can choose multiple directions in which to evolve (DeLanda, 2002: 18; Batty & Marshall, 2012: 35). After these bifurcations, the system adapts itself to its new environment through a process of co-evolution, until stability increases again (De Roo, 2012: 160-161). Such phase transitions appear to be cyclical: Relatively short periods of instability and chaos alternate with relatively long periods of stability (Rotmans et al., 2012: 179). Though the boundaries of the system remain more or less intact, the structure and function of the system change fundamentally (ibid.: 180-181).

Steady states are determined by attractors, the preferred parameters to which a system moves (or: self-organizes) when no external shocks or perturbations take place. These attractors function like control parameters, but not in the sense of underlying, universal principles. Rather are they the elements that give robustness and resilience to the system (cf. DeLanda, 2002: 18). A system can have multiple attractors, and thus multiple possible states, adding to the complexity and unpredictability of its development (DeLanda, 2002: 13; Rotmans et al., 2012: 180). Self-organization in this understanding of complex adaptive systems refers again to the ability to develop structure as a result of the system's internal constitution, and not as a result of external management. However, as adaptation and self-organization occur simultaneously, external stimuli, and fuzzy interactions between a system, subsystems, and a contextual environment, can force the system to shift internally, through a process of self-organization, toward a new, punctuated equilibrium (Rotmans et al., 2012: 181; De Roo, 2012: 162). According to Rotmans, transition systems consists of three levels of organization: First the macro-level, which is society; secondly, the meso level of regimes, that is, networks of established, continuous players that execute particular functions within society; and thirdly the micro-level of niches, small groups of agents that emerge within a system but do not align with the usual configurations. When a system, or society, faces persistent problems, the renewal or phase transition has to be set in motion by finding the niches that might be able to break down the incumbent regime and build up new regimes, taking up a new function within society.

This second understanding of complex adaptive systems takes self-organization as the bottom-up emergence of niches that deviate from the overall system, but that can emerge further to become regimes that eventually determine a phase transition of the system as a whole. Transition management concerns itself with the fostering of such transitions, by empowering niches and providing them with a safe environment and the relevant resources to develop toward a regime. As such, the transition manager is concerned with setting in motion processes of self-organization that make the system stable and in line with its environment. This can be done by focusing on frontrunners and connecting them, creating guiding principles and a new type of language, setting up portfolios of experiments, and organizing reflexive monitoring (Rotmans et al., 2012).

This way of understanding complex adaptive systems embodies a romantic and a baroque view. The way in which systems in phase transition have well-defined system boundaries, structured in micro, meso, and macro levels, and the belief that niche innovations lead to phase transitions of "whole social systems," are romantic tendencies. On the other hand, the limited predictability of which

niche will lead to which transition, when transitions occur, and the multiple directions in which a system can possibly develop, are rather baroque tendencies. The tendency of the transition manager to explore these possibilities, open up directions, find the experiment is also baroque. The belief, however, that it is the transition manager's task to guide this process of self-organization, and to steer the niches into a desirable direction in favor of society as a system as a whole, is again a rather romantic tendency. Understanding complex adaptive systems as systems in phase transition, really incorporates both readings of complexity.

The idea of systems in phase transition can be applied to society as a whole, to organizations, and to cities or geographical areas. For cities this understanding means that they are seen as continually out of equilibrium, and that their potential for change is to be found within the system itself (Batty & Marshall 2012: 21). Transition management in spatial planning:

... implies planning strategies that open up innovation trajectories rather than predetermine them, that create the conditions for self-organization and surprise, rather than to manage these, and that offer stimulation, guidance and direction rather than to try and control through long-term plans. Urban transition management then is the search for ways to deal in a pro-active way with such semi-autonomous processes (Rotmans et al., 2012: 183).

In this way, social innovation is guided and accelerated, while new modes of governance and policymaking are developed simultaneously (ibid.: 183). Civic initiatives could be understood as a deviating niche that can grow into a common practice. What this approach has in common with the first understanding of complex adaptive systems is that, in general, individual actors cannot be held to account for the effects their intentional behavior has on the emergence of what the researcher sees as the system as a whole. The system is larger than the individual actors can possibly oversee. It is the task of the transition manager (often a professional one) to oversee the system, the regimes, and niches within, and to bring those niches forward to generate a phase transition, so that the system is able to maintain its relevance in the world.

This understanding of self-organization could, for instance, provide insight into the question how many civic initiatives are needed to transform a city or a planning system. It could also be an incentive for planners to look for civic initiatives that could serve the phase transition they envision for the city, like transition managers. However, through this understanding of complex adaptive systems, the distance between the professional planner and civic initiatives,

and the contrast between disciplinary, inclusionary tendencies in planning, and the complexity and diversity of civil society, is still not overcome. Moreover, this understanding of complex adaptive systems remains focused on outcomes (for society as a whole), and does not address the strategies developed in and in relation to civic initiatives themselves. As such, this understanding of complex adaptive systems will also not generate the desired insight into planning strategies in an age of active citizenship.

Complex adaptive systems as emergent actor-networks

A third way of understanding complex adaptive systems is to regard them as emergent networks. When networks between actors are seen as contracts, cooperation agreements, letters of intent, etc., notions of complexity are not taken into consideration. But in emergent networks, the becoming and evolution of such networks comes into perspective, in which fixities such as contracts, procedures, or agreements are only one of the many elements (De Roo, 2012: 143, 159). When complex adaptive systems become regarded as emergent networks, the emphasis is placed on the relationships that constitute the network (Cilliers, 1998: 112). In recent years, scientists from a range of fields – including mathematics, physics, computer science, sociology, and biology – have been pursuing these questions and building a new “science of networks,” which presents a much more dynamic view on networks than social network analyses did, and an view in which the notion of self-organization is paramount (Newman et. al, 2006; Barabási & Réka; Barabasi, 2002). These approaches have grown quite popular in sociology, and found their way to spatial planning as a way to explain for instance activity patterns in cities. But just as the approaches to self-organization as explanation of the emergence of urban form did not provide new perspectives on planning strategy, neither does the science of networks. Different is the work of Judith Innes and David Booher (2002; 2010) on the study how planners operate within powerladen and relational stakeholder networks. Actor-network theory, as developed by among others Latour, Callon, and Law, provides a detailed and accurate way to examine and describe the emergence of these relational networks and the behavior of actors within them. How actor-networks evolve from fairly unstructured beginnings (no central agency, distributed control, and dynamic boundaries) into organizational closure through self-organization, can be studied by following the associations and controversies that make an actor network “happen.” This approach does not take the system as a starting or an end point, because processes are understood as ever-evolving, without clearly identifiable beginnings, delineations, final ends, or outcomes. According to actor-network theory, systems cannot be defined beforehand by theorists standing outside the system, but should be followed, traced, and

reassembled as part of the research (Latour, 2005: 12; Callon & Latour, 1981; Law, 1986; 1992). Actor-networks are operated and constructed by the actors of the network themselves, and when following and tracing such a network, the observer has to abandon all a priori distinctions (Callon, 1986).

Actor-network theory therefore provides a perspective to explain how these networks exist in a constant process of making and remaking. They continuously undergo processes of group formation and de-formation (Latour, 2005). The focus of these networks is not on stability, but on the action of actors in the associations. In this understanding of complex adaptive systems, boundaries are emergent and performed, and networks comprise those elements of a system that interact directly with the outside of the system (its environment). Boundaries exist, but they are impossible to specify, as one is never quite sure whether one is dealing with the inside or the outside of a system or network (Cilliers, 2002: 82; Hillier, 2012: 58-59). All elements are interrelated and thus close to the boundary. This makes the boundary “folded in” (Hillier, 2007: 47). The notion of “society” – or any other social aggregate – is replaced by the notion of “collective” or “the network.” In actor-network theory, there is no such thing as society: only heterogeneous networks (Latour, 2005). In this understanding, complexity exists because no single actor can oversee all the dynamics and networks that simultaneously emerge.

Within this understanding of complex adaptive systems, the baroque reading of complexity – in which the discovery of more detail, interconnectivities, heterogeneity, and specificity is leading in the study of emergence – is paramount (Law, 2004; Hillier, 2007; 2012). Also actor-network theory is considered as a predominantly baroque approach (Law, 2004; Hillier, 2007). Representations are not made, since networks are regarded as performative and interventionist. The science of networks as developed by among others Newman, Barabási & Watts (2006), is rather more romantic again, as it aims at abstracting away details, revealing patterns in behavior and underlying mechanisms of behavior in networks. The romantic reading that actor-network theory provides, however, should not be neglected. Within actor-network theory, the aim to create one, unifying and homogenizing vocabulary that treats both human and non-human entities and hybrid networks the same and that can be used as a prescriptive–descriptive guideline, can very well be seen as romantic tendency, too (Law, 2004: 17; 2009b, Latour, 2005).

For planners, actor-network theory enables the linking of social processes to a material kind of thinking, as actor networks are understood as being made up of both human and non-human actors such as physical objects. Things relate,

for instance, because of involuntary processes of encounter in space, networks can become organized around certain physical objects in space (Thrift, 2006: 139), and networks materialize spaces in their processes of becoming (Murdoch, 2006: 74). Planners are understood as being part of these networks, as actors themselves, who, in networks, are capable of developing meaningful heterogeneous spatial connections (Boelens, 2009).

This understanding of complex adaptive systems gives a different perspective on self-organization. The study of self-organization is no longer concerned with the control, universality, and certainty of underlying, unifying laws as in feedback/forward systems. Nor is it concerned with a belief that self-organization should be “scaled upward” from niches to regimes in order to re-stabilize the system of society as in transition systems. In this third perspective on complex adaptive systems, the study of self-organization is concerned with the emergence of networks among people, things, places, goals, etc. According to De Roo (2012: 159), “a process of self-organization [is what] drives the evolution of these actor-networks, with actors moving in and out of the formal and informal organizations participating in the project of question.” This wide-open process of self-organization leads to frequently changing structures, dependencies, and interactions, which are often only temporary, set up for a particular reason. De Roo (*ibid.*: 159) wrote that: “Multiple parties are involved in all of these cases, and each one has some degree of power to act, invest or withdraw, and to appreciate and enjoy the benefits of any results. All these parties are needed to keep the project up and running.” Self-organization is no longer a property of the system as a whole, but the expression of the interactions of individual actors that over time form networks around specific situated issues. The perspective of self-organization as emergent actor-networks allows a shift from an interpretation of self-organization as unplanned versus planned, toward an interpretation of various actor-networks that are simultaneously planning. The object of research in this approach is an actor who aims at achieving something in his own interest, but needs others as well. In relation to civic initiatives, this understanding of self-organization does not address the effect of civic initiatives on urban form (as the first understanding did), or address civic initiatives as the incentive for or promise of new planning regimes (as the second understanding did). Instead, this third understanding opens up to considering civic initiatives as self-organized themselves. As such, it can help to overcome the distance between the professional planner and civic initiatives, and the contrast between disciplinary and inclusionary tendencies in planning and governance, and the complexity and diversity of civil society. It therefore provides a good starting point to study how civic initiatives emerge and what planning strategies are developed by and in response to their becoming.

	Systems with feedback loops	Systems in phase transition	Emerging actor-networks
Representative	Unifying theory explaining urban form	Structured systems moving from niche to regime	Uniform vocabulary
Performative	Agent-based modeling	Niche management	The emergence of an initiative

FIGURE 2.1 Overview of divergent understandings and readings of complexity.

5

THE ROAD TO TAKE CONCERNING CIVIC INITIATIVES

The first and second sections of this chapter elaborated on the emergence of complexity theory, and how notions of complexity entered the domain of spatial planning and governance. They showed how planning theorists who were studying complexity theory, argued that complexity would enable planning to act in a highly dynamic, complex, and diverse society. According to these theorists, complexity would overcome the shortcomings of technical rationality and communicative rationality, both of which strive to achieve single, optimal solutions. Complexity would bridge the divide between the spatial orientation of technical rationality, and the purely social orientation of communicative rationality. Complexity theory provides a metaphorical language that includes notions like non-linearity, self-organization, emergence, adaptation, and co-evolution, and enables planners to understand an increased social complexity, in which interrelatedness and resource interdependence are thriving.

The third section sketched how different approaches to complexity can be distinguished and how these approaches have led to different ways of understanding and applying the notion of self-organization in urban studies and planning contexts. A distinction was made between a romantic and a baroque reading of complexity, and complex adaptive systems as systems with feedback loops, systems in phase transition, and systems as emergent actor-networks. All of these understandings of complex adaptive systems have the potential to

generate interesting insights into civic initiatives as self-organization. In the three understandings, a shift of focus takes place from self-organization as a way (1) to explain the emergence of social or spatial patterns out of uncoordinated individual actions, (2) to explain societal change that evolves from niches into common practices, and (3) to describe how actors organize emerging actor-networks. The first understanding, concerning cities as self-organizing feedback/feed-forward systems, could provide insights into the spatial patterns that might emerge when a multitude of civic initiatives emerge within a certain geographical area. Computational models could simulate these civic initiatives and make policymakers aware of the possibilities of civic initiatives, as well as of the complexity and unpredictability of the system they are part of. Such models could train policymakers to deal with civic initiatives. The second understanding, concerning transition systems, could for instance provide insight into the question how many civic initiatives are needed to really transform a city or a planning system. It could also be an incentive for planners to start looking for civic initiatives that could serve the phase transition they envision for the city, like transition managers. What these two approaches lack in addressing the study of citizen initiatives, however, is insight into the dynamics and drivers of the individual initiatives and its actors. They show possible patterns, outcomes, and effects, but they do not explain the behavior and the strategies deployed. Both approaches therefore run the risk that system definitions will draw a veil over what actually takes place within civic initiatives (“Behind *system* an organism may hide itself” (Kwa, 2002: 27)), and exclude multiplicity and complexity rather than enhance it.

A romantic reading of complexity is recognizable in understanding cities as complex adaptive systems in which the behavior of individual actors following certain simple rules can lead to the emergence of unexpected new urban patterns. A baroque reading of complexity is recognizable in complex adaptive systems as emerging actor-networks, since the emergence of actor-networks on top and through each other is something that always continues and leads to ever more complexity, and moreover, when tracing back this emergence of actor-networks one will find ever more motives, connections, and factors of importance that “gave rise” to the network (Kwa, 2002). Both readings are recognizable in the understanding of systems in phase transition. Romantic and baroque readings of complexity thus do not exclude each other. A baroque notion of complexity is also apparent in cities as complex adaptive systems, since also complexity notions of non-linearity, no central control, self-organization, unstable equilibria, adaptivity, and surprises apply. But these systems are often still represented in models that aim at reshaping thinking. In emergent networks, romantic, homogenizing tendencies are visible as well, for instance in the network

sciences. In actor-network theory, some romanticism is found as well, but this romanticism is formed within the actor-network itself; the emerging order is performed. The homogeneity of a network is not something to be discovered: It is to be formed and maintained in a constant process of becoming (Law, 2004).

Since the aim of this thesis is to find planning strategies that move beyond the inclusionary and disciplining tendencies of participatory planning, and beyond the romantic tendencies of technical rationality and communicative rationality (reaching for an optimal proven or socially accepted, agreed upon solution), the understanding of complex adaptive systems as emerging actor-networks, and the baroque reading of complexity, are preferred in this thesis. A baroque reading of complexity opens up for diversity, specificity, and dynamics, and would fit the dynamics of civic initiatives very well. The perspective of self-organization as emergent actor-networks allows for a shift from an interpretation of self-organization as unplanned versus planned, toward an understanding of various actor-networks that are simultaneously planning and emergent. This understanding thus provides the most insight into the behavior, interests, and movements of the actors within an emergent civic initiative. It allows to describe the emergence of civic initiatives as citizens who do not get organized by participatory planning, but organize themselves, autonomously from governmental procedures and their inclusionary practices. Therefore, the understanding of self-organization as derived from the “hard” sciences, the new conceptualizations of how urban systems develop and explanations for the emergence of urban form – are not developed further in this thesis (see Chapter 9 for a further clarification and refinement).

Instead, this thesis aims to develop further the understanding of self-organization as the emergence of actor-networks. This understanding of self-organization has not yet been strongly developed in the literature on complexity and planning. Developing this understanding further, asks for a combined vocabulary from complexity theory and actor-network theory, something that needs careful attention as some elements of these theories at first sight seem to be rather contradictory. The following two chapters develop this understanding step by step, making use of some prominent post-structuralist philosophers and their ontologies. At the same time, a vocabulary with which to address and understand the emergence of civic initiatives is gradually built.

A Post-structuralist Understanding of Self-organization

The previous chapter introduced complexity theory as a promising perspective from which to address the challenges that spatial planning faces in an age of active citizenship. The chapter highlighted different views on complexity – one looking up for unifying principles, the other looking down for ever unfolding detail – and different understandings of complex adaptive systems and their self-organizing capacities: As feedback systems, as systems in phase transition, or as emergent actor-networks. It argued that, when looking for planning strategies that are developed in, and in response to, civic initiatives, the latter understanding of self-organization (emergence of actor-networks) would fit best. This understanding would allow a close look at the drivers and interactions within the individual civic initiatives, and would overcome the dichotomy between professional, public planners and planners in civic initiatives. This chapter further elaborates on this understanding of self-organization. The chapter first introduces post-structuralist thinking, which over the years has been closely related to the development of complexity theory. In the second part of this chapter, various perspectives on processes of becoming derived from a mixture of notions from complexity theory and post-structuralist thinking are brought together: Self-organization from complexity theory, translation from actor-network theory, and individuation from assemblage theory. From this mixture arises a much more precise understanding of self-organization as emergent actor-networks, useful in further studying civic initiatives as emergent and networked selves. In the third part of the chapter, this understanding of self-organization is linked to various post-structuralist (or relational) views on space, place, and planning, in order to underscore the promise of studying civic initiatives in spatial development for planning theory.

1

A POST-STRUCTURALIST ONTOLOGY

A short introduction to post-structuralism

Post-structuralism is a philosophical and sociological thinking that is more a complex web of thoughts and mutual influences, than a coherent whole to be captured under one denominator. Strong resonances exist between complexity theory and post-structuralism, especially between the works of Ilya Prigogine, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Serres, Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, and later also Bruno Latour and Isabelle Stengers (Cilliers 1998, Thrift 1999, DeLanda 2002, 2006, Morçöl 2005, Hillier 2007, Van Wezemaal 2012). These contemporaries used comparable sources of inspiration: Von Leibniz inspired Michel Serres, Ilya Prigogine, Isabelle Stengers, and Gilles Deleuze; Whitehead inspired Ilya Prigogine, Isabelle Stengers, and Bruno Latour; and Henri Bergson inspired Gilles Deleuze, Bruno Latour, and Ilya Prigogine (Ieven et al., 2011).

Moreover, there are or were many personal linkages between these contemporaries, as they live or lived their academic lives in close geographical vicinity, co-authored, debated, referred to one another, and were occasionally each other's colleagues at various institutes (Thrift, 1999; Ten Bos, 2011; Ieven et al., 2011). This has inevitably created a kinship between their works and ideas. Although Deleuze has been criticized for not fully understanding the terms from the natural sciences he was making use of, the natural sciences – including the work of Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers – have been a major source of inspiration for Deleuze's work (Thrift, 1999; Prigogine & Stengers, 1979; Christiaens & De Ronde, 2009). Deleuze's notion of the "fold," for instance, has linkages to the "refiguring of 'internal' and 'external' processes" that complexity theory makes use of (Thrift, 1999: 56). The focus of complexity theory on discovery and the development of knowledge influenced Michel Serres's understanding of knowledge as being linked to an observer who is also part of the system. Serres's idea that practices are made up of people and things, subjects, and objects, inseparably related to each other, creating knowledge in networks (Ten Bos, 2011), enabled Bruno Latour to develop his actor-network theory, where the researcher is seen in networked relation with his research topic, and where distinctions between natural and cultural sciences, and human and non-human actors are no longer made (Thrift, 1999). Connectionist and complexity notions are also apparent in the work of Jacques Derrida (Cilliers, 1998). Time and again,

notions of difference, becoming, and order not as a law but as exception and emergent property, are crucial elements in these post-structuralist works (Thrift, 1999). The shared ontologies between these thinkers (Van Wezemael, 2012; Hillier, 2007: 54) provide an excellent basis to further develop an understanding of self-organization as the emergence of networks – to develop a post-structuralist understanding of self-organization.

To develop this post-structuralist understanding of self-organization, there are three particular themes, or counterpoints (to use a baroque term), between complexity theory and post-structuralism that appear to be relevant. The first is the denial of transcendence and representation, the second is the notion of becoming related to the virtual and the actual, and the third is the becoming of a self in heterogeneous networks.

A rejection of transcendence and representation

The first counterpoint of post-structuralist thinking to discuss in the light of self-organization concerns the denial of transcendence and representation. As argued in Chapter 2, complexity theory – especially in its baroque understanding – is the antithesis of a “traditional (or modern) way of confronting complexity [by finding] a secure point of reference that could serve as a foundation, a *passé-partout*, a master key from which everything else could be derived” (Cilliers, 1998: 112). In complexity, the structure of a system cannot be explained from a single origin or immutable principle. Cilliers (1998: 106) even argues that

... claiming [...] self-organization [as] an important property of complex systems is to argue against foundationalism. The dynamic nature of self-organization, where the structure of the system is continuously transformed through the interaction of contingent, external factors and historical, internal factors, cannot be explained as resorting to a single origin or to an immutable principle. In point of fact, self-organization provides the mechanism whereby complex structure can evolve without having to postulate first beginnings or transcendental interventions.

The same line of thinking is found in the explicit rejection of representation and transcendence by Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-François Lyotard. Representation is simply impossible, according to Deleuze, due to the complexity and heterogeneity of relationships (Romein et al., 2009: 60). It is therefore not the thing or its representation that deserves attention, but rather its becoming, individuation, and differentiation. The only way in which representation is interesting, is when it is performative, when the representation is a becoming in

itself that affects and encounters (Posman, 2009; Huyghens, 2009; Oosterling, 2009). This also resonates with Lyotard's notion of presence and representation. According to Lyotard, representation of the real is impossible due to the heterogeneity of meaning: Of what is meant, who means it, and to what the meaning is assigned. Looking for representation is nothing more than an attempt to achieve the impossible, namely to bridge all these irreconcilable elements (Parret, 2011). In the world, becomings are happenings, and it is these happenings that people communicate about and seek representations of, in order to transform this elusive happening in the here and now into a conceivable presence that can last. However, these representations themselves are also happenings that become and affect. For instance, an artwork is interesting not so much for what it represents, as for what affects it induces by being present at a certain time and place. This is what both Lyotard and Deleuze regard as post-representational (Parret, 2011). In his philosophy of becoming, Deleuze argues that there is no place for universal essences or transcendence – static hierarchies that exist regardless of the world (De Kesel, 2009; Posman, 2009; De Bolle, 2009). Entities, Deleuze argues, are not produced by anything transcendental, but rather through series of recurring sequences – universal essences are replaced by the concept of multiplicity and differentials (DeLanda, 2002: 19). Derrida also explicitly rejects any transcendental explanatory meaning that exists outside of empirical cases. According to Derrida, what matters is not transcendence, but repetition (*la môme*). The infinity of repetition includes not only sameness, but also an intrinsic mutability of things, as things transform through their repetitions (Berns, 2011).

For self-organization from a post-structuralist perspective, the denial of transcendence and representation implies that there are no universal principles, no essences that exist outside of the actual self-organization. Self-organization is non-representational: It either happens at a certain time and place, or it does not. It can never be represented, and it does not represent anything but itself. When it does take place, it creates its own representation, affecting and inducing ruptures in its environment.

Virtual and actual, consistency and organization

The second counterpoint of post-structuralist thinking to discuss in the light of self-organization concerns the notions of becoming, a notion that strongly resonates with Prigogine's theory on how order can arise spontaneously, and how open systems can organize themselves into specific physical conditions (Christiaens & De Ronde, 2009: 341). To understand such becoming-of or becoming-something-else, Deleuze introduced the differences between the virtual and the actual, planes of consistency and planes of organization. Deleuze

relates the becoming of a self to the movement from the virtual to the actual (DeLanda, 2002).

The distinction between the virtual and the actual stands not for a distinction between the unreal and the real, but for a difference of intensity in becoming. The virtual is all that takes place in a gradual, almost unnoticed way, the unidentifiable processes of becoming. It is the domain of long-term tendencies, affects, possibilities, and heterogeneity. The virtual is a becoming without being, a becoming that never acquires a form or specific place in time or space. It happens in the past and the future simultaneously, and always sidesteps the present. The virtual is present in all that becomes, and at the same time contains the heterogeneity and differentiation of those becomings (DeLanda, 2002). The intensity of such virtual becomings can, however, suddenly increase, when various processes of becoming come together (get folded) and start resonating with each other. Then, the process of becoming intensifies and starts to individuate in such a way that identifiable objects, standalone events, and individual entities become apparent. Then, Deleuze speaks of the actual. In contrast to the virtual, the actual does have a form, a specific materialized structure in space. The actual is present in the present, whereas the past concerns its individuation process and date of birth, and the future the possible trajectories ahead and date of expenditure (ibid.). Although described as opposites, the actual and virtual do not exclude each other. Rather they exist in each other. When the virtual passes into the actual – in other words, when the virtual is actualized – it solidifies and becomes a concrete identity rather than infinitely moving. Relations of pure philosophical multiplicity transform in “normal” relations between identifiable variables (Christiaens & De Ronde, 2009: 339). But then in turn, every actual object is again surrounded by a virtual mist of affects, tendencies, and possibilities. Following Deleuze, Stengers sees the virtual as an ability to think about facts, and the actual as an ability to be concerned about something, to define matters of concern that make people get organized (Bordeleau & Van Tuinen, 2011). Consider, for instance, a neighborhood that has deteriorated over the years, slowly and unnoticed, because people were not talking about the affects they individually have for the neighborhood, sidestepping the present as talks only concerned how good things have been and how things might turn better someday, and the desires people have to improve the neighborhood are never transformed into action and indeed, *actual*, improvements. Or, for instance, a variety of unspoken thoughts and unarticulated interests (the virtual) of various actors that materialize in a written plan (the actual), and the long-term tendencies intended in a plan (the virtual) becoming materialized through physical interventions (the actual).

In his philosophy of becoming, Deleuze distinguishes between movement in the virtual and movement in the actual. According to Deleuze, this movement happens in two ways: Along planes of consistency and along planes of organization. Planes of consistency exist solely within the virtual. They concern the relations (and consistencies) between various processes of becoming without becoming actual. This is the plane of concepts: Becomings (also potential ones) and tendencies are created and assembled in order to reshape thinking, and create new links in thinking, not necessarily to be materialized in space. Planes of organization stand for the movement from the virtual toward the actual, a slowing down, suspense, and intensification of becoming, an ordering toward actual being (Van Tuinen et al., 2009; Christiaens & De Ronde, 2011). Think, for instance, about a planning process that starts with sketches and intentions, and moves toward agreed-upon plans, actual designs, physical interventions, and building activities, along an orderly, structured decision-making process through sequential steps in time. These two different planes do, of course, relate to each other, can become folded, which in turn can lead to a variety of unexpected, new constellations or sensations. Planes cause affects, meaning that while they are becoming, they affect and change other livings or sensations, leading to new percepts and new ways of seeing (De Bolle & Van Tuinen, 2011: 51). As an example, consider two planning processes, one more conceptual, the other more focused on physical interventions. Each of the processes is concerned with its own issues, places, and actors. But accidentally, the processes cross each other due to an overlap of actors involved (one actor participates in both processes, or both processes concern the same physical element in space). While crossing, or rather touching upon each other, both processes change, perhaps even meld together or decide to both move further in opposite directions, or create additional planning processes. Such encounters and affects, as well as the repetitive rehearsals between and within planes, can lead to new differences, which is the multiplicity of becoming that is central to the work of Gilles Deleuze.

In a post-structuralist understanding of self-organization, the actual and the virtual are both there. The tendencies, attractors, concepts, potentials, and intentions, and the increased consistencies between them (the plane of consistency), are the triggers for a process of individuation, an organization, and an ordering toward an actualization or materialization in space (the plane of organization).

The construction of a relational self

The third counterpoint of post-structuralist thinking to discuss in the light of self-organization concerns the becoming of a self. As self-organizing networks are open systems, in full interaction with their environment, it is difficult to define borders (Cilliers, 1998: 3-5), to delineate the self, and to decide whether an emergent network behaves as several interacting elements or as a self-organizing entity (Buijs et al., 2009: 47). Post-structuralist thinking deploys this embroilment by underlining how a self emerges from continuous interaction with its environment. This involves the work of Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, and Gilles Deleuze.

According to Deleuze, individuals and their identity are historically constituted entities; they are not given all at once, but are defined progressively (DeLanda, 2002: 10, 26). Moreover, according to Lyotard, individuals and their identity, the selves, are constructed in a web of meaning and relationships:

A self does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. Young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, a person is always located at “nodal points” of specific communication circuits, however tiny these may be (Lyotard 1984 in Cilliers 1998: 115, original emphasis).

In his work on message-bearing systems, Derrida elaborates how we distinguish ourselves and create meaning for ourselves and our surroundings. According to Derrida, the inner workings of a complex system gives it identity and meaning, and holds it together. This happens in relationships with others and with what it is not, relationships that are “always playfully changing in an unpredictable way” (Cilliers, 1998: 37). To explain this, Derrida uses three concepts: *Différance*, *trace*, and *la même*. *Différance* explains the way in which we relate ourselves to the world and others around us: We define ourselves by what we are not, and it is the absence of all that we are not, that makes us who we are. But things are never entirely absent, since there is a certain porosity between what is absent and what is present; nor can we be entirely present, because there will always be absences working within us, too. Think about a person, who more and more individuates while progressing in life, fulfilling his life by pursuing a career. The life of the person distinguishes itself through his practice, but while living the life it is spent as well, and even lost by death at the end. This makes death always present in life, while the individuation by his carrier excluded all the other things the person could have done but never did. *Différance* is thus a double movement: It denounces differences to identify something, and everlastingly suspends the fulfillment of the individual self.

The second notion Derrida uses to explain the inner workings of a complex system and how a system constructs a self is trace. Trace is related to *différance* as it stands for the traces left inside something by the things it is not. Absence is absent by the traces left behind (Berns, 2011). A system, such as language, is constituted by nothing more than relationships, so it consist only of traces. There are no fixed reference-points from where traces emanate, neither spatially nor temporally. Traces are traces of *différance*. According to the post-structural notions of trace and *différance*, no word in language has any significance by itself. Meaning is determined by the dynamic relationships between the components of the system (Cilliers, 1998: 46).

Derrida's third notion, *la même*, was already highlighted concerning the rejection of representation and transcendence. This notion relates to things that time and again collide with sameness, and are thus recognized as being the same. This sameness is not consciously constructed but is something that befalls. *La même* does not exist in isolation, but is an addition to the traces and absences of the *différences*. Any presence is permeated by absences, concepts are only valid within a given framework, and they are always embedded in a context that is impossible to demarcate (Berns, 2011).

When developing a post-structuralist understanding of self-organization, the self – which according to post-structuralist thinkers, is constructed along the way – is, of course, crucial. The self is defined by all that it is not (*différance*), by remembering the absences and what has been excluded (trace), and by relating to what it resembles (*la même*). The self thus never stands alone, but exists and co-evolves within a network of relationships and interactions.

2

POST-STRUCTURALIST SELF-ORGANIZATION

Networks, systems, assemblages

After elaborating on resonances between complexity theory and post-structuralist thinking, a notable difference needs to be pointed out. This concerns the use of either the term networks (dominant in post-structuralist thinking) or the term systems (dominant in complexity theory). In the Oxford English Dictionary, “network” is defined as “a piece of work having the form or construction of a

net; a collection or arrangement (of some thing or things) resembling a net,” “an interconnected group of people,” “an interconnected chain or system of immaterial things,” “interconnected events” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989, V. 10: 346). “System” is defined as “an organized or connected group of objects,” “a whole composed of parts in orderly arrangement according to some scheme or plan,” “arranged or organized for some special purpose,” and “a set of correlated principles, ideas or statements” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989, V. 17: 496–497). Both systems and networks thus address a certain interrelatedness of component parts that constitute a coherent whole without losing their individuality. Whereas there is no essential difference between the way in which systems and networks are understood in complexity theory and post-structuralist thinking, the terms do have different connotations. “System” presupposes a boundary that identifies the system as a coherent whole. Systems are understood as robust (though open and adaptive) and purposeful toward collective action. “Networks”, on the other hand, are understood as much more fluent, transformative, and open. Interpreting this, it could be said that systems focus on wholeness, purpose, and organization, whereas networks are more or less loose connections between components that only cooperate if they wish to do so.

Concerning civic initiatives, the notion “network” fits very well with the loose interactions, associations, and controversies that occur during the emergence of a civic initiative. However, by describing a civic initiative solely as a network, it seems that the group of actors involved always remains fluent, that goals are never really achieved as they keep on being adjusted to changed circumstances, and that actualization is not the purpose of the initiative. As a network never establishes any boundaries, it remains ambiguous whether an emergent network behaves as several interacting elements or as a self-organizing entity (Buijs et al., 2009: 47). In other words, by describing a civic initiative as a network, focus is taken away from the actual end result in favor of the sole process of becoming. Thus, the notion of network does not fit very well with the eventual static appearance of the project, when all the fuzz and experimentation is over, the initiative has materialized, and is literally in place.

It could therefore also be very well argued that a civic initiative functions like a system. “System” assumes a more or less fixed group, working together for a shared purpose within an organized set of methods and ideas. But although the end result of a civic initiative might have these characteristics, it is evident that in its process of becoming its workings are not nearly so stable, delineated, and purposeful. Describing a civic initiative as a system takes away the focus from the actual emergence in favor of the mere end results. Thus, neither “network” nor “system” fully addresses what civic initiatives are about, as “network” focuses

mostly on the process of becoming and “system” on its more or less stable end results.

For this reason, the notion of “assemblage” is added to the spectrum. This notion is derived from the work of Gilles Deleuze, and its meaning reconciles both systems and networks. Like systems and networks, assemblages are wholes constituted from component parts with the same coherent interrelatedness mentioned before. However, in addition to robust, purposeful systems with boundaries, an assemblage is both a whole and an open combination of heterogeneous elements (Schuilenberg, 2009). Assemblages are individual entities, composed of individual entities, that moreover exhibit a variety of capabilities to form assemblages with other individuals (DeLanda, 2002: 72). The notion of assemblages being individual entities composed of various individual entities goes beyond the micro–meso–macro distinction so often used in system thinking (see Chapter 2). On the one hand, the looking down for assemblages in an assemblage may continue into infinite detail, never quite reaching an ultimate micro. On the other hand:

Within these collectivities larger assemblages may emerge of which the members of the population are the component parts. In other words, the interactions between members of a collectivity may lead to the formation of more or less permanent articulations between them yielding a macro-assemblage with properties and capacities of its own (DeLanda, 2006: 17).

Thus, looking up for assemblages that emerge toward even larger assemblages may also continue infinitely, never actually reaching an ultimate macro. The whole of the assemblage is therefore not indivisible, but rather a continuum of relationships (Schuilenberg, 2009). Assemblages can, but do not necessarily have to, have a well-defined identity, or possess clear boundaries or homogeneous composition (DeLanda, 2006: 35). But in addition to open, fluent, and transformative networks, the notion of assemblages does help to define what is the object of tracing is – whose becoming should be traced. Whereas networks could be traced endlessly, assemblage thinking is helpful in deciding where to stop: The component parts and their interactions can be traced endlessly, but the overall assemblage is kept in mind (Silberberger, 2011: 28).

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate further on an understanding of self-organization as emergent assemblages, as a way to describe the processes of becoming of civic initiatives. The resonances between complexity theory and post-structuralist thinking allow for combining the notions of systems, networks, and assemblages, and to make use of the various ways to describe processes of

becoming. The following paragraphs provide more detail about how processes of becoming are described from a systems perspective (self-organization), network perspective (translation), and assemblage perspective (individuation), and elaborate on how mixing these various notions delivers an accurate vocabulary to describe the becoming of civic initiatives.

Self-organization

One way of describing processes of becoming is by the notion of self-organization from complexity theory. Self-organization is generally defined as the appearance of structure or patterns where no structure or pattern existed before: A process of the autonomous development of complex structure and the spontaneous emergence of coherence (Cilliers, 1998). The notion of self-organization is closely linked to the notion of systems, although Chapter 2 already underlined how the notion of self-organization can also be linked to emerging networks. By taking a closer look at some of the key aspects of self-organization, it becomes apparent how suitable it is to use for the notion of networks, and how instrumental it can be in describing the becoming of civic initiatives.

A first key aspect of self-organization is the focus on the self: The intention for new emergence comes from within the system itself; it is spontaneous, autonomous, and internally and locally driven (Heylighen, 2001; Teisman et al., 2009; Cilliers, 1998). With regard to systems, this self is evident, but regarding networks, it is much more difficult to define what exactly the self is (Buijs et al., 2009: 47). Then, the focus is put on the internal drivers of the elements of the network, and their local interactions. The emergence of the network is not imposed by external agents, or through the intervention of an external designer. Instead, the incentives for movement come from the self-interest and self-motivation of actors who are part of the network. The activity of these actors does not have to be connected to global patterns, and each element in the system is ignorant of the behavior of the network as a whole. This emphasizes the importance of local interactions (Cilliers, 1998). Interactions are short range; information is primarily received from immediately neighboring elements (*ibid.*: 4, 94). Interconnections only change as a result of local information or general principles that have a local meaning (*ibid.*: 91). For civic initiatives, this means that they are a response to local interactions, local events, or events that generate local meaning.

A second key aspect of self-organization is distributed control. The large number of components, which interact in a fairly rich way, make the system emerge and evolve. Centralized control is absent, and all different elements within the system

contribute to a resulting arrangement (Heylighen, 2001: 8), through competition among units (on resources for instance) and through cooperation (Cilliers, 1998: 94). A self-organizing system always has a history, and previous conditions of the system have vital influences on present behavior. Since systems learn from experience, they remember previously encountered situations and compare them with new ones. However, there is no central place or actor controlling the information and knowledge present in the system, and information and memory is distributed among the different elements that constitute the system. Each element in the system holds its own narrative about relations and changes (Cilliers, 1998: 92; Hillier, 2012: 39). Therefore, movements of and inside the system can never be brought back to a single origin (Cilliers, 1998). When relating this key aspect of self-organization to emergent actor-networks and civic initiatives, it can be said that decision-making, planning, knowledge, memory, and information are not allocated to one central actor summoning others to take action. Instead, it is dispersed among the many participants and the actors who are in one way or another connected to the initiative, making it a complex constitution of various actors sharing the same internal drivers and ideas – especially at the beginning of an initiative. Moreover, in order to materialize, resources have to be collected from and with many other actors who may be part of systems other than the initiative.

A third key aspect that relates self-organization to networks is open boundaries. Even though the notion of system is used, this does not mean that the emerging structure is closed to external influences. A system never stands entirely on itself; it is embedded in an environment. Boundaries are difficult to define, as they are dispersive and subject to change and interpretation (Cilliers, 1998: 3-5). Self-organizing systems aim at creating synergy between themselves and their environment. They will co-evolve dynamically according to changes in their environment, trying to find the best fit. In order to achieve this, organizational boundaries are crossed and new connections are realized (Buijs et al., 2009: 100). As this is done based on local information, a system only has a function within its own particular context. A particular stable configuration is by definition only reached to fit its particular circumstances (Cilliers, 1998: 89-94; Heylighen, 2001: 12). This relates to civic initiatives, which also have open boundaries. An initiative or initiator reacts to a disconnection between its self-interest and its environment. It will tend to adjust itself and its physical and institutional environment, in order to become accepted and materialized. Civic initiatives are thus strongly embedded in their own context. As the civic initiative emerges, elements of this environment are dealt with and boundaries of the initiative can shift: Elements in the environment can become either included in or excluded from the network during the process of becoming.

A fourth aspect of self-organization is the emergence of order and closure. Self-organization tends to reside on the “edge of chaos,” that is, in the narrow domain between equilibrated constancy and turbulent, chaotic activity (Heylighen, 2001: 13). Emergence means that a system gradually achieves more and more order and structure, organizational closure, and hierarchy, in order to fulfill a particular function and configuration, in spite of disturbances:

The system has now become responsible for its own maintenance, and thus becomes largely independent from the environment. It is thus also “closed” against influences from the outside. Although in general there will still be exchange of matter and energy between system and environment, the organization is determined purely internally (ibid.: 11).

Through feedback loops, boundaries of the system can shift again, providing a better fit with the environment, or further stabilize boundaries through self-reference (Buijs et al., 2009: 100), which can of course also undermine the resilience of the network, when closing boundaries leads to a lock-in and inefficient path-dependencies. Self-organizing networks are thus both robust and resilient, which means that they are relatively insensitive to perturbations or errors, and have a strong capacity to restore themselves. One reason for this fault tolerance is the distributed configuration of the system: Non-damaged elements can usually make up for any damaged ones. Another reason for this intrinsic robustness is that self-organization thrives on randomness, fluctuations, or “noise” (Heylighen, 2001: 9). Actors in the process of becoming will try new ways of working as soon as old ones prove to be dysfunctional for the system, or new ways are found when old connections are lost. This key aspect of self-organization stresses that an initiative does not always remain entirely open. Internal dynamics between the participants, drawing distinctions between the initiative and other actors, a drive to remain autonomous, the need to gain an identity and to become an identifiable project, are all tendencies toward order and closure, making the initiative more robust, creating boundaries, and generating closeness and hierarchy.

A fifth key aspect concerns the increased multiplicity that evolves from self-organization. In complexity theory, it is generally understood that emergence is heading not toward a certain form of optimization, equilibrium, and order, but toward higher forms of complexity. The order newly emerged from self-organization is not so much a solution to the disorder or the unstructured beginnings that existed before, as an addition of complexity. The emergence of new structure happens because of or despite already existing structure, and thus increases multiplicity (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984). This key aspect relates

to civic initiatives, which always emerge within an existing context. They aim at changing certain things, adding new activities, new uses, new physical objects to an existing spatial configuration. A civic initiative must “organize itself within the context of other initiatives, their grassroots, and the political recipients who will implement the initiative” (Teisman et al., 2009: 9). The process starts with a person having an idea but no co-initiators, resources, location, etc., and moves toward a materialized project – the newly emerged order. This newly emerged order does not replace any pre-existing disorder, but adds another layer to the existing structures – civic initiatives as an increase in the multiplicity of space and place.

Translation

The second way to describe processes of becoming is to use the concept of translation from actor-network theory (ANT). As stated in Chapter 2, ANT provides an excellent method for tracing processes of becoming. Developed mainly by Bruno Latour, Isabelle Stengers, Michel Callon, and John Law, ANT builds upon the ideas of Ilya Prigogine, Michel Serres, and Gilles Deleuze. It is thus strongly embedded in post-structuralist thought and resonates strongly with complexity theory (Thrift, 1996: 23; Law, 1994: 18; Hillier, 2007: 54; Silberberger, 2011: 29). One major influence on ANT has been the network thinking in the line of Deleuze’s rhizome. A rhizome is an underground system of roots that branches out in all directions, without an origin, direction, beginning, or end – an open system in which concepts are related to circumstances rather than essences. Rhizomes, like networks, are immanent and relational, always flowing, moving, propelling, and engaging. They proliferate in all directions, and where a taproot breaks, a creative and productive shoot pops up in unexpected places, producing a radical multiplicity and plurality in the present. Such nodes within the rhizome are middle points, never start or end points (Oosterling, 2009; Van Tuinen et al., 2009). A rhizome is an ever branching and creative network of different possibilities, with the potential to branch out and connect, which produces eternal repetition and differentiation simultaneously (Posman 2009: 300, Cobussen 2009: 261).

Other major influences on the development of ANT are Michel Foucault’s observations on power and knowledge, and Michel Serres’s idea of science in the making, considering truth as the achievement of a social process. ANT focuses on the process of shaping discourse, knowledge, and space, on how relations are made and relationships built, how they form networks, and how these networks transcend distinctions such as local–global, center–periphery, people–things (Murdoch, 2006: 27). Within such actor-networks, no distinctions are made between human and nonhuman entities, and technological objects are seen

as acting entities (or actors) too. Since relations that only consist of human to human ties are very laborious to maintain, objects play a crucial role in rendering associations durable. Any course of action will rarely consist of only human to human ties or only object to object connections, but will probably zigzag from one to the other (Latour, 2005: 75). However, since objects cannot act intentionally, they tend to be intermediaries rather than mediators, and they appear only associable with another through momentarily social ties. Actors are entities that do something, that have an impact. This includes things that, for instance, have a disciplinary effect: They allow other entities to act in a certain way, or they can break down or suddenly appear and thus change the course of action for others (Latour, 2005).

[A]ny thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor [...]. Thus, the questions to ask about any agent are simply the following: Does it make a difference in the course of some other agent's actions or not? (ibid.: 71, original emphasis).

Within ANT, all entities are in turn an endpoint of a network that contains many different entities, as a thing is something gathered together, and turned into a black box. Think of networks in which scientists, natural phenomena, magazines, designers, natural resources, factories, patent systems, political parties, representations of social problems, etc. play a role. Each thing in such an actor-network is a connection between reality and politics (Verbeek, 2011), a node within the rhizome. Phenomena should thus not be approached with preconceived frameworks. It is the networks, or the relationships between actors, that need to be studied.

Latour (2005) introduces various “sources of uncertainty” to emphasize why one should study not existing and stable networks, but the becoming of emergent networks. Some of these uncertainties resemble the key aspects of self-organization as discussed above. A first uncertainty concerns the nature of actions. In ANT, each course of action involves a great variety of actors that barge into each other, displacing or transforming original goals. In other words, actions are overtaken or other-taken. One can therefore never be sure what exactly the origins of a certain action are. Action in itself is dislocated; it is always “borrowed, distributed, suggested, influenced, dominated, betrayed, translated” (ibid.: 46). Action is never entirely original, as it is always caused by something else and creates new action elsewhere again: Action is always overtaken. When transporting a course of action, intermediaries do not transform anything, but mediators add their own meaning and thus transform a course of action. The world consists of a chain of mediators, where each point can be said to fully act,

although one can ever be sure who and what is making one act. Actors are part of a chain of actions, and will describe their own acts as such (*ibid.*). The behavior of one agent is explained or caused by the actions of another actor (Law, 1994). This uncertainty concerning “action is overtaken” corresponds with the notion of “no central agency imposing structure” and “distributed control.”

A second source of uncertainty concerns the nature of groups. According to ANT, networks are always open and subject to change, and as such, there are no groups, only processes of group formation. A group, system, or network is constantly renewing itself, and exists because of the confirmation of associations, or by starting up new associations. Newly arising issues, identities, and actors can always be included in the considerations and group formation process (Callon, 1986; Latour, 2005). Groups exist only because they keep being remade and re-established. When a group ceases to be made, or in other words, is not constantly reconfirmed by all sorts of actions, the group no longer has a meaning and ceases to exist. As such, it is the stability of a group, its maintenance and continuous existence, that is the exception that needs to be explained. ANT concerns an active performativity of this process (Latour, 1987: 89), and offers a method to trace back the means by which this stability has been created, and how certain means “have to make the grouping reach a bit further and stand a bit longer” (Latour, 2005: 35). Because there is only group formation, the boundaries of a group are always contested, and constantly changed and shifted. Open boundaries make it difficult to decide what is and what is not part of the network, and groups need to constantly reconfirm their togetherness, or try to emerge toward order and closure (group formation) in order to not fall apart or lose relevance. This corresponds to the key aspects of self-organization of “open boundaries” and “emergence of order and closure.”

In both ANT and complexity theory, the focus is on processes of becoming. Like complexity theory, in which self-organization is the emergence of both order and increased complexity, ANT is a sociology of such processes of orderings with increased multiplicity, and concerns how this ordering is done in practice (Thrift, 1996: 25). As self-organization is all about emergence, a self-organizing network can be in various states of becoming: It can be inert or in a more or less equilibrium state, or it can be in a dynamic process of formation or in transition toward a new equilibrium state (Boons et al., 2009). The study of such processes should be done by mapping inertia, stability, dynamics, and vaporization, the dynamic and temporal dimensions of change, on adaptive processes and the selection variables that play a role in these processes, and on change events (Buijs et al., 2009; Teisman et al., 2009). How networks progress from fairly unstructured beginnings to organizational closure through self-organization, can

be studied by following the associations and controversies that make an actor-network happen. For this tracing, ANT offers a very valuable method in the form of translation.

Translation lies at the very core of ANT. Latour (2005: 106) even calls it the “very birthplace” of ANT: The “sociology of translation.” Translation concerns the becoming of networks, through a continuous movement of assembling (ibid.: 88). The concept of translation allows to follow “the social fluid through its ever-changing and provisional shapes” (ibid.: 87). It is a process in which the “identity of the actors, the possibility of interaction and the margins of manoeuvre are negotiated and delimited” (ibid.: 203). Translation is to follow an actor through the construction–deconstruction of his network, tracing actors, and the changes they cause while doing what they do (Callon, 1986). A key aspect of translation is that causalities are produced through a series of intermediaries that are not logical in the formal sense of the term, but that oblige those who relate to a proposed problem to become interested, through almost imperceptible shifts. This is because translation stands for a process of making connections between things that are not consistent per se, but that gain consistency along the way, translating themselves into something that is accepted and seen as logical and in place (Latour, 1999). Once things are realized they look logical; their stories add up. This can, for instance, mean that actors start doing unexpected things, that there is a convergence of interests between actors (Murdoch, 2006: 62-63). “The notion of translation emphasises the continuity of the displacement and transformations which occur in [a] story; displacements of goals and interests, and also displacement of devices, human beings, and [non-human actors]” (Callon, 1986: 223). Translation is thus a process rather than a result, and it makes sense to combine the various key aspects of self-organization with the notion of translation. Translation provides a detailed and accurate way to examine the relationships that determine a network, a way to describe and capture the topology of these relational networks and the behavior of those making up actor-networks.

Individuation

The third way of describing processes of becoming, is by the concept of individuation from assemblage theory, as developed by Manuel DeLanda. Like systems or actor networks, assemblages can be applied to social entities, but do cut across the nature–culture, or the human–non-human divide, being both organic and inorganic (for instance, an *animal* walking on the *ground* moving across a *field*) (DeLanda, 2006).

In Manuel DeLanda's (2006) ontology an individual person, a population of individual persons, friendship networks, interpersonal networks, organizations, inter-organizational networks (clusters, etc.), cities and territorial states are all conceptualized as assemblages on different spatial scales. They do not differ in ontological status; they are all historically produced, unique individuals. Furthermore, they can be chosen differently. The assemblage-based ontology is open to any connections or expansions as long as any additions are defined in a non-essentialist way and as long as any novel entity introduced maintains relations [...] with those entities already included (DeLanda, 2006) (Van Wezemaal, 2008: 168).

Assemblages are unique, singular individuals that exist without hierarchy, transcendence, eternity, or fixed order. They emerge by a process of historical differentiation, are non-representational, and do not presuppose any generalities or essences. Every relation within the assemblage or of the assemblage has a localized rather than a transcendent motive (DeLanda, 2006; Schuilenberg, 2009; De Roo et al., 2012: 10).

Assemblages are explicitly not described by their relations of interiority. Relations of interiority are, according to DeLanda, a feature of closed systems, which implies that the component parts are constituted by the very relations they have to other parts in the whole; they exist only for each other's sake with a focus that does not reach outside of the whole they compose. Instead, parts in the assemblage are seen as self-subsistent. They can be detached and plugged into a different assemblage, in which its interactions are different. There is always a certain autonomy of components and assemblages. Therefore, assemblages are described by relations of exteriority. Relations of exteriority guarantee that assemblages can be taken apart, while allowing that the interactions between parts may result in synthesis. Relations of exteriority make assemblages both material and expressive (DeLanda, 2006). While material literally refers to the body of the assemblage (e.g., a human body, a building, or a city), expressive components either rely on specialized vehicles (e.g., language, genetic codes, or behavior) or are directly expressive (e.g., the architecture, color, or material of a building, a movement made by a human dancer, or the skyline of a city) (Van Wezemaal, 2008: 175). The rejection of focus on the interiority of assemblages is compensated by focusing on their intensity. The scale of assemblages is determined on the one hand by extensive properties (e.g., the number of components, geographical span, length of duration) that refer to the links between homogeneous components. On the other hand, their scale is determined by intensive properties (e.g., density of connections, degree of centralization, degree of materialization, degree of routinized practices) (DeLanda, 2006).

The intensive refers to the properties of the assemblage that give rise to it, the heterogeneous elements, and the capacity to differentiate (DeLanda, 2002: 73). It also refers to the capacity of an individual to form assemblages and synthesis with individuals very different from itself, and the ability to synchronize or entrain one another's temporal behavior (ibid.: 113). Assemblages can increase in scale measured by the number of members, and increase in intensity or thickness by the process of assembly (DeLanda, 2006: 7).

In assemblages, the emphasis also lies on the process of becoming. An assemblage view on complexity "asks less what a thing is, but how it has come into being and *what it can do*" (Van Wezemaal, 2008: 168, original emphasis). For the creation and stabilization as processes of becoming, assemblage theory uses the notion of individuation. Intensification of an assemblage is equivalent to its individuation or becoming. Individuation is a process through which yet unformed individuals become what they are, namely acquire a well-defined inside, and a process in which a fully formed being becomes something else in association with something heterogeneous on the outside through bifurcations (DeLanda, 2002: 122). "Individual" refers to all semi-stable entities with the capacity to affect (Van Wezemaal, 2012: 99). As soon as an assemblage emerges and an identity is acquired, it will start providing resources for its components, but will also start to restrain them (Van Wezemaal, 2010). The assemblage will work on the maintenance of its identity, which is defined as the length of time after which all individuals have been replaced without affecting the organism's identity (DeLanda, 2002: 108). Following Deleuze, this individuation is the genesis of individuals by a process of actualization into a final product or temporary formation with specific spatial structures (DeLanda, 2006: 56). Assemblages comprise a field of actualities (exercised properties of components) and a field of virtuality (potential properties). In between lies a generative field: The intensive, where individuation takes place as a progressive differentiation from the virtual into the actual, and vice versa (Van Wezemaal, 2012: 103). Individuals must be accounted for via the processes that created them and those that maintain or change their identity. This makes assemblage theory also a theory of creation (DeLanda, 2006).

Assemblages develop, or individuate, along trajectories, which is a series of more or less stable states (DeLanda, 2002: 80). These processes of individuation are set in motion by "attractors" – the inherent or intrinsic long-term tendencies of a system, that is, the states a system will spontaneously tend to adopt in the long run as long as it is not constrained by other forces (ibid.: 14). Individuation through attractors does not imply a certain essence, as identities are not given all at once but are defined progressively (ibid.: 26). Attractors draw the system

toward itself in order to individuate further, but they belong to the domain of the virtual. This means that unlike trajectories, which represent the actual states of objects in the world, attractors are never actualized, since no point of a trajectory ever reaches the attractor itself. But they do confer on a trajectory a certain degree of stability, a certain regularity (ibid.: 29, 33). They can never be fully reached or actualized, although they can be reached infinitely close (ibid.: 29). Even when one speaks of the end of a trajectory, in reality the movement is fluctuating around its attractor, not occupying it (ibid.: 34). The more attractors working in a system, the more intense and the more nonlinear the process of becoming (ibid.: 76).

To summarize, assemblages can be placed between, or rather seen as a reconciliation of, systems and networks. Moreover, the concept of assemblages is very well suited to address self-organization. Like networks, there is a notion of becoming and emergence in assemblages, but in addition to networks, there is also a notion of individuation, of the establishment of a self or an individual entity. Like systems, there is a notion of a whole and of boundaries. However, these boundaries are relations of exteriority too (as they are both material and expressive). Thus they do not imply closure, but function as expressive communications directed toward differentiating or synergizing to other assemblages. Whereas the tracing of networks can be endless and the study of systems can be too narrow, assemblage theory is helpful in deciding when to stop tracing, without denial of the still continuous interactions that cross that decision (Silberberger, 2011: 28). Assemblages come into being in a world already populated by other assemblages (DeLanda, 2006: 39), which links to “increased multiplicity.” Assemblages can be component parts of other assemblages and they also might interfere with each other (ibid.: 21), which links to “open boundaries.” Exteriority and performance means that the self of the assemblage is always placed in an environment that it affects, which also links to “open boundaries.” And last but not least, a self emerges through individuation and intensification. In a post-structural view on self-organization and civic initiatives this would mean that the self is an attractor, a tendency or intention to which the initiatives move without ever fully actualizing it. Thus, assemblages and their process of becoming strongly resonate with the notion of self-organization, and the same key aspects can be found in the notions of self-organization and individuation. Concerning civic initiatives, assemblages can relate to the initiative itself, which is made out of tendencies, attractors, concepts, potentials, and intentions (the virtual), but while becoming an assemblage, intends to individuate toward actualization and materialization in space. The self, which stands for the initial goal and concern of the initiative, is not something that is precisely defined beforehand; rather, it too individuates along the way, becoming more and more detailed and known during

the process of group formation and translation. But assemblages can also relate to other actors, institutions, or emerging networks, such as a city or a planning system (Hillier, 2007: 61-62), that are heavy and dens of routines and materializations.

How it all adds up

This section has so far elaborated on the resemblances between complexity theory and the notion of self-organization, ANT and the notion of translation, and assemblage theory and the notion of individuation. All notions describe processes of becoming that offer a vocabulary to understand and a method to trace the emergence of civic initiatives. Combining these theories of self-organization, translation, and individuation has more benefits. They complement each other, and elaborate on tendencies present in one another that have not yet been so precisely articulated. In that sense, self-organization, translation, and individuation are complementary to each other, in four ways.

A first benefit of combining self-organization, translation, and individuation, concerns the nature of objects. According to ANT, both humans and non-humans have agency, are actors too. In this way, ANT not only focuses on the behavior of human actors involved in the process of network making, but adds a material thinking, making it relevant for dealing with questions of the physical environment. Moreover, networks can also be constituted around places and things, and places and things play a crucial role in the maintenance of the networks. ANT is thus very explicit in overcoming the divide between a physical, material, or technical world and a social, human world system. Complexity theory also aims at overcoming that divide, but remains a bit quiet about how it intends to do so. ANT makes it possible to explicitly consider the importance of the spatial objects in the process of self-organization, in the becoming of the networks of civic initiatives, such as location, architecture, plans, etc. It adds a material thinking to the rather abstract notion of self-organization and places it back into a world of planning practice that concerns spatial objects, locations, buildings, plans, and actors who are concerned, that feel responsibilities, etc.

A second benefit concerns the localization of the global, the redistribution of the local, and the connection of sites, or the divide between local interaction and global context. In self-organization, it is said that new structure emerges only from local interactions. But what makes interactions local, and is local the opposite of anything like the non-local or global? According to ANT, there is no such thing as an opposition between local and global. Instead, ANT “irons the social ‘flat’” (Latour, 2005: 172). On the one hand, according to ANT, no place can

dominate other places enough to be global. The global, or terms like structure, culture, and context, do not exist outside of local interactions. They only exist because they are enacted in local practices. On the other hand, according to ANT, no place is self-contained enough to be local (ibid.: 202). Interactions can never be only local, since any given interaction seems to overflow with elements that are already in a situation, coming from some other time, some other place, and generated by some other agency (ibid.: 166). Every local interaction is shaped by many elements that are already in place. According to ANT, all sites are local (localizing the global), and all sites are connected (redistributing the local). There are continuous connections laid, leading from one local interaction to other places, times, and agencies, through which a local site is made to do something (ibid.: 173). Actors reveal the narrow space or locality in which all the ingredients of the world are possibly enacted in. And their actor networks explain through which vehicles, traces, trails, types of information, the world is being brought inside those places and then, after having been transformed there, are being pumped back out of its narrow walls (ibid.: 179). In this way, ANT adds a significant dimension to the locality of self-organization.

A third benefit of combining self-organization, translation, and individuation, concerns another source of uncertainty described by Latour, namely “matters of fact”. Instead of seeing facts as independent of their context, as transcendent or universal truths, in ANT facts are seen as being constructed, as being fabricated. This means that matters of fact do not mysteriously pop up out of nowhere, but that they have humble, visible, and interesting origins (Latour, 2005: 88). The construction of facts does not say that facts are less true (ibid: 90), but it simply states that matters of fact do not describe the world any better than pre-assumed definitions do. Facts as solid bedrocks to build anything else on, as certainties, and as neutral intermediaries, are seen by ANT as just very poor renderings of experience (ibid.: 110-111). Instead, ANT prefers to see facts as the result of an assembling and fusing of humans and non-humans around “matters of concern.” “These real, objective, atypical and, above all, interesting agencies are taken not exactly as object but rather as gatherings.” [...] This is “still real and objective, but it is livelier, more talkative, active, pluralistic, and more mediated than the other” (ibid.: 114-115). This presents facts as complex, elaborated, and collective makeups. This source of uncertainty can be seen as an elaboration of the post-structuralist denial of transcendental principles, or the baroque denial of unifying and simple rules that can steer self-organization. Moreover, it could be read in the sense that it is not facts but concerns that drive self-organization forward. Concerns that are not isolated but always in perspective, contextual, and in relation to as many elements as possible. This also means that a problem does not merely exist, but is always related to a problem owner: An actor who

is concerned about a certain issue (Latour, 1987; Urry, 2003). Problems and possibilities are always relational. Problems, concerns, and intentions are crucial elements in the emergence of civic initiatives, which are never neutral or indifferent. The notion of “matters of concern” thus adds an intentionality and direction to self-organization as the emergence of networks.

A fourth benefit of combining self-organization, translation and individuation, is that self-organization and individuation add a self to the emergence of actor-networks, in line with the philosophies of Lyotard, Derrida, and Deleuze. Whereas systems have a self, networks constitute a self. Without losing the openness, fluidity, and transformability of networks, it will still be necessary to define boundaries to some extent. Such boundaries should then be based on specific, subjective judgments about what the process is about, who is included and excluded, and how results can be achieved, on the boundary judgments from those involved in the activities in the network and through the account of actors (Buijs et al., 2009: 46, Boons et al., 2009: 242). A clear elaboration of what the self is (and thus the attractor of the initiative) can be instrumental in delineating such boundaries. This emphasis on the self enables to put the emphasis on the internal drivers of a civic initiative, on and the self and the individuation of the self. This self can be grouped around a matter of concern, which can, of course evolve, over time, functioning as an attractor that generates a tendency of the network to evolve in a certain direction, though never really materializing or actualizing. This addition to translation can generate more insight into the motivations and interests behind civic initiatives in urban development, and enables me to trace the planning strategies developed by or in response to the civic initiatives.

3

POST-STRUCTURALIST PERSPECTIVES ON SPACE, PLACE, AND PLANNING

Chapter 2 elaborated on complexity theory as a general science that is currently gaining influence on planning theory. From complexity theory, the notion of self-organization was derived, a notion that is very suitable and deployable for creating an understanding of the becomings of civic initiatives. This chapter elaborates on the post-structuralist ontology with which complexity science strongly resonates, and develops a post-structuralist perspective on self-organization by combining the notion of self-organization with the notions of translation from ANT, and individuation from assemblage theory.

This combination enables to develop an understanding of self-organization as a non-representational becoming, an individuation in which the self is actualized through processes of differentiating, and delivered a method to trace back processes of becoming. It also added a material notion to self-organization, indispensable when spatial planning is concerned. Now, the time has come to link this post-structuralist perspective on self-organization as emergent actor-networks back to the world of space and spatial planning. This is done by elaborating on what has been called “relational notions on space and place” and on post-structuralist planning ideas.

Relational space, place, and planning

In the late 1990s, post-structuralist notions started to appear within geography and planning, under the name of “relational notions of space, place, and planning” – closely related to the emergence of notions of complexity as described in Chapter 2. The main aim of the relational approaches to space, place, and planning was to counter the dominant structuralist notions of space, which were focused on examining the underlying truths of predefined systems. Instead, the relational approaches focused on “social and cultural associations that are open and dynamic, constantly in process of becoming” (Murdoch, 2006: 10), with a clear emphasis on the “multiple meanings and modes of identification that emerge from the constitution of relations” (ibid.: 9).

According to this perspective, meaning and action are not so much the product of underlying structures, but must be set in a context of extensive relations (ibid.: 9) that are heterogeneously producing spatial formations (ibid.: 2). Graham and Healey (1999) described relational planning as planning that primarily considered relations and processes, rather than objects and forms. A planning that acknowledges the multiplicity of space and time, a planning that represents places as multiple layers of relational assets and resources, that generates a distinctive power geometry of places (ibid.: 642-643). Post-structuralist notions of space, place, and planning are concerned about how and why transformation takes place, in order to explore the conditions under which something new is able to emerge (Hillier, 2007: 12). This has led to a change of viewpoint, or a shift in the physical position of the planner within the multiple processes of emergence in space (Massey, 2005). A post-structuralist perspective sees the planner and the planned as continuously, reciprocally entangled in heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming (Hillier, 2007; Boelens, 2009; Murdoch, 2006).

Another aim of the relational approaches was to bridge the material–social divide that followed from the technical rationality and the communicative rationality, by

building upon ANT and the consideration of both human and non-human actors, as space is only partially seen as physical, and in constant co-emergence with relations (Murdoch, 1998; 2006). Thus, strong resonances again exist between the already described themes of complexity theory and post-structuralist thinking, and these relational approaches to space, place, and planning. Their resonances can again be clustered around recurring themes (or counterpoints).

A first theme concerns the importance of openness, relationships, and the production of space in networks. Post-structuralist approaches to space, place, and planning, see spaces and places as open and relational, produced in ever changing networks. This is very much in line with the notion of irreversibility used by Prigogine and Stengers, which is translated to space as “always in a process of becoming” (Massey, 2005: 32). It also resonates with the post-structuralist notion of knowledge being produced in networks – space and place as products (and actors) of networks, too. Nigel Thrift speaks of a world made up of billions of encounters consisting of multitudinous paths that intersect (Thrift, 1999: 302), and of space as something porous without boundaries (Thrift, 2006). Open and relational space develops in complex and unexpected ways, as they are engaged with other spaces and places in different space–time frames, and these places and spaces are cross-cut by different processes and practices, some that emanated from within, and some that emanated from outside. Spaces and places are multiplicities, made out of various spatial practices, identifications, and forms of belonging (Murdoch, 2006; Hillier, 2007; Boelens, 2009; Bertolini, 2010). The relational perspective “views cities and regions as agglomerations of heterogeneity which are ‘locked into a multitude of relational networks of varying geographical reach’ (Amin, 2004)” (Van Wezemaal, 2010: 288).

Ash Amin (2002: 389) summarizes relational space as “co-constituted, folded together, produced through practices, situated, multiple and mobile.” According to Amin, the reading of space should thus happen in nonlinear, non-scalar terms, and accept geographies and temporalities as they are produced through practices and relations of different spatial stretch and duration (ibid.: 389). There is continuity and connection between space and action: Space is arranged so that action can take place, action configures and reconfigures space and action, and relations are grounded. Doreen Massey (2005: 10-11) conceptualizes relational space along three principles: 1) Space as a product of interrelations, constituted from interactions, relations being understood as embedded practices; 2) Space as the sphere of the possibility of multiplicity, plurality, difference, and heterogeneity; and 3) Space as always under construction, always in process, again, as an open system. When these multiple and heterogeneous relations meet in space, new relations are formed, and new spatial identities come into

being (idem., 1999; 2005). Every space is in constant motion, although constant processes and attempts to make it static and stable take place. This theme of relational approaches of space, place, and planning contributes to a further development of a spatial interpretation of self-organization as emergent actor-networks. In emergent actor-networks, spaces and places can be actors, too. Space and place can be a matter of concern for the emergent actor-network, be crucial in the formation and maintenance of groups, or be the local and internal drivers of self-organization. Moreover, space can also be a construct of those emergent actor-networks, running from the virtual to the actual: From “we wish we could find a space in which we ... ,” or from “this particular place is of concern to us,” toward a place in which a certain spatial intervention is actualized.

A second resonating theme concerns the concept of space as the dimension of multiple trajectories, and the consequent struggles over meaning and identity between those trajectories. These trajectories evolve along the notion of “spacing”, in both a spatial and a temporal sense, which is similar to the trajectories by which assemblages develop (DeLanda, 2002) and to Jacques Derrida’s construction of the self through difference and deconstruction (Massey, 2005). The movement of spacing marks what is set aside from the self, what interrupts self-identity, self-homogeneity, self-interiority. This is a relation of negativity, producing sameness and otherness. The coexistence of others, and the specification of their difference through the process of being set aside, is what produces plurality and heterogeneity (ibid.). Therefore, relations are multiple, contested, and in constant struggle or interplay over meaning and identity of place and space. As such, struggles concern whose reading of space gets/takes priority, and this opens the production of space and place to politics and power play (Murdoch, 2006: 9; Massey, 2005). Following the work of Michel Foucault, spaces are seen as emergent from relations of discourse, power, and knowledge, and as reproducing new relationships again: “Relations come into being, discourses, knowledges and spaces gain shape – they co-evolve in complex ways, coiling around one another until some kind of stability emerges” (Murdoch, 2006: 56). Spatial relations are network relations, shaped by power relations that are everywhere and productive at the same time (ibid.: 73-75).

Thus, strategies of domination and resistance, struggle, and the composition of specific alliances are an integral part of how spaces evolve and are perceived along the way. These struggles can be obstructive, but they can also produce novelty, and new forms of spatial identity and spatial practices (Murdoch, 2006: 18). Relational space and place can gradually move from multiplicity (many at the same time) toward singularity (dominance and stability), and be made up of either strong networks or competing associations (ibid.). As Doreen Massey

puts it: "The conceptualization of space itself is, crucially but usually implicitly, a stake in emerging confrontations" (Massey, 2005: 99). Agonism, dissensus, disagreement, and difference are recognized as having potential for learning and the emergence of something new (Pløger, 2004; Amin & Thrift, 2005; Thrift, 2005). This theme of relational approaches to space, place, and planning contributes to a further development of a spatial interpretation of self-organization as emergent actor-networks, as it emphasizes how various actor-networks interact in space simultaneously, sometimes intensifying and reinforcing one another, sometime obstructing and antagonizing one another, and sometimes indifferent to and autonomous from each other. Each self-organization is a trajectory in itself, organized around an attractor or matter of concern, that aims to be actualized toward a new spatial configuration. But as spaces and places are open and self-organizing networks are open, self-organization as trajectories will also cross in space other trajectories from other assemblages, both other emerging or more established ones. Thus, although an emergent actor-network itself will strive for new order and closure, struggles between several emerging actor-networks over the meaning and identity of place and space mean that the result of self-organization will be an ever increasing multiplicity of trajectories running through and encountering each other in space.

A third post-structuralist theme that resonates in relational approaches to space, place, and planning concerns the non-representation of space and place. Nigel Thrift (2007: 5-17) states that space is non-representational because of its materialization and embodiment, and thus can never be expressed other than as itself. According to Thrift, space is a situation of a concreteness and materiality that is hard to express in words. Space and places are seen as absolute particularities of the mixtures of influences found together (Massey, 1999: 22). Instead of representational, space is performative, because of the actancy of objects and continuous invention, provision, and emergence. Non-representational styles of thinking focus on practice as valid in itself, as a creative and constitutive feature of social experience, and see the world as a making. Following the philosophies of becoming, non-representational theory tries to capture the "onflow" of everyday life. It concentrates on practices, which are understood as bodies of work or styles that have gained enough stability over time through, for example, the establishment of routines and specialized devices that reproduce themselves (Thrift, 2007: 5-17). Thrift's (1996; 2000) non-representational theory on space and place therefore concerns presentation, rather than representation. Representation is no longer a process of fixing, but an element in a continuous production, a part of it all, and itself constantly becoming (Massey, 2005: 28). Thrift's theory puts the emphasis on intuition and phronesis; on actual relations, and how these are formed, and form practice and knowledge; on events,

experiments, and relations; and on affects and sensations. As far as representations are concerned, Thrift regards them as performative (Thrift, 1996; 2000; 2006; 2007).

Jean Hillier (2007: 271-272) also problematizes representation: "Representation distorts reality through reductionism and exclusion." But she also recognizes that practices, or "delicate milieus" as she calls it, do "include a range of representations, and seek to find ways in which we can value the multiplicity of differences rather than the reductionism of views to one 'this is'" (ibid.: 198). Like Thrift, she therefore sees representation as performative. In her view, space is performative, constitutive as well as constituted, and spatial planning and governance are performances of representation (ibid.). Hillier's post-representational view on planning sees planners as actively engaged in producing representations and becoming of representations as attempts to understand and tame space. "The beyond of representation [...] is representation's own beyond" (ibid.: 198). Plans and strategies are open wholes, never so much complete as "enough for now" (ibid.: 316).

This third theme of relational approaches to space, place, and planning contributes to a further development of a spatial interpretation of self-organization as emergent actor-networks, as it stresses its non-representation. Civic initiatives are practiced, meaning that they exist only when they happen. Their movement is not induced by external actors, but comes from internal and local drivers – drivers that are not general principles, underlying rules, or transcendental essences, but drivers that are actual and localized. The self-organization of civic initiatives is about an actualization, a materialization in space; it is about spacing, and the individuation of a network toward such an actual intervention in space. As each space and place is a non-representational particularity in itself, civic initiatives when seen as self-organized in space, cannot represent anything but themselves.

Three recently developed planning approaches are worth mentioning here as well, as they are explicitly based on the post-structuralist thoughts discussed above. These approaches are Jean Hillier's multiplanar planning, Joris van Wezemael's associated assemblage planning, and Luuk Boelens's actor-relational approach.

Multiplanar, or post-representation, planning (Hillier, 2005; 2007; 2008; 2011) is grounded in complexity, relationality, and post-structuralism, as a reaction to "the lack of theoretically-based understanding of the transforming dynamics of current spatial practices", which "leads to a weak intellectual basis for the effective development of new strategies of spatial governance" (Hillier 2007: 9).

The approach focuses on transformations, and the identification of networks and trajectories through which various actors are forming relational space. What Hillier is interested in, is the collective creations that emerge over time, rather than their representations. Post-representational theory examines how style, affect (such as emotions, desires, imaginations), and politics intersect in improvised practices and performances (ibid.: 223). It considers planning a “speculative and creative, yet structured, experimentation in the spatial” (Hillier, 2011: 521). A multiplanar approach to spatial planning and governance requires ongoing engagement with the “ever-changing multiple complexities, relations, connections, lines and folds of actants” (ibid.: 312), not in order to arrest or repress any of these becomings, but to sustain and enhance them. Based on the Deleuzian difference between the actual and the virtual, multiplanar planning distinguishes two planes: planes of immanence and planes of organization (ibid.: 225). The plane of immanence consists of longer-term developments, the creation of concepts, and the articulation of intentions in the virtual, whereas planes of organization consist of short-term intensifications of concepts and intentions into actual interventions in space. These planes are, of course, interleaved, and both are present and real in planning.

Assemblage planning (Wezemaël, 2008; 2010; 2012) builds further on multiplanar planning and focuses on the passage from one plane to the other, making use of assemblage theory (Van Wezemaël, 2010). Departing from the difference between non-active and non-directional assemblages and highly directional *agencements* that aim at eventuating change, the planner should be engaged in generating agencement or at least be tracing the possibilities for agencement to emerge (Hillier & Van Wezemaël, 2012). This is also what Hillier terms as “strategic navigation”: A journey with an unknown destination as an exploration of alternatives and to establish new relations (Hillier, 2011). This theory thus sees planning as a thoroughly performative practice.

The actor-relational approach (Boelens, 2009; 2011) is also grounded in post-structuralism, actor-network theory, and relational notions of place and space, and aims at introducing a form of open source planning, in which a variety of actors engage in networks that aim at spatial interventions, finding and interlinking associated planning strategies from various actors and various proposals for spatial-institutional resetting (Boelens, 2011: 547). Boelens links the notions of relational space–time, through actor-network theory, back to the actors’ spatial planning concerns – leading actors from public, private, and civic society, organized around unique core values or dominant actors and factors of mutual concern, in the converging relationships toward a robust and sustainable interaction of the aims and dreams of actors in the business, civic, and public

society (Boelens, 2010: 31). Boelens' approach can thus be seen as an operationalization of multiplanar, performative, and navigating planning.

Challenges for the relational approaches

Despite the profound development of post-structuralist thought on space, place, and planning, being in line with contemporary social complexities, and aiming to overcome the divide between technical and communicative approaches to planning, relational notions of space, place, and planning are still having a difficult time finding their way into planning practice. Relational approaches are time and again confronted with the very strong routines in planning practice (Graham & Healey, 1999), which often still operate within a traditional concept of space and time (Boelens, 2009: 27). So far, according to Boelens, planners have been unable to translate these behavioral, collaborative, or relational, post-structural planning theories into convincing, decisive, and sustainable planning practices (ibid.: 185). This is attributed to the persistency of existing planning institutions, which are state controlled, behave in a regulatory fashion, and are prescriptive (Boelens, 2010: 28). The planning system and planners remain focused on a reduction of complexity, on substantiated programs, clear communal goals, to fix space in time, apparently to reduce uncertainties and to structure operational processes in advance, and not on dealing with heterogeneity, multiplicity, and difference (Boelens, 2009; 2011). Planning practice is, according to Boelens, still mainly structuralist. The problem is not the idea of relational planning, but unfortunately how, and through which instruments, these views are operationalized in planning practice. The challenge for notions of relational space, place, and planning is threefold.

The first challenge lies in matching the relational notions of time and space with the usual scalar practices of planning. Most planning institutions – especially governmental institutions like municipalities, regions, provinces, and nation states – are organized by scale and each works in favor of its own spatial aggregate. Even developers and housing corporations are often bureaucratically organized in scalar subdivisions. Such a nested hierarchy of distinct and bounded spaces conflicts with an understanding of space as relational (Hillier, 2007: 18). In emerging networks and processes of becoming, scale as a spatial aggregate is simply not that relevant; the specific places the network concerns and connects, and what particular places are relevant within the network, are what is important. So the challenge lies in matching the usual scalar politics of regulation and governance, the formal politics, with the changing relationships between places and actors, as both places and actors are part of networks that transcend global–local and human–non-human divides. According to Ash Amin (2002: 395), these

two worlds need to be juxtaposed to each other, shifting politics of place to politics in place. Such politics are then open-ended, not based on participation in singular, all-encompassing political institutions and movements, but rather on a participation in multiple political identities as well as new ones (ibid.: 397).

The second challenge to introducing relational notions of place, space, and planning into planning practice, is that planning is all about representation. To date, most practices of spatial planning and governance have been essentially representational, with professional planners as their spokesmen. Relational, and thus non-representational, notions of space, place, and planning clash with what Massey calls the “old chain of meaning – space – representation – stasis” that planning often is (Massey, 2005: 24). In planning practice, meanings that are related to a certain space or place are usually converted into one dominant representation of that space, a representation that fixes the understanding of that space through time and, even worse, is considered value-free and objective (Hillier, 2007: 188). Conflicts of spatial planning are often conflicts about representation, because meaning is relational (and thus dependent on the viewpoint of the respective actor), and representation is a cultural and political process in which individuals/groups seek to persuade or coerce others into accepting that their representation is “the correct” one (Hillier, 2007: 187-190). Representations do not reflect any of the multidimensional, often conflicting representations that coexist in reality. Representation enables one to ignore the real importance of space, when conceived as relational (open, multiple, and relational, unfinished, and always becoming) (Hillier, 2007). In a relational view, representation is not an objective way of visualizing space, but a political process in itself. The representation – and not the actual space itself – is taken as a starting point for political debate. This is not a problem per se, but notions of relationality do not move planning further when it remains within its representational core. As long as representation “wields its power” (Massey, 2005: 24), a true relational view on space and planning is not possible.

The third challenge lies in the tendency of planning to tame space through Euclidean plan-making, demarcating, and delineating space, or by political bargaining à la communicative or collaborative planning practices (Murdoch, 2006). According to Massey (2005), planning is more involved in taming space toward coherence and the reduction of complexity, than in opening up to complexity.

Relational notions of time, space, and planning acknowledge the multiplicity and openness of space, space as an open ongoing production, and the constant process of becoming that space is. However, they do not seem to be able to move

planning beyond its fixed institutions and procedures. Planning institutions and procedures remain dominant in scalar, representational, and taming practices, unable to enhance notions of relationality or complexity. Relational planning takes great steps forward, but in practice keeps on being confronted with the same inclusions as participatory planning. The three challenges for relational notions of space and planning – namely scale, representation, and the taming of space – are very similar to the inclusionary practices of communicative planning as discussed in Chapter 1. Just as such inclusionary practices are unable to address those that are not able to cross the boundaries set by theme, geographical area, and procedure, the multiple non-representational trajectories, and struggles over space as constantly being reproduced, are not able to enter the persistent routines of inclusion set up in planning practice, to move beyond the disciplining forces of planners. As Murdoch (2006: 149) puts it: “So while the communicative or collaborative planning theorists may wish to open up space for multiplicity in the making of planning decisions, the likelihood is that such efforts will routinely encounter strategies of exclusion and manipulation.” For instance, communicative or participatory planning is intrinsically about representation, talking *about* space. This takes the act of planning too much into the representation, and thus is not tackling the dominance of the traditional professional monopoly on the taming of space from a scalar perspective.

The promise of civic initiatives

This section explored the influences that post-structuralist thinking has had on planning theory in recent years. Recent developments in post-structuralist planning approaches contain the same notions of relationality (as the interconnectivity of spaces, people, and times), but put more emphasis on emergence and becoming, going beyond representation or seeing representation as an act that one has to engage in. These approaches focus on transformations, the identification of networks and trajectories through which various actors are forming relational space, a creative movement between the virtual and the actual, planning as a thoroughly performative practice (Hillier, 2007; Van Wezemael, 2010; Boelens, 2009). The planner becomes a non-neutral person who proactively engages in processes of becoming. Both the performer and the context of the performance are entangled in the heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming (Murdoch, 2006: 18), and representation is something to engage in. The relational perspective also shows that this taming of space and representation does not come from a single, objective standpoint, but results from manifold processes that are taking place simultaneously from various standpoints within various networks. This moves planning beyond the dominance of a central, objective actor or the dominance of the ideal of a reachable, deliberated optimum of communi-

cative planning. Spatial planning is no longer an exclusive right for one kind of actor (mostly public), but is an act for any actor that has a certain interest, need, desire, or objective to change space (Hillier, 2007; Boelens, 2009; 2011). These approaches also bring closer the translation of a post-structuralist understanding of self-organization into the domain of spatial planning, and to linking it back to civic initiatives in urban development. However, such approaches also encounter difficulties in their application to and incorporation in planning practice.

This thesis though, hypothesizes that studying civic initiatives, when seen through the lens of self-organization as non-representational emergent assemblages in which selves are relationally constructed along-the-way, will shed a new light on these post-structuralist planning approaches. The institutions, scalar practices, matters of representation, and the taming of space, that are now standing in the way of a new, post-structuralist planning practice, will no longer be a challenge when planning leaves behind the prescripts of a professional practice, and turns into a radical practice itself, and becomes nothing more and nothing less than self-organizing, emergent actor-networks of professional, semi- or non-professional actors that work toward spatial interventions out of clear self-interest.

A Diagram of Processes of Becoming

In the previous chapters, a post-structuralist understanding of self-organization as the emergence of actor-networks was developed, in order to describe the process of becoming of civic initiatives. So far, though, self-organization has only been described in terms of its characteristics, and the way in which these characteristics exist within civic initiatives. Self-organization, however, is even more complex, as it dynamically emerges from the interactions between component parts of a network, an assemblage, the environment, other trajectories, etc. In order to add a more dynamic perspective to civic initiatives, and to describe their actual *process* of becoming, this chapter turns to describing various forms of behavior within self-organization and various intentionalities behind self-organization.

These behaviors and intentionalities are presented in the form of a Deleuzian diagram. They are not consciously used by the actors in the cases, but are a way to explain how the civic initiatives have proactively succeeded in their materialization. Identifying the behaviors and intentionalities of the actors in the cases reveals how they have transformed their fields of influence, how they have been finding partners, been matching them, and how they have been actively seeking out what possible joint interests could be (Sanders, 2009). In other words, this diagram visualizes the transformation from the actual to the virtual, and vice versa, the ways in which the actors in the cases have continuously created possibilities, and opened new routes toward actualization (Hillier, 2011). The diagram has two dimensions. The first concerns behavior in self-organization, based on the three strands of theory introduced earlier, namely self-organization from complexity sciences, translation from actor-network theory, and individuation from assemblage theory. The second dimension concerns the intentionalities that can be present in self-organization, building further on the various ways translation is considered to be a quasi-intentional process of ordering.

1

FOUR FORMS OF BEHAVIOR IN PROCESSES OF BECOMING

Introduction

From the three descriptions of processes of becoming discussed the Chapter 3 (self-organization from complexity theory, translation from actor-network theory, and individuation from assemblage theory), four forms of behavior can be identified. Self-organization speaks of bifurcations and equilibria as moments in time, and dissipative and autopoietic as forms of behavior (Heylighen, 2001; Cilliers, 1998; Luhmann, 1995; Jantsch, 1980; Prigogine & Stengers, 1984; Bor, 1990). Translation speaks of four sequential steps that are taken before a translation is fully made: problematization, *interessement*, enrolment, and mobilization (Callon, 1986), or perplexity, consultation, hierarchization, and institution (Latour, 2004). Individuation speaks of four expressive dimensions of an assemblage (how it relates to its outward world): coding, decoding, territorializing, and deterritorializing (DeLanda, 2002; 2006).

The benefits of combining these notions concerns the sequence and simultaneity of behavior in processes of becoming. In complexity theory, different forms of behavior and moments in self-organizing behavior are described as each other's opposites, but are hardly operationalized for describing becoming. Translation offers such an operationalization, but presents the four steps as sequential in time, disregarding that these can actually overlap. Moreover, whereas self-organization mainly addresses the internal dynamics of the system, translation mostly focuses on how the components of the network interrelate with the outside world. Assemblage theory, again, combines both understandings by presenting different expressive qualities of assemblages, organized around axes that stabilize, destabilize, individualize, or de-individualize the assemblage (DeLanda, 2006). By bringing together these different post-structuralist understandings of processes of becoming, the sequential steps of translation are transformed into four forms of behavior that are simultaneously present in the process of becoming and individuation, as interrelated movements of an assemblage over time. In other words: a framework is developed, which enables different kinds of self-organizing behavior to be described as opposite and related, and as sequential and simultaneous.

Although these forms of behavior are opposite and related, sequential and simultaneous, the following paragraphs describe them in a sequential way, and for the sake of convenience, the sequence of translation is used. To stress that it is all about movement, use is made of modern dance terminology while explaining the forms of behavior. Following Thrift (2000) and personal experiences as an amateur modern dancer, modern dance is a very suitable example of non-representational performance, as it is the art of the now, a one-time-only phenomenon. Therefore, its terminology can very well be used to express what these theoretical concepts mean in spatial becomings. Even if modern dance involves repetition of a number of performances, every performance is a unique event in itself. Moreover, modern dance is often a combination of choreography and improvisation – the body as something that is written upon, but that is also writing its own story at the same time (Thrift, 2000). Dance in general (and especially the *ausdruckstanz* of Pina Bausch) relates to the combination of the material and expressive in assemblages: A physical being in space and a dehumanized bodily skill of movement through space as materiality, and expressive as it is humanly responsive, expressing the self and causing affects in other humans, while human and non-human materialities work together in reaching this consistency between materiality and expression.

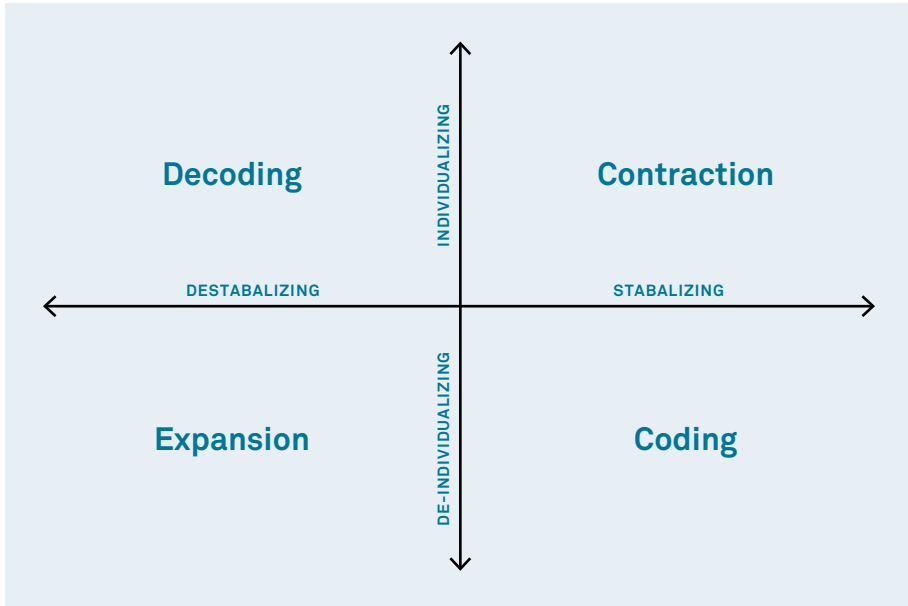


FIGURE 4.1 Four forms of behavior in self-organization

Decoding

The term “decoding” is derived from assemblage theory, and reconciled with what in complexity theory is described as “bifurcation” and in translation as “problematization.” It refers to the willingness or urgency of actors to abandon the usual way of working, to disassociate from existing schemes and try something new. In dancing terminology, I would characterize this form of behavior as the interaction between dancers performing in unison and a solo dancer. In a unison dance, several dancers make similar movements at the same time. Then, suddenly, one of the dancers starts moving differently, steps out of the unison and continues in solo movements. The movement is initiated by the dancer; it is not possible without the intrinsic driver and energy to step out. However, the move away from the group would not be possible without the unison, the object away from which the solo dancer can individuate. Moreover, the solo dancer heads somewhere the unison of other dancers is not heading to, or perhaps at a different speed. The reason for the dancer to move away from the unison can be manifold: The other side of the space might appeal more, the dancer can feel an intrinsic need to just leave, or the dancer might need to in order to remain balanced. This movement, or form of behavior, thus implies one and many dancers, a context to move away from, and directions to head in. Regardless of whether this stepping out is done in a sudden grand movement or gradually by

small repetitive changes, the break of symmetry from stepping out of the unison is always instantly perceived and experienced as disruptive and destabilizing. The observer is no longer looking at one movement, but at two movements that interfere and move against each other.

This movement, and break away from the unison of other dancers, can be described with the term “bifurcation.” Literally, bifurcation means a division into two forks or branches of something that was whole before, and it can either be a state or an action (Oxford English Dictionary, Simpson & Weiner 1989, Vol. 2: 180). In complexity theory, the term bifurcation is used to address moments in time and place in which the elements of a system suddenly decide to break with existing routines and start behaving in a new, unforeseen and unexpected way. These bifurcations spontaneously set in motion the emergence of new order (Heylighen, 2001; Cilliers, 1998). Bifurcations are a move away from the threshold of equilibrium, which is only one steady state that depends on a few control parameters (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984: 160-161). In assemblage theory, an equivalent of this form of behavior is “decoding” (DeLanda, 2006: 15-16). Decoding concerns an expressive mediated (ibid.: 15) disassociation from an existing situation, a decoding of routines, a rejection of a stable state, as well as an initiation toward a new stable state, and the start of a phase transition of the system (ibid.).

Bifurcations and decoding are equivalent to the problematization phase of translation. The problematization phase in the establishment of an actor network is often presented as a first phase in the emergence of an actor-network. In this phase, the leading or initiating actor starts with a disassociation from the existing situation. A problem is delineated, for instance concerning a physicality, making others see there is a problem that needs to be addressed by new ways of doing, and that a new type of knowledge or organization is necessary to solve this problem. Bifurcation adds an iterative movement and the notion of “event” to the definition of problematization – the “lightning strike,” the suddenness of meaningful coincidence, of timely events, that according to Nigel Thrift is absent from the rather passive description of problematization in ANT (Thrift, 2000: 214). Each bifurcation should be seen as an ideal event that sets in motion a phase transition in the system, and not as the actual phase transition itself (DeLanda, 2002: 80). The notion of events fits well with bifurcation, as the “choice” made by a system at a bifurcation point is a unique event (ibid.: 42). This event relates to the dancer who suddenly starts moving differently and away from the unison of other dancers.

Decoding is a reaction to that which is already in existence – that which was considered to be in equilibrium, a movement *away* from a situation, from certain conditions. Indeed, no event is un-conditioned, and events hang together, one event fulfills the necessary conditions for other events to occur (Kwa 2002: 42). The trajectory along which a system, network, or assemblage evolves is characterized by a succession of endogenously generated stable states (attractors), and of instable ones, near the bifurcation points, where the system can “choose” between or among more than one possible future, and where the system exhibits abrupt transitions between stable states (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984: 169-170; DeLanda, 2002: 60). Bifurcations require highly specific conditions and only happen when the fluctuations in a system become abnormally high (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984: 180). They are embedded in the history of the system, and are a combination of determinism (the conditions forced the bifurcation) and free choice (the bifurcation took place) (ibid.: 160-161). Triggers for bifurcation can be external factors (a “change in the external situation, the *boundary conditions* of the system,” (Heylighen, 2001: 13, original emphasis)), external shocks or perturbations (DeLanda, 2002: 18), or internal factors (“order emerges from within rather than being imposed from the outside” (Bertolini, 2010: 95). When control knobs stop functioning, important elements in the assemblage break down or disappear, or new elements enter the assemblage, requiring an adjustment, for instance, when stable configurations or organizational routines become suboptimal and a lock-in emerges that can lead to a collapse of the system (ibid.: 83). It can happen “spontaneously by means of missing or incorrect connections (or other happenings of chance), as well as by the non-linearity of the system and the resulting sensitivity to small fluctuations” (Cilliers, 1998: 95).

Bifurcation points also determine further emergences. They are like a first break away, the genesis of a self and its actualization. After symmetry-breaking, a process of self-organization emerges, and the system develops in a new, unforeseen direction, preferring this new particular direction and behavior as the new configuration, changing the range of possibilities of further non-linear development, creating novelty (Heylighen, 2001: 12). A new proposition enters and challenges the collective, shaking up those who were gathered to discuss, as well as their habits, established hierarchies, and institutions (Latour, 2004: 123). This new direction, which was set in motion through bifurcation, decoding, or problematization, makes the new emerging system, network, or assemblage act as a whole, as one actor (Kwa, 2002: 42). This actor (whether an individual, a person, an assemblage, a group of initiators, or the group around initiators) makes a triple movement: The actor defines what it wants, which forms the identity of the network, system, or assemblage (the first obligatory passage point) (Callon, 1986: 204-206); the actor establishes itself as indispensable in finding

this new way of doing (the second obligatory passage point); and defines the third obligatory passage point concerning who needs to be taken into consideration in finding new kinds of behavior (ibid.). These determine the further individuation and becoming of the network.

Expansion

The second form of behavior in processes of becoming is “expansion,” a term that brings together what in complexity theory is described as “dissipative” behavior, in translation as “*interessement*,” and in assemblage theory as “deterritorialization.” It refers to the stance of the initiative toward its outside environment – trying to be as broad, informed, and open as possible to new and different options and actors. The term “expansion” is derived from dancing terminology: It is a technique in which the body of the dancer is stretched as far as possible, not only physically, but also mentally. The dancer’s awareness and attention goes in all directions at the same time, addressing all other dancers present, and inside the body the dancer is filling his or her joints with air. This movement is combined with breathing in, creating more air to float around in the body, making the body grow physically, and mentally claiming more space and attention, to such an extent that the dancer is almost weightless and infinitely present. This movement implies a dancer and an environment to exchange matter with (air to breath in) and to expand one’s body in, claiming space. It is a destabilizing movement, as expansion means the dancer loses his or her place, boundaries, and weight. It also de-individualizes, as the dancer and the environment exchange matter and energy, the environment filling up the dancer and the dancer filling up the environment, making the two more or less flow into each other.

According to translation, this expansion of the network happens through “*interessement*.” The initiating actor looks for allies, and tries to establish connections between them and the network (Callon, 1986). This behavior is therefore characterized by an outward movement. The self needs to deal with its outside, with the others – who gradually become more and more attached to, and part of, the expanding network. This corresponds with the form of self-organized behavior that is indicated as “dissipative.” Dissipative behavior also concerns an external orientation of a system, a continuous exchange of energy with the environment. Dissipative behavior is boundary breaking, leading to evolution of systems, as it plays a constructive role in the dynamic transformations of organizations, increasing internal diversity and the probability of successful transformations (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984; Bor, 1990; Morçöl, 2005). Dissipative processes are deemed capable of creating synergy between the system and its environment. Dissipative behavior refers to the increasing

connection of various subsystems, to the cooperative quality of organizations, crossing and breaking organizational boundaries and realizing new connections, and exploration of information (Buijs et al., 2009b: 100). In this process, the system aims at openness and exploration for the increasing interconnection of different subsystems, leading to highly dynamic and vital processes (c.f. Jantsch, 1980; Teisman et al., 2009) and wide and widening boundary judgments in which variety and redundancy of ideas (plans, content) and actors is aimed for (Van Meerkerk et al., 2012).

Expansion is also an investigation into the best way of detecting propositions, making them visible, and getting them to talk. Or in other words: To require relevance, an investigation into the best way to constitute a jury that is capable of judging the effects of each proposition on the habits of the others (Latour, 2004: 181). The obligatory passage points that are defined when decoding, as the network problematizes and sets off in a new direction, are now taken into account and are approached. "The interessement, if successful, confirms (more or less completely) the validity of the problematization and the alliance it implies" (Callon, 1986: 209-210). Actors have to consider what needs to be taken into account, and what new propositions need to be found and accounted for (Latour, 2004). Perplexity and consultation are leading in this form of behavior, and the number of propositions to be taken into account should not be simplified nor should the number of voices that participate in the articulation of propositions remain short-circuited (ibid.: 109-110). Moreover, the actor-network places itself "within," in the midst of things, but there is also a choice involved: Do actors want to be involved, want to be placed within ("inter-esse") as well? "Interessement" also concerns how allies are locked into place. "Interessement" is "the group of actions by which an entity, network or association attempts to impose and stabilize the identity of the other actors it defines through its problematization" (Callon, 1986: 207). Expansion needs an environment and air to breathe in, meaning that expansion often happens at the expense (in terms of attention, time, energy, resources) of existing and surrounding structures and processes. The emerging network is in competition with other evolving associations and identities, and hard work is needed to "interest" other actors in the emerging actor network. So to get other actors involved in the association, other ties have to be weakened, to be extracted from their context. And each new actor entering the network again transforms the identity of the whole (ibid.). Identities are consequently defined in competitive ways – in competition with other evolving associations and identities.

If the outward movement of expansion continues, the actor-network or assemblage increases in scale and becomes more and more extensive. In

assemblage terminology, this is called deterritorialization. Deterritorialization refers to any process that either destabilizes spatial boundaries or increases internal heterogeneity (DeLanda, 2006: 13). Deterritorialization frees up fixed relations and heterogenizes entities (Van Wezemaal 2008: 175). Expansion thus combines the notion of making people pay attention to the emergent network through intersement – the notion of making the network scattered over various locations and increasing internal diversity through dissipation – and deterritorialization, the act or process of making something increase in scale. There is a danger of instability, though, when this expansion or deterritorialization continues for too long, and the network/system/assemblage might lose its internal coherence. This is where the third type of self-organized behavior – contraction – becomes important.

Contraction

The term “contraction” brings together what in complexity theory is called “autopoiesis,” in translation theory “enrolment,” and in assemblage theory as “territorialization.” It refers to the dealings of an initiative with its internal dynamics, including selecting outside elements to include in the initiative because they are necessary for it to survive in its best self-interest, and a specification of boundaries, identity, and hierarchy. The term “contraction” is derived from modern dance terminology. In modern dance, contraction is a technique that concerns the tightening the abdominals, tucking the pelvis, and forming a “C” with the torso so that the shoulders are over the pelvis. This movement appears as if the whole body is sucked together into compactness, emphasized by a strong and sudden exhalation of breath. The attention of the dancer is on his or her center and spine, the parts of the body from that balance is derived from. This type of movement implies a dancer, a center point (the spine and/or center) to project the movement to, components to get rid of (air to breath out), and an environment to project closure to. Contraction is a stabilizing and individualizing movement, as the movement is projected to the spine – the identity that forms the most stabilizing element of the dancing body. Air and dancer more or less exclude each other in this movement, sharpening the boundaries between them.

For translation, the inward movement of contraction is equivalent to the enrolment phase, in which the specific roles of the interested actors are negotiated, consolidated, and defined, and a common identity is determined and set (Callon, 1986: 214). This phase is characterized by an internal orientation: Propositions are instituted or rejected, hierarchies are set, and both the inside and the outside of the collective are stabilized (Latour, 2004). This inward orientation corresponds to “autopoietic” self-organization, which concerns the

processes of reproduction, confirmation, creation and re-creation of self, and self-maintenance, highlighting the essentials of the system, stabilizing internal structure, and intensifying boundaries (Jantsch, 1980; Luhmann, 1995; Flood, 1999; Teisman et al., 2009; Maturana & Varela, 1980: 98-101; Mingers, 2002; Twist & Schaap, 1991). In this phase, the identity of the system is formed and set, and a variety and redundancy of plans and ideas are countered (Van Meerkerk et al., 2012). An autopoietic system generates and continuously regenerates the same type of organization, and is therefore also framed as conservative (Buijs et al., 2009: 6.2). In other words: An autopoietic system can only transform itself into itself; it produces itself and only itself (Maturana & Varela, 1987; Mingers, 1991; Mingers, 2002). All change is internally determined and subordinated to the maintenance of the self of the system (Maturana & Varela, 1980: 91, 97). This internal self-reproduction works in the sense that in the processes of production components are generated, that themselves participate in a continual recursive re-creation of the self (Maturana & Varela, 1987 in Mingers, 1991). An autopoietic system only produces internal components that will work in the favor of the strength, homogeneity, and maintenance of the system. Autopoiesis highlights the essentials of the system – distilling them from an over-complex environment – and thereby have these repeatedly confirmed (Luhmann, 1995; De Roo, 2010: 9). In social system, this self-production can for instance be a communicative event, as it refers to descriptions, concepts, and ideas articulated that will strengthen the self of the system (Mingers, 2002: 283-286).

As post-structuralist ontology explained earlier, this self that is reproduced and maintained is mostly defined by what it is not. This means that an important aspect of autopoiesis is the exclusion from the system of elements and processes that do not belong to it, and the selection from a range of possibilities (Maturana & Varela, 1980: 92; Mingers, 2002: 286). The system determines what information it needs, and it distinguishes what belongs to the system and what does not – this is the closure of autopoietic systems (Mingers, 2002: 287). The exclusion of elements or people from membership of the assemblage, in favor of the maintenance of the self, is also acknowledged in territorialization (DeLanda, 2006: 13). In translation, attention is given to this particular interaction with the outside of the actor-network as “rejected propositions are consigned to the dumping ground of the collective” (Latour, 2004: 124). Contraction thus both strengthens the self, the identity of a system, network, or assemblage, and creates an outside, an otherness, observers who stand outside the system. In this sense, contraction is not only concerned with the inside of the assemblage, but also has an expressive role as well. There is still a very strong relation of exteriority in this creation of internal robustness: It defines and strengthens boundaries (which is external communication) (DeLanda, 2006: 9).

This process of exclusion, sorting, and rejection has two outcomes. The first is that the boundaries of the system or network are defined and strengthened. Autopoiesis creates a boundary defining the entity as a unity; boundary judgments are intensified, leading to the deep closure and autonomy (Klijn & Snellen, 2009: 27; Mingers, 2002: 280-282). Territorialization also defines or sharpens the spatial boundaries of actual territories (DeLanda, 2006: 13). The second outcome is that the internal settings of the system or actor-network are homogenized. This increase in internal homogeneity can be described as territorialization, which plays a synthetic role, since it is through the more or less permanent articulations produced by this process that a whole emerges from its parts and maintains its identity (ibid.: 14). This whole, the assemblage, increases in thickness and intensity. Relations of interiority become more important, as there is reciprocal determination between parts of the assemblage, and the component parts are constituted by the very relations they have with other parts in the whole. A part detached from such a whole ceases to be what it is, since being this particular part is one of its constitutive properties (ibid.: 9). "In order for an actor to successfully enroll entities (human and non-human) within a network their behavior must be standardized and channeled in the direction desired by the enrolling actor. This will entail redefining the roles of the actors and entities as they come into alignment, such that they come to gain new identities or attributes within the network. It is the intermediaries which act to bind actors together, 'cementing' the links" (Murdoch, 1995: 747-8; Thrift, 1996: 24-25).

Another aspect of the inward movement of contraction concerns the setting of hierarchy, of internal order, and representation; or in other words, the fixing and stabilizing of the posture of the network, system, or assemblage in a specific context. In translation, this is the power to set hierarchy, to arrange in rank order, for instance by assessing the compatibility of new propositions with those which are already instituted, in such a way as to maintain them all in the same common world that will give them their legitimate place. Compromises are made and actors and their roles are accommodated. The inward movement and setting of hierarchy also implies the requirement of publicity and representation (Latour, 2004). "The stronger the network the more powerful the translating actor. Thus, those who are powerful are not those who hold power but are those able to enroll, convince and enlist others into networks on terms which allow the initial actors to 'represent' these others. Powerful actors 'speak for' all the enrolled entities and actors and control the means of representation." (Murdoch, 1995: 748; Thrift, 1996: 25) This is also a requirement of institution, of fixing the "indisputable premises," a requirement of closure, regarding the question whether the network or collective can live together in the current settings (Latour, 2004: 110). Once these propositions have been instituted, their legitimate presence at the heart

of the collective is no longer in question, and they become part of the internal self-reproduction of the network or system (ibid.: 109). To meet the requirement of closure, and investigation into the means to be used to stabilize the inside and the outside of the collective is made (ibid.: 181). Contraction is thus an inward movement toward closure, though full organizational closure would remain an unrealistic notion (Kickert, 1993: 272; Buijs et al., 2009b: 99).

To summarize, the movement of contraction concerns self-reproduction, a strengthening of boundaries and the exclusion of otherness, the setting of internal hierarchy and order, and an articulation of boundaries through choosing representation and publicity. It refers to the dealings of an initiative with its internal dynamics, including selecting those elements from the outside to include in the initiative that are necessary for it to survive in its best self-interest, and a specification of boundaries, identity, and hierarchy.

Coding

The fourth and last type of behavior to discuss is “coding,” a term from assemblage theory that reconciles what in complexity theory is described as “equilibrium,” and in translation as “mobilization.” It refers to the elements that turn the initiative into something familiar, something obvious, something that fits existing schemes. In modern dance terminology, this movement again relates to a unison of dancers. This time, the movements of the solo dancer gradually or suddenly merge with the movements of the unison. Although the individual body of the dancer remains, his or her movements are no longer individual, as they are synchronized with similar movements of other dancers. This type of movement thus implies an individual dancer, heading in the direction and synchronizing to the movement of the unison of other dancers, which is the context, the common, of which the dancer becomes part.

This coding is the end result of translation, which is a state of mobilization (Callon, 1986: 214). After exercising the power to take into account (expansion) and the power to put in order (contraction), the network has become thicker, more established, more accepted, more embedded in its surroundings. In other words, the network has proven to be, internally and externally, strong enough to remain together and can now exercise the power to follow through (Latour, 2004). A new type of order has emerged, one in which certain entities within the network control the others (Callon, 1986). A thing has come into being, an identity has been formed, making a lasting impression on its environment. The result is a situation in which certain entities control others, and actors are defined, associated, and simultaneously obliged to remain faithful to their alliances (ibid.: 224).

When this representation is chosen well, the masses, or the rest of the network, will follow these representatives (ibid.: 214). The network is like a black box, whose content is no longer questioned but just taken for granted. This means that internally, there is agreement on what the system is and what it represents. In this phase, the maintenance of the network as a collective becomes important, as is the constant evaluation whether the network is *still* able to follow through (Latour, 2004). Even if the network reaches the mobilization phase, in which a new equilibrium, or type of order, has emergence, the process of translation continues. The terms equilibrium and emergence of order already make explicit the kinship with self-organization. Mobilization and equilibria can both be seen as the outcome of translation and of self-organization: The civic initiative has reached an equilibrium and stabilized accordingly. Another reading of the relation between coding and equilibria, is that by coding, the civic initiative refers to an existing equilibrium in society. But, following Prigogine and Stengers, this new order is not necessarily to the detriment of another, already existing order, but rather exists on top of the already existent order – creating an even higher level of complexity (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984).

However, a chosen representation would not make sense if this representation is not recognized by the environment of the system. In the mobilization phase, the links and relationships of the network become predictable, standardized; the network becomes “heavy with norms” (Callon, 1991: 151). But what do these norms mean if they are only internal? What is a black box when there is no-one to actually see it? This is where assemblage theory and the notion of coding come in. Coding concerns the choice of a certain representation derived from and related to the environment. Coding is not something derived from the internal dynamics of the system, but finds its sources in legitimate authority, traditions, and rational-legal settings. Coding is performed as narratives establishing a sacred source of origin, or constitutions spelling out the rights and obligations associated with a formal role (DeLanda, 2006: 15). In other words, the black box of the network itself is further stabilized by making references to other black boxes, representations are picked from the outside world and applied to the collective in order to make it more recognized, and thus even more stable, fixed, and strong.

Behavior in civic initiatives

In the perspective of civic initiatives, these four forms of behavior relate to the following. Decoding refers to the willingness or urgency of actors to step out of the usual way of working, to disassociate from existing (planning, spatial) schemes, and to try something new. Expansion refers to the encounters the initiative has with its outside environment – trying to be as broad, informed,

and open to new and different options and actors as possible, in order to find the necessary resources for the materialization of the initiative. Contraction is the behavior in which the initiative chooses and selects in the best interest of the initiative, and excludes those elements that are unnecessary. With contraction, the initiative deals with its internal dynamics, including those elements from the outside that are necessary for the initiative to materialize. Coding refers to the elements or schemes that are used in order to turn the initiative into something familiar, something obvious, something that fits existing planning and housing schemes.

All behaviors should be simultaneously present in the becoming of a civic initiative, as the behaviors presuppose each other, but also have to alternate in order to prevent the network from falling apart, or becoming disconnected and un-adaptive to its environment. Coding and decoding presuppose each other: There have to be codes to decode from anything at all. But existing codes can become weakened when they are too often a reason for decoding, which can give rise to new codes. Also expansion and contraction presuppose each other. Expansion is an outward movement, looking for allies, trying to interest them in the network in order to move forward. In doing this, they are in competition with other evolving associations and identities, and hard work is needed in order to “interest” other actors in the emerging actor network. It is dissipative, boundary breaking. On the other hand, contraction stands for the intensification of the boundaries that are broken by expansion, or that require redefinition after expansion, a determination or redefinition of the common identity, the hierarchy in the assemblage, and the exclusion of those elements that do not work in favor of the intentionality of the assemblage. As such, they both meet the two complementary requirements of a collective (Latour, 2004).

Moreover, neither of the forms of behavior should be present too much. Due to coding and contraction, the initiative becomes something identifiable; it gets a name that represents the initiative as a coherent whole. However, only coding and contraction would in the end just lead to standstills, be the end of all movement and renewal, and only lead to reconfirmation of what is already in place, and make the network too static to be really adaptive to new, unanticipated situations. Only decoding and expansion would in the end just lead to the evaporation of the network, and not to an actualization of its intentions. When a actor-network is totally unstable due to expansion and decoding, it is not capable of responding in a coherent way to new challenges and can easily become rudderless. The four forms of behavior should thus be continuously combined, in order to have an effective process of becoming. Decoding and coding presuppose each other, expansion and contraction have to alternate. Too much expansion and decoding

can undermine the stability of the network, and too much coding and contraction can undermine the capacity of the network to adapt to changed circumstances. Decoding and contraction form and maintain the self of a civic initiative, but again, too much of this behavior will isolate the network and make it irrelevant to its environment. Expansion and coding connect the self and the civic initiative to an environment, but too much expansion and coding will undermine the individuality of the network. That is why both coding and decoding, and expansion and contraction are necessary for a network to be effective in its actualization.

This can also be termed as bounded instability: "... the organization can find the mix of confirmation and novelty that allows it to be a learning system that is able continually to self-organize and thus renew itself" (Merry, 1999: 275; Van Meerkerk et al., 2012). A self-organizing system will try to balance itself at a critical point between rigid order and disorder. It will try to optimize and maximize the number of attractors without becoming unstable. A chaotic system is useless, but a too stable system is handicapped, as it will have a badly impaired capacity for adaptation when undergoing strong perturbations (Cilliers, 1998: 97). Far-from-equilibrium conditions are shifted back to near-equilibrium conditions, and vice versa, which creates indefinite evolutionary patterns (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984: 189-191). The evolving network moves constantly from the perplexity of decoding to the institution of coding and back again (Latour, 2004: 114). One has to be careful, though, not to move too directly from perplexity to institution, from decoding to coding. When a new proposition comes in and a bifurcation takes place, it first has to go through all the four compartments of the diagram to prove the "seriousness of its candidacy for existence; it demands to be taken into account by all those whose habits it is going to modify [before] it earns its legitimate right to [...] become an institution [and] part of the indisputable nature of the good common world." (Latour, 2004: 123)

2

TRANSLATION IN THREE INTENTIONALITIES

Having identified these four forms of behavior in processes of becoming, the question remains how and with what intentions actors and civic initiatives move through and thread together these different forms of behavior, and how trajectories are formed over time toward materialization. For this, a return is made to the notion of translation.

Collateral and/or intentional translation

"Translation" as derived from actor-network theory concerns the process of making connections between things that gain consistency along the way. This process of ordering can be seen as an equivalent of self-organization as the emergence of actor-networks. As said, translation offers excellent tools to trace back processes of becoming, of things that once they have become, look logical, and like facts, but actually made a great effort to become what they are. In relation to civic initiatives, translation can be understood as the work necessary to move from an initial idea to an actualized physical intervention in space. Once actualized, the urban interventions will look logical and in place, but a lot of hard work collecting resources, organizing a network and keeping that network together have been necessary to achieve such an actual materialization in space. By tracing back these becomings, the planning strategies that are developed and enacted within, and in response to, civic initiatives can be brought to light.

Intentionality is an aspect of translation that is crucial to discuss before applying the concept of translation to the practice of civic initiatives and related planning strategies. In the literature on translation, it is described how translations can be collateral and unintentional, as well as the result of purposeful and deliberate action. Collateral realities are realities that get done incidentally, along the way, unintentionally. Collateral and unintentional translations, for instance, happen when actors accidentally encounter each other in space, or when a person without intention provides orderings of situations at hand by telling others how to see things. Collateral realities get done quietly along the way, incidentally, without any kind of fuss, and they often remain unquestioned, uncontested (Law, 2009a). On the other hand, translation can also be seen as a sequence of proactive, purposeful, and deliberate actions in order to establish something envisioned, that is, as a performative process of network building, of creating links between actors and factors that were not linked before (Law, 2009b; Latour, 2004; Mol, 2002a).

Both views on translation are possible, and are recognized in assemblage theory. In assemblages, individual actors are capable of making intentional choices that sometimes lead to the creation of new institutions. Assemblages themselves are non-directional, but they can both gain agency (and become an *agencement*) or be the result of agency as the relational effect of collective unintended actions (DeLanda, 2006: 21-25; Hillier, 2007: 26). The causality of the process of becoming is therefore described as quasi-causal, causality being something that is constructed among the components of an assemblage while becoming, as a mixed result of intensions and collaterals (DeLanda, 2002: 108). Full collateral translation is hard to make, as actions by individuals will always to

a certain extent be intentional. Intentional translation, on the other hand, is often partial, incomplete, more or less local and implicit. Even the most intentional practices are still surrounded by a world that is “messy, multiple, heterogeneous, constantly escaping the precarious orderings of even the most determined” (Law, 2009b: 11).

Quasi-intentional is therefore a nice way to describe the becoming of civic initiatives. The eventual physical intervention might not have been entirely envisioned beforehand according to a fixed plan, and people in the initiative might not know exactly where and how they will end up, or what the spin-off of their initiative might be, as many collaterals happen during the initiative’s process of becoming. But still, civic initiatives always contain a certain degree of intentionality. The actors who start an initiative always have some sort of intention. Regardless of whether they have an idealistic motive or a personal, individual interest, there is always a reason why they start organizing something new, by themselves. Therefore, the actors involved in a civic initiative are considered proactive and normative interventionists, working hard to assemble the necessary passage points around the need for and necessity of a specific interference, knotting actors and places together, and producing new causalities along the way. Their driver toward improving or changing things is their attractor, the self of the self-organization, the thing that needs to be actualized through the process of becoming and individuation. The initial idea that is part of the off-set of the initiative (defined while decoding), stays part throughout the initiative. Even though context and exact interpretation or actualization may change during the course of the initiative, it is the self that is the major driver of it. In other words: Self-organization is not about making others do things in their favor, but about organizing a context around oneself in order to further expand and actualize the vision and the self of the initiative, through expansion, contraction, and coding. This understanding of translation adds an intentionality (or at least a quasi-intentionality) to processes of becoming and the more passive notions of self-organization and assemblages (which can become *agencements*). Intentionality explains the motives, the why behind self-organization and its movements. Three intentionalities by which this process of becoming is driven are described below.

Translation in three intentionalities

Three intentionalities are distinguished in translation, that are not sequential, but rather relate to their intensity, degree of activity, and interaction with their environment. All three intentionalities also have collateral features.

A first intentionality is interfering for change. This intentionality refers to a very light and temporary process of becoming. It has an *agencement* situated in a specific time and space, and aims to make a difference to that situated context. This form of intentional translation tells a story of how things have turned out a certain way and how they work, but also of how things have been made better, according to the actors involved. What is better is not, of course, a pre-given truth or fixed optimum, but something that is normative, situated, contextual, and thus constructed as an entity within the network (Mol, 2002a). Interferences for change that come from that normative, situated, and contextual perspective, aim at shifting the object of treatment, in order to counter deviances that are felt or considered incommensurable to the translation of the network. There is no question of what the best interference might be, only the question whether it effectively solves a certain problem or addresses a certain need within particular circumstances, according to those involved (Mol, 2002b; Law, 2009b).

With this emphasis on interference, the urban environment is no longer a “single passive object in the middle, waiting to be seen from the point of view of seemingly endless series of perspectives. Instead objects come into being – and disappear – with the practices in which they are manipulated” (Mol, 2002a: 5). Translation in this intentionality occurs as certain things are foregrounded and something else is turned into unimportant detail, meaning that some things might become fixed while other things or information might get lost (Mol, 2002b), sometimes intentionally, and sometimes collaterally. This is not only done by talking about situations, but is turned into actual physical interferences as well. The urban environment, however, does not remain something that is just being discussed, since the delineation of problems in the environment is soon followed by foregrounding practicalities, materialities, the proactive creation of events that not only aim at changing the understanding of the physicality, but also aim at changing the physicality itself (Mol, 2002a: 12). So the urban environment does not remain untouched, but the initiators make their interference visible (*ibid.*: 55) and material. They “re-do” space (Metzger, 2011) according to the potentialities the initiators see. Interferences for change are thus very situated actions in time and space, with a high intensity directed not so much toward the self of the initiative but rather at changing its environment.

A second intentionality is networking for a fit. In this form of intentionality, a network is gradually strengthened, expanded, and made thicker. It knits together events and other networks around new and emerging meanings. The initiative starts with almost nothing, just an idea, and while working their way through they construct a context around their idea (Latour, 1996: 119, 133). The more actors become interested and part of the chains of translation, the more actual

an object, plan, or initiative becomes. The real comes together in a manner that is willful, explicit, spelled out (Law, 2009b: 4); the focus is the proactive grouping around meaning. Grouping around meaning concerns how unity, a common world, and a common good are established among the components of the emerging network through the reassembling of facts and values, a movement toward potential unification (Latour, 2004). In spatial planning, this intentionality refers to the collection of resources needed for the realization of a spatial intervention (Boelens, 2009). Spatial planning itself can be seen as a process of network building, in which entities of various kinds are assembled in ways that allow the network to undertake certain functions. It is a process in which actors with a certain interest and willingness to invest in their local environment out of more or less self-interest, engage in organizing and networking meaningful spatial connections, and mobilizing the means, such as land, finances, buildings, permits, etc., to achieve their goals (Boelens, 2009; 2010). This intentionality is also situated in time and space, but the process is more continuous, and thus happens with less (but still high) intensity. Its relation with its environment is one of mutual influence, compliance, and fluidity, and its goal is to achieve an optimal fit between the idea and the physical environment, so that this idea can materialize into an actual physical project.

A third intentionality is assemble to maintain, an intentionality that is found in more or less stable networks focused on maintenance, homogeneity, and coherence (Thrift, 1996; Hillier, 2007). The stronger the network, the tighter the various entities (human and non-human) are tied in. Despite their heterogeneity, they work in unison. However, the power of intermediaries may be curtailed by actors modifying or appropriating them in accordance with their own projects. When the translation process has been weakly executed, the components find their states continually in question, and find it hard to define a common world with other parts of the network. Thus, successful or strong networks might be considered to be those where the processes of translation have been effectively executed, allowing the component parts to consolidate the assemblage on their own terms (Callon, 1991: 151). As soon as an assemblage has emerged, it starts providing resources for its components and also starts to restrain them. They work as sorting machines in favor of their own emergence and maintenance (Van Wezemaal, 2010: 290). This is the moment that “translation” moves from the process of collecting resources (Boelens, 2009) to the process of maintaining coherence and homogeneity (Hillier, 2009). In this intentionality of translation, the maintenance of the network as a collective becomes important, as does the constant evaluation whether the network is able to still follow through (Latour, 2004). This is not the end of the process of translation, as the process of construction and maintenance of networks requires constant effort as well

(Thrift, 1999: 23). Moreover, the non-directionality of assemblages can turn into *agencement* again, turning an assemblage that is mostly focused on its own maintenance into an individual whole that is interfering in its environment. Assemblage to maintain is an intentionality that is more continuous in time and space, its intensity is much lower, and its relation with the environment concerns not so much the environment itself as the maintenance of the self within that environment.

In the perspective of civic initiatives, these three intentionalities can relate to the following. When the intentionality is interference for change, the initiative may be short term, very issue based, and materialize in a temporary event, a small-scale intervention, for instance an art project or a temporary redecoration of a street. The intervention is, for instance, focused on creating awareness or a new understanding of a certain place. When the intentionality is networking for a fit, the initiative aims at materializing a project that is meant to be there to stay. What the initiative is looking for, is the right environment in which to realize its idea; in other words, the environment that fits best to their ideas. When the intentionality is assembling to maintain, the initiative aims to create a stable community and improve parts of that community. But, of course, although presented here as distinctive, these three intentionalities also presuppose each other. An interference for change presupposes a network that is able to interfere. And this network has to “become” before it can be, find a fit with its environment, and be able to maintain itself. So even though interference for change, networking for a fit, and assembling to maintain are different forms of intentionalities, they cannot exist without each other.

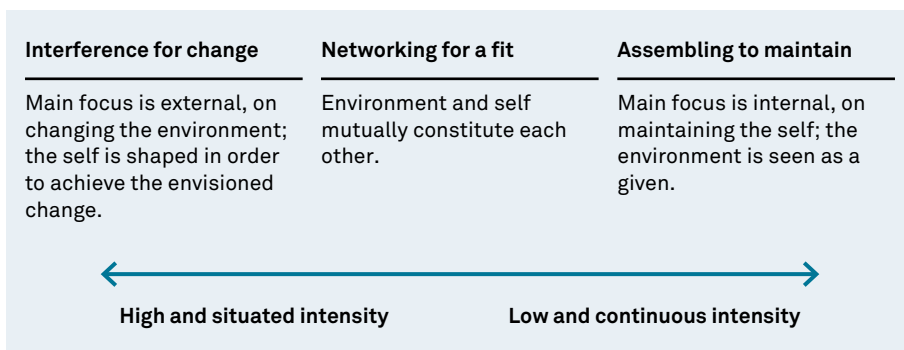


FIGURE 4.2 Translation in three intentionalities

The resonances between complexity theory and post-structuralist thinking enabled the combination of three ways of understanding processes of becoming: Self-organization from complexity theory, translation from actor-network theory and individuation from assemblage theory. Combining these related understandings of processes of becoming has several benefits: It enables the researcher to emphasize the role of both non-human and human actors, it gives a different understanding of what “local” means, and it adds the notion of a self and a “matter of concern” that forms that self. Moreover, by mixing these understandings of becoming, four behaviors can be identified: de-coding, expansion, contraction, and coding. These behaviors can be showcased by actors within the emerging network, actors that encounter the emerging network, and by the network as an actor itself. And, last but not least, the notion of translation adds intentionality (in three different intensities) to these processes of becoming.

Thus, together, these different but related ways of understanding processes of becoming, provide a vocabulary that is well suited to describing and tracing the becoming of civic initiatives. By tracing back the becoming of a civic initiative and plotting these traces on the diagram, insights into the planning strategies developed within and in response to the emerging civic initiatives can be gleaned. The following chapter explains how.

The Empirical Perspective: Introduction to the Case Studies

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this thesis developed a vocabulary to address civic initiatives for spatial interventions by framing them as the emergence of self-organizing actor-networks. This was a necessary step in developing a theoretical diagram of processes of becoming with which the emergence of actual civic initiatives can be traced and studied. In the second part of this thesis, this diagram is used to answer the three sub-research questions: 1) Under what conditions do civic initiatives emerge? 2) How do civic initiatives gain robustness and resilience? 3) What planning strategies are developed within and in response to civic initiatives? These questions are addressed in the chapters to follow, each of which focuses on a different collection of civic initiatives in spatial development. In chapter 9 the outcomes of the case studies are used to answer the overall research question of this thesis, and to come to a conclusion on planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship.

1

MULTIPLE CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Multiple case study research

To address these questions, multiple case study research was carried out. This is an often applied and proven method within policy, governance, and planning studies (Buijs et al., 2009). Case studies are a preferred strategy for empirical enquiry when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events and cannot manipulate or influence relevant behaviors, and when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 1984: 13, 23). Case studies have several applications: They explain links between and in real-life interventions, they describe a real-life context in which an intervention occurs, they are illustrative of the intervention itself, and they explore situations in which an intervention has no clear, single set of outcomes (ibid.: 25).

Multiple case study research works with a set or collection of case studies. This set can effectively illuminate a common program or phenomenon without taking one case as a representative of other cases. Instead, multiple case studies are studies of particularization: The set of cases is selected as a principle of organization that occurs only in specific, particular, and local situations. The unique, non-representational and situational life of the case is the real interest (Stake 1998: vi, 8). What makes a case study appealing is that it operates in real time, and opens the possibility to look at how it occurs in its contexts and particular situations (ibid.: 2). Cases as part of a set show how a program or phenomenon appears in different contexts, and how this context influences its appearance and activities (ibid.: 27). The goal of multiple case study research is not to look for generalized causal relations, but to provide a better and richer understanding of experiences and lessons learned (ibid.: x, ix).

An individual case is something singular and identifiable as an entity, but is in itself made up of various parts and members, a complex entity located in its own situation and context. It can be, for instance, a collection of people, activities, policies, decisions, processes, events, etc. (Yin, 1984: 23; Stake, 1998: 12-13). The focus of case study research is therefore on relationships and interactions, open boundaries between case and context, processes of becoming with no single outcome, and the situational, particular, and non-representational. This

makes multiple case study research a method that fits very well with notions of complexity and post-structuralism as discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. It relates to such notions as “context as the outcome of interpretation” (Buijs et al., 2009: 49-50), “defined within a case itself, by the actors who make up the case” (Latour, 2005: 186), “context that cannot be provided objectively and is never absolutely determinable” (Cilliers, 1998), “the way in which a thing is included in a series of events,” a “researchers’ awareness of unexpected corners, the still unpronounced, not yet recognized, the local, the specific ... and collect and disseminate knowledge in turn” (Bos, 2011: 405-421), and the “articulation of the specificity of a situation” (Christiaens & De Ronde, 2009: 339).

In line with Deleuze’s philosophy of becoming, multiple case study research does not answer the question “What is ...?” but rather “Who, how, why, when, where?” in order to express the accidental events and location where something occurs, and by which it is activated (Christiaens & De Ronde, 2009: 339). Moreover, the description of a case and a set of cases strongly resembles the definition of an assemblage, namely an open whole of loosely connected parts. The best case studies are those in which many such relationships are brought together (Stake, 1998: vi). The description of a set of cases as multiply sequenced, multiply contextual, and functioning coincidentally and purposefully at the same time, with a strong sense of self (ibid.: 3, 13), resembles such notions as multiple trajectories, quasi-causality, or intentional and collateral translations. This makes multiple case study research an excellent method to study practices from a complexity and post-structuralist perspective. The method enables the researcher to combine in-depth case studies with more comparative methods, and to alternate between and simultaneously apply methodologies and levels, in order to establish a pluralistic approach, as is desired within complexity studies (Buijs et al., 2009: 50-51).

Choosing the sets of cases

From the ontological and theoretical understanding of civic initiatives in spatial development as emergent self-organizing actor-networks, many directions can be taken in looking for empirical experiences from urban practices that provide insight into planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship. For this thesis, three sets of cases were selected – fields in which civic initiatives manifest themselves, in which they can be traced, and plotted on the diagram of processes of becoming. These sets were selected on the basis of various conditions that are presupposed as enablers of civic initiatives, and cover the Netherlands, Denmark, and England. The Danish and English sets comprise a referential case study of a subject that recently received substantial policy

attention in the Netherlands. One set of cases is fully Dutch: It covers three subdomains within spatial planning, namely housing, urban regeneration, and public space.¹

The first set of cases concerns civic initiatives in the field of housing, more specifically in the development of co-housing initiatives. In such initiatives, the initiators are also the end-users of the housing estates: Groups of future residents collectively take a leading position in the commissioning (planning, designing, and building) and cooperative maintenance of their housing estates. As such, these initiatives can be considered civic initiatives. Within the Dutch context, such self-commissioning (by both individuals and collectives) has been promoted for years by various policy and funding programs. However, until 2012, the actual number of houses developed in this manner remained negligible and far behind the intended 30% share of all newly developed housing stock. Moreover, stories of failure abounded, due to long, demanding, and rigorous procedures, and difficulties in bringing a group together, finding appropriate locations, and financing. Obstacles to their “process of becoming” were said to lie within the institutional context of housing and planning routines. A reference for cooperative housing schemes or co-housing is therefore found in Denmark. Although the institutional settings for planning and housing in the Netherlands and Denmark are very comparable, Denmark has a much stronger tradition of self-build housing, cooperative forms of living, and planning through negotiation and consensus. This tradition of “do-it-yourself together” is a presupposed enabling condition for civic initiatives in housing. The different institutional setting and planning practice in which Danish co-housing initiatives emerge provides a range of experiences with civic initiatives in spatial development and their planning strategies, and also insight into the role of tradition.

The second set of cases concern urban regeneration initiatives undertaken by local entrepreneurs – more specifically, the emergence of business improvement districts (BIDs). In these districts, local entrepreneurs form a collective to maintain, enhance, and develop their business environments, which can be considered a form of civic initiative. BID initiatives are enabled by legislation,

¹ With a heavy heart, and mostly due to time and budget constraints, I decided not to include some other tremendously interesting fields in which civic initiatives are currently emerging, such as renewable energy and local self-organizing energy cooperatives, the field of greening strategies for cities and self-organizing urban gardening and urban farming, the field of cultural amenities and self-organizing cultural free-zones in, for instance, vacant buildings, or the field of healthcare and local self-organizing care communities. I have, however, good hopes that these fields will soon open up for further research, as active citizenship is such a growing concern within a broad set of societal topics.

which provides a legal framework for collective actions, to collectively self-govern and self-maintain business environments. Such legislation is a presumed enabling condition for civic initiatives by entrepreneurs. In the Netherlands, this legislation was introduced as an experiment in 2009, and was made permanent in 2015. Over the years, BIDs have proven to be very popular in the Netherlands, although at the time of selecting this set of cases in 2010, experiences of the Dutch BIDs were still meagre. A reference for BIDs is found in England, where BID legislation was introduced in 2004, and where thus longer and more profound experiences of BIDs and urban regeneration has been gained. Other enabling conditions for civic initiatives in England are presupposed in the English planning system, which is more based on public sector-led land use regulation and evolutionary private sector-led development compared to the Dutch system, and the profound set of legislative frameworks that support policy efforts to stimulate community-led development under the flag of Big Society and the recent Localism Act. The different institutional settings and planning practices in which these initiatives for BIDs emerged provide a range of experiences with civic initiatives in spatial development and their planning strategies, as well as insight into the role of legal frameworks.²

The third set of cases are rather different in their set-up. The set does not concern an international reference, or a single policy domain; instead, a Dutch municipality – the new town of Almere – is its area of research. In Almere, the local municipality had been experimenting with new planning approaches aimed at stimulating active citizenship in the development and maintenance of the living environment – policy to put citizens in the lead. Civic initiatives have emerged in Almere, related to housing, urban regeneration, and public space. These initiatives provide insight into whether a local authority actively looking and experimenting with new planning strategies, and ways to facilitate civic initiatives in spatial development, is also an enabling condition.

² I am well aware that in this section, I have framed BIDs and co-housing initiatives as forms or manifestations of civic initiatives quite positively, perhaps even too positively. The controversies over both set of cases with respect to self-organization are, however, thoroughly discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, respectively, nuancing the above descriptions to a large extent. Some generalization about the set at the outset of the study is hardly avoidable, but modified again when I grew more acquainted with the individual cases over time (cf. Stake 1998: vii).

2

TRACING THE INDIVIDUAL CASES

Selecting individual cases

Due to their volatility, localness, variety, temporality, etc., there are no overviews on civic initiatives in general. But there are overviews of co-housing initiatives, business improvement districts, and civic initiatives within a demarcated geographical area, and these are often made by the people involved in the initiatives and their supporters. This is why the abovementioned sets of cases were chosen. Working with a set of cases makes it easier to identify, select, and approach a civic initiative as an individual case study. According to multicase study research, there are three main criteria for selecting such individual cases.

A first criteria is whether the case is relevant to the set of cases. The set functions as something to which an individual initiative can code itself, as part of its process of becoming. Through this coding, an initiative becomes a part or a manifestation of the set, and also becomes identifiable and visible as an individual entity. The individual cases are thus not meant as mere examples of a set of cases, but as local practices that provide a deeper understanding of the workings of the set of cases. The individual cases were chosen because they manifest what binds the set together, in actual, particular, real-life, and situational practices (Stake, 1998).

A second criteria is the diversity across contexts the individual cases can provide. In the selection of these individual cases, one can seek a structured representation of cases among various contexts and attributes, selected on pre-assumptions on what factors could be of possible influence on the working of the cases. When this structured representation cannot be made on such pre-assumptions, however, one can look for cases that differ on various attributes (Stake, 1998: 25). In the selection of the three sets of cases, this variation is found over countries, policy domains, and pre-assumed enabling conditions for civic initiatives in spatial development. In selecting individual cases as part of these sets, a restriction was made to certain geographical delineations in which a fruitful variety of individual cases could be found, which could all be visited within attainable travel distances. Next, the benefits of multicase study research are best if the number of individual cases lies between three and ten (*ibid.*: 22). Such a fruitful variety of BIDs was found within the municipal borders of Birmingham

(England), where five BIDs in the city center were found, each different in type of businesses and neighborhood. A variety of co-housing initiatives were found within the greater Copenhagen-area and Sjælland in Denmark, where four co-housing initiatives were selected, different in their interaction with municipalities. A variety of civic initiatives were found within Almere, where four civic initiatives were selected that differentiated in the policy domains they addressed.

A third criteria concerns whether the cases provide good opportunities to learn about complexity and contexts (Stake, 1998: 23). The selected case studies are therefore not the average real-life manifestation of a set of cases, as highly atypical cases can sometimes give much better insights (*ibid.*: vii). Individual cases were selected on their outstandingness – their ambitiousness, the spatial issues they address, the innovativeness of their initiative, or perhaps because something turned out quite differently than expected. When selecting cases that have these characteristics, one expects to find more interactions and controversies between the civic initiative and more conventional planning strategies, and thus more fruitful learning experiences in relation to such interactions. Some variety in age and diversification of matters of concern was also considered preferable.

Collecting data

Once cases have been selected, the next concern is how to collect the data that will enable the writing of a case account. Data collection concerns what a researcher actually does in the field, such as conducting interviews, reading documents, taking notes and photographs, etc. (Latour, 2005: 123; Stake, 1998: vi). Such data sources and data-gathering activities need to be defined in advance, as they provide the evidence for the case and the case findings. Once an individual case has been selected, the next step therefore is to select the persons, places, and events to observe (Stake, 1998: 26). Both the set and the individual cases can be seen as assemblages in a process of becoming, and cannot be approached or seen as fixed entities. Therefore, when a researcher approaches a case, this can best be seen as an encounter between two evolving trajectories: that of the case, and that of the researcher. When this encounter takes place, action in the case has already started, and action will also continue when the researcher no longer is around (Latour, 2005: 123). The researcher is therefore always “in the middle of things.” This is why cases are looked at in hindsight: Starting from the here and now of the encounter between me (the researcher) and the case, the process back into the origins of the self is traced. This tracing back of the becoming of an initiative is not too difficult, as during the process of becoming of the network, assemblage or system, point-to-point

connections are established that are physically traceable (human and non-human factors), and thus can be recorded empirically (ibid.: 132). Looking backward in time means that the most significant behaviors and intentionalities that led the emergence of the self and the actualization of the initiative, have already been taking place. Moreover, looking in hindsight at a case is convenient for three more reasons.

The first convenience is that the actors in the case have already shaped a group and its story. This means that the boundaries of a group can be traced. For every group that forms itself, a list of anti-groups is set up as well, defining what the groups is not, and who does not belong to it. Moreover, actors are always engaged in the business of mapping the social context in which they are placed, and they make figurations of how they relate to that context. These stories of group formations are told in the form of narratives, to which the researcher can listen and make account of (Latour, 2005: 31-34; 52-58). The second convenience is that the case has already generated spokespersons. These spokespersons can be human, someone who speaks for the group's existence, who tells the story of the initiative's becoming in the name of the group. These are persons who have grown more dominant than others, as they had the means at their disposal that were crucial in the establishment of the initiative, and they are distinguishable as the actors who organized the network. Spokespersons do not have to be human, though; they can also be websites, newspapers, or the accounts of other scientists in which the name and the story of the group appears. These spokespersons can all be approached as first entries to the case (ibid.: 31-34). The third convenience is that in its process of becoming, the initiative is making a difference in a state of affairs, and while doing so it leaves traces in the form of produced artefacts, such as a new spatial configuration or a newly produced object (ibid.: 52-58). These artefacts can be visited, touched, studied, read, observed, and photographed by the researcher who is tracing the case.

Impressions derived from narratives on group formations, spokespersons, and artefacts are good data to start with, but the researcher will want assurance of what is seen and heard. And at the same time, he or she will want to remain open minded about the nuances in understandings, internal contradiction, and time-boundedness, be tolerant of ambiguity, and have an appetite for multiple perspectives. It is therefore important to seek out and present multiple perspectives on activities and issues, discovering and portraying the different views (Stake, 1998: vi). To achieve this, the researcher should find multiple rather than single observers of the same thing, use second and third perspectives, and apply more than one research method (for instance document review and interviews) (ibid.: 37). This is called triangulation (ibid.: 35).

Following conventional case study research, triangulation is achieved by a combination of document analyses, observations, and interviews as the three main sources of data (Yin, 1984). As a first source, documentation is studied, such as memos of events, minutes of meetings, reports, newsletters, proposals, websites, political documents, statutory instruments, formal studies or evaluations, news clippings and articles, organizational maps and charts, survey data and personal records (*ibid.*: 81), when such are available and provided by the individual case. The observations made during site visits and the physical artifacts produced in the case, documented in notes and pictures, are a second source of data. Interviews are the third source of data (*ibid.*). The way an interviewee sees the case is essential knowledge, and the researcher needs to find out a little about the interviewee to understand his or her interpretations (Stake, 1998: 33).

Therefore, in this research, in all cases various key players were interviewed: The individuals involved in the initiatives and other main actors in the case, often civil servants working for the local planning authority and other involved governmental agencies. Participants were asked to reflect on the initiative during a semi-structured or focused interview, in which an open-ended conversation was held, with some key questions as starting points and an issue-based checklist (Bryman, 2008; Stake, 1998; Yin, 1984: 82-84). Interviewees were asked to give a chronological description of the process toward materialization of the initiatives, and additional questions were asked related to aspects of decoding, expansion, contraction, and coding, without using these specific notions (see next paragraph). Transcripts of these interviews were sent to the interviewees for a check on accuracy (Stake, 1998: 37). Based on these multiple sources of evidence, a case study database, and a chronological description, or chain of evidence, was made of each individual case (Yin, 1984: 78).

3

PLOTING THE TRACES ON THE DIAGRAM

Identifying behavior

Having put together case reports that elaborate the chronological becoming of the initiative, and the persons, places, and events involved, the four forms of behavior in a process of becoming were identified. This was done according to the diagram

presented in Chapter 4. The four forms of behavior were then translated into an issue list by which the interviews and all other data collected were structured.

Decoding refers to the willingness or urgency of actors to step out of the usual way of working, to disassociate themselves from existing schemes, and try something new. It defines a new state to move to, which functions in the further trajectory of the case as the self or the attractor. Decoding tells about the conditions that were crucial in the becoming of an initiative, in the sense of those conditions that needed to be changed, or that enabled the actors to start changing something. It also tells about the reasons why other trajectories join the trajectory of the initiative, sometimes only temporarily and sometimes in a more permanent way, leaving behind their usual ways of working. This behavior was identified by asking such questions as:

- Who started the initiative, and why?
- What were the conditions under which the initiative started?
- What did the initiators want to change or achieve?
- Did these initial conditions and motives change over time?
- Were other goals added to the initiative over time?

Expansion refers to the encounters the initiative has with its outside environment – trying to be as broad, informed, and open to new and different options and actors as possible. Expansion has an external orientation by looking for exposure, exploring new content, and connecting to a large number of actors in new actor constellations. It is about creating diversity, increasing connections, striving for a redundancy of plans, ideas, content, and actors. Expansion mostly explains how the initiative gains external robustness through the establishment of new, temporary and permanent associations with other trajectories. This behavior was identified by asking such questions as:

- What actors did the initiative encounter along the way?
- For whom did the initiative have to become relevant?
- Who was consulted, and why?
- What exposure was made by or given to the initiative?
- What options (e.g., location, legal form, focus, activities) were considered over time?
- Did the focus and the range of activities of the initiative broaden over time?

The behavior of **contraction** refers to the dealings of an initiative with its internal settings, including selecting those elements from the outside to include in the initiative that are necessary for its best survival. A specification of boundaries,

identity, and hierarchy is made, actor constellations are stabilized, and plans, content, and actors are sorted, and selected. The activities in this type of behavior are focused on confirmation, strength, homogeneity, maintenance, alignment, cementing links, bringing and binding together, and choosing representation. Contraction mostly explains how the initiative gains internal robustness by binding together the components of the assemblage, and keeping together the trajectory. This behavior is identified by asking such questions as:

- What choices were made (e.g., location, legal form, focus, activities), and why?
- What options were not followed through, and what became excluded from the initiative?
- What is the identity, the binding principle of the initiative, and how was this decided?
- Did the identity change over time, and if so, why and how?
- How are boundaries defined, explicated, and decided upon?
- Did actors leave the initiative, and if so, why?
- Did the boundaries change over time, and if so, why and how?
- What organizational form and structure was chosen, and why?
- Did the organizational form and structure change over time, and if so, why and how?
- How is internal communication organized?

The behavior of **coding** refers to the elements that turn the initiative into something familiar, something that fits existing schemes, a part of something bigger. Other “black boxes” are used or referred to in favor of turning the initiative into a black box of its own, providing the initiative with externally derived stability. Through coding, the initiative becomes identifiable, grows heavy with norms, and therefore also loses some of its individuality. Materialization or new routines that emerge from the case are also forms of coding. Coding sheds light on the conditions that play a role in the becoming of a civic initiative, as well as on the way in which internal robustness (being stabilized by something bigger, or other black boxes) and external robustness (being recognizable as something people know) are achieved. This behavior is identified by asking such questions as:

- What references were made to other initiatives?
- What planning institutions (procedures, routines) were followed by the initiative?
- What legal frameworks did the initiative use?
- Were there changes in these legal frameworks over time?
- What was learned from the case, and turned into something repeatable?
- Did the initiative lead to similar initiatives?

Visualizing the trajectories

Having identified the four forms of behavior in the becoming of an initiative, these behaviors were structured according to a chronological time line. This time line begins with the moment the actors in the case point out as “the beginning” of the case – theoretically to be framed as the first emergence of a self in the self-organization, or the definition of an attractor. The time line ends with the moment at which I as a researcher encountered the case. This usually took place after most activity in the establishment of the case had already taken place: The co-housing project had been built (materialized) and was inhabited by the initiators, the business improvement districts had been established and were carrying out their activities. For the civic initiatives in Almere, this “endpoint” is rather diffuse, as the cases were still developing during the period of research.

To structure the time line of each individual case, use was made of Teisman’s (2000) rounds model on policy and decision-making processes. In this model, decision making is assumed to consist of a number of decision-making rounds: Each round ends with the interactions between purposeful actors resulting in an event or decision (ibid.: 938). These end-of-rounds are defined by the researcher in retrospect, but are based on the reconstruction of the process by the respondents in the individual cases, and on what the main actors identify as the most crucial decisions (ibid: 944). The crucial decision or event is the beginning of a next round, and so never fixes the progress of the process, but merely serves as a focal point of reference for the actors involved (ibid: 946). This model therefore fits the post-structuralist perspective, as it is focused on the variety of actors involved in decision-making processes and the dynamics resulting from their interactions, and it combines both a sequential perspective as a perspective of simultaneity (ibid: 942). This round model enables the case description to be divided into various time periods, and for the various forms of behavior within a certain time period to be presented. It shows that the various actors involved in the cases exhibit the various forms of behavior simultaneously.

Now, when the four forms of behavior are plotted on the horizontal axis of a scheme during the various time periods (vertical axis), and the behaviors are connected chronologically with a line, the trajectory of the case becomes visible. Such a trajectory identifies the self of the initiative and the intentionalities of this emerging self, which is of course the dominant trajectory in this diagram of the process of becoming. However, while becoming, the initiative also encounters – collaterally and intentionally – other trajectories, for instance those of professional parties and planning institutions such as a municipality, a developer, or perhaps other communities within a certain area or other civic initiatives. What happens is that through the actor-network’s translation around

an initiative to gain a context in which it can exist, the initiative begins to interact: “A citizens’ initiative must organize itself within the context of other initiatives, their grassroots and the political recipients who will implement the initiative” (Teisman et al., 2009: 9). These encounters take place because there can be an overlap between the actors and factors involved in the trajectories, like physical objects, professional capacities used in private time, or issues at hand. From these encounters, insight can be gained into conditions that give rise to civic initiatives and how the initiatives gained both internal and external robustness. It also reveals what other actors get temporarily involved in the initiative, but do not become part of it, including municipal planning professionals. These encounters play a role in the gaining of external robustness. Interestingly, this way of plotting the trajectories of a civic initiatives on the diagram of processes of becoming, also renders visible what changes in the planning practices emerged from the encounters with the civic initiative. These insights were used to learn about planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship.

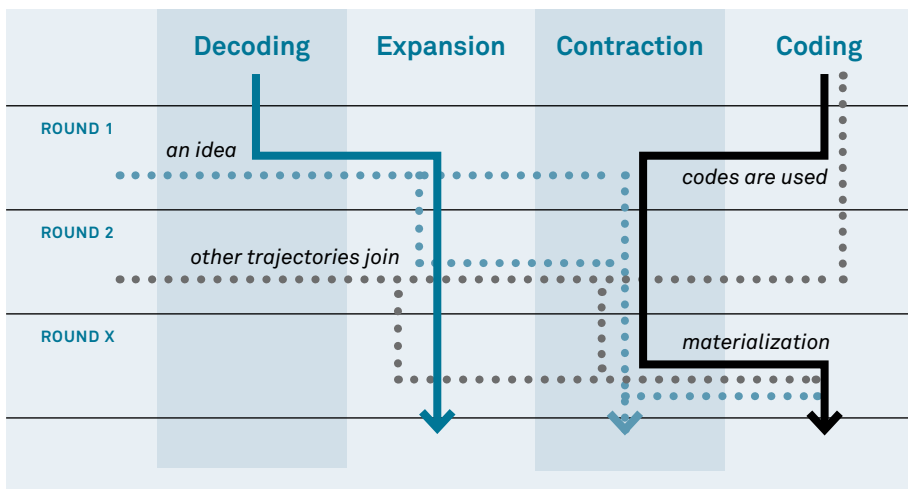


FIGURE 5.1 Plotting the traces of the initiative on the diagram of processes of becoming, visualizing the trajectories

4

FORMULATING ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The diagram, which includes the time line, various forms of behavior, and the trajectories running through the map, provides the information needed to answer the three research questions from Chapter 1. So far, the gathered data, maps, and case findings were input for individual case accounts. An attempt was made to keep these case accounts as close as possible to the practices and the actors within the case itself, and they are particular, idiosyncratic, and localized (Latour, 2005: 137), whereas no attempt was made to explain or reveal any externally derived or overarching explanations (Czarnawska, 1995). However, in order to draw conclusions in relation to the overall research question regarding planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship, at last a move is made from the individual cases back to the sets of cases. Not for case comparison, but for even better understanding of life in multiple situations (Stake, 1998: 83). This moving back to the set of cases is therefore done while staying as close to the individual case findings as possible.

Conditions that gave rise to the initiatives

The first research question was: ***Under what conditions do civic initiatives emerge?*** In other words, this question concerns what actors and factors made people organize themselves, and what actors and factors (spatial, institutional, situational) in the environment enabled them to develop their ideas. These actors and factors that set a trajectory in motion can be both human and non-human. Answers to this question can be found within the fields of coding and decoding. In the process of becoming, or the individuation of a civic initiative, decoding tells about the actors and factors, or the conditions that made the actors in the initiative change their behavior and start self-organizing. Coding tells about the actors and factors, or the conditions that enabled the actors to self-organize, to secure, to and develop their initiative further.

Ways in which the initiatives gained robustness

The second research question was: ***How do civic initiatives gain robustness and resilience?*** This question concerns how the initiators and other actors involved in a civic initiative organized their internal structure in order to become more robust,

and how they ensured embeddedness in their surroundings in order to become more resilient. The answer to this question is twofold.

The first part of the answer refers to the actors and factors that gave robustness and embeddedness to the trajectory. These actors and factors – or conditions – can be found within the fields of expansion, contraction, and coding. The field of coding tells about the actors and factors that have conditioned the initiative in its robustness and embeddedness in its spatial, institutional, social, and situational environment. The field of expansion tells about how, and with what actors and factors, the initiative widened its scope, got other actors interested, tried various possibilities, and thus gained external robustness. The field of contraction tells about how and with what actors and factors the initiative organized its internal structure, how it set the hierarchy, made choices and selection, what its exact boundaries are, and thus how the initiative gained internal robustness. The factors of importance in keeping the trajectory of the initiative together (internal robustness), and the factors of importance in establishing associations with other trajectories (external robustness), also shed light on this question. Those – again both human and non-human – actors and factors are usually those elements within the network or assemblage that have more or less held the initiative together, and were important in making the initiative actualize its intentions.

The second part of the answer refers to the ability of the trajectory of the initiative to form associations, and deploy controversies in its process of becoming. Associations and controversies can occur within the trajectory of a single initiative (such as between the trajectory of the initiative and the self that was defined at the beginning or actors within the initiating group), as well as with other emerging trajectories of those who are already in existence (such as the physical environment, legal settings, planning authorities). The initiative will try to interest and enroll other trajectories, for instance the planning institutions. The other way around can happen, too: Planning professionals try to model the initiative into a form that fits their routines and institutes as well. And these encounters can even lead to displacement or inventions, modifying the original two (Latour 1999: 179). These encounters, the associations formed, and the controversies deployed, keep the trajectory in motion, and provide the initiative with internal and external robustness, and resilience.

Planning strategies developed in, and in response to the initiatives

The third research question was: ***What planning strategies are developed within, and in response to civic initiatives?*** The answer to this question relates to the way

the trajectories intentionally (and quasi-intentionally) move across its map, from decoding, through expansion and contraction toward coding (and materialization). What associations were made, and what controversies were made productive (meaning that oppositions between trajectories that were supposedly insurmountable, were turned around so that all trajectories could move forward in a desired direction again)? Can patterns be discerned in the way in which trajectories move across the map and encounter each other? What goals were achieved by the various trajectories crossing the map, and what conditions, associations, and controversies were created intentionally in order to achieve these goals? At this point, the intentionalities behind the various trajectories in the case need to be identified: Those of the initiative (and how its intentionality changed over time) and those of other trajectories encountering the initiative. Did the initiative start to interfere in its environment in order to make a change, or was assembling to maintain some existing settings the main incentive of the initiative? As there are no clear boundaries to be drawn between these different intentionalities, it would be impossible to measure unambiguously what even occurs with what intentionality. So these need to be judged by the researcher.

This question thus relates not only to the trajectory of the initiative itself, but also to the intended actions of other actors encountered by the initiative. Did these other trajectories interfere in the initiative, did they help the initiative move forward because it would generate useful resources, or did they obstruct the initiative in order to maintain themselves and an existing situation? And when does a trajectory shift from one intentionality to the other? The field of decoding can shed light on this question – not the decoding of the initiative itself, but the decoding of other actors who became associated with the civic initiative during its process of becoming. What old behaviors were left behind, and why? The field of coding can also shed light on this question – not the actors and factors to which the initiative codes itself, but the codes that are derived from the initiative. Were certain conditions changed and reshaped after their encounter with civic initiatives? Planning strategies derived from the case can relate to the period before the initiative started, during the trajectory of the initiative, and after the initiative has become or materialized.

Learning from the cases

Now that the research questions have been answered on the basis of the individual cases and the diagram of processes of becoming, a reflection can be given on the set of cases as a whole (while saving the overall research question “What planning strategies fit an age of active citizenship?” for the last chapter).

Following a post-structuralist understanding of processes of becoming, one has to be careful and very modest about the claims that are made on the basis of case studies and about the specific constraints that have made these claims possible (Cilliers, 2005: 256; Buijs et al., 2009: 50). Therefore Hillier (2007: 18) is followed in attempting not to “discover universal [settings], but to “find the conditions under which something new is produced.” The conditions, behaviors, and intentionalities that drive a case forward are not meant to be generalized, or to be projected cases not examined (Latour, 2005). According to Mol and Law (2002: 14), cases are not merely examples or illustrations of something general, representations of something larger; they do all kinds of other work. They sensitize the reader to events and situations elsewhere that have not yet been recognized, and that may well be improbable. They seduce the reader into continuing to read, to ask what is going to come next. They suggest ways of thinking about, and tackling, other specificities, not because they are “generally applicable,” but because they may be transferable, translatable, and even work allegorically (ibid.: 15-16). They can indeed create a better understanding of certain experiences that can help other actors in other cases to decipher their own particular and complex situations they are meant to synthesize. Conclusions from the cases are thus rather attempts to enrich the reader’s experiential knowing with as much of the action and context of the cases as possible (Stake, 1998: 90); they provide experiences from which the reader can learn (Latour, 2005). However, if the researcher does encounter some generalizations that appear evident from the data, they should be given. But these generalizations are of a different sort. The strategy is to conclude anything that oversees the various cases and could help explain the set of cases. Some oversimplification is likely and perhaps inevitable, but can be limited by keeping close to the experiences and reflections of the people in the case themselves (Yin, 1984: 21).

It is in this light that the international referential case studies in Denmark and England should be seen. The intention is not to borrow from policy and planning practices elsewhere to solve problems in one’s own planning environment, or to strive toward convergence of planning practices, as is often the case in international comparisons (Booth, 2011). Such comparisons are a real minefield, as comparative researchers often forget how planning practice can be the outcome of very specific local and national cultures, and how deeply planning systems are embedded in their socioeconomic, political, and cultural context. However, the reason to conduct referential case studies is not to converge to or borrow from Danish or English practice. Instead, the intention is to learn about various experiences with civic initiatives in various local contexts, national contexts, and policy domain contexts, in order to develop a broad view on planning strategies that could possibly fit an age of active citizenship. Learning from the

experiences of these foreign initiatives, a reflection can be given on the Dutch situation. In the Almere cases, a different method is used to derive lessons from the case studies. Here, an interactive workshop was organized in which the various initiators and civil servants involved in the specific cases or in policy for active citizenship in general were asked to reflect on the case findings and the elaborate on the dilemmas they encountered while dealing with civic initiatives or with the local authorities. The research design of three sets of cases does not develop generalized empirical knowledge, but provides a detailed understanding of contextual and situational conditions that influence the emergence of civic initiatives and related planning strategies.

A Practice of Do-It-Yourself, Together: The Case of Co-housing, Denmark

Collective private commissioning – or “co-housing,” in international terms – is a form of housing in which future residents go through a joint building and planning process in order to achieve individual tailor-made housing and communal living areas based on a shared vision of an optimal living environment (SEV, 2010; Tummers, 2011; Hasselaar & Qu, 2011). As such co-housing initiatives are started by the community of intended end-users themselves, they can be considered civic initiatives in urban development: Originated in civil society, issue-based, and aimed at spatial interventions in the self-interest of the community.

Such initiatives are a rarity in the Netherlands. The Dutch post-war tradition of large-scale urban development made the Netherlands renowned and celebrated for its functional, efficient, large-scale, industrialized, and institutionalized building sector (McKinze & Company 2010, Qu & Hasselaar, 2011). But it also gave the Netherlands a housing sector dominated by local governments, real estate developers, housing corporations, and the construction sector. The Dutch housing stock became highly uniform and Dutch citizens became mere housing consumers (Qu & Hasselaar, 2011). This large-scale standardized housing practice, however, started to receive critique when in the late 1990s, issues like individual self-determination, self-expression, individualization, diversification, private initiative, and responsibility for the residential environment became important in housing and planning debates (Qu & Hasselaar, 2011; Hasselaar & Qu, 2011; Tummers, 2011). In an attempt to break with this large-scale standardized housing practice, the Dutch government started to encourage self-commissioning in housing in the form of resolutions by Member of Parliament Adri Duivesteijn in 1998 and 2000, policy documents (the memorandum "What People Want, Where People Live: Housing in the 21st century," Min VROM, 2000), and subsidies. The Dutch government decided in 2000 to strive for one-third private commissioning (including collective private commissioning) in the new build housing programs by 2005 (Min VROM, 2000). Numerous experiments with self-commissioning were set up, both for individuals as for co-housing groups, especially by the Dutch Housing Experiments Steering Group (SEV). But despite these measures, the proportion of self-commissioning as part of the overall newly developed housing stock remained low or even decreased (from 14.3% in 1998, to 10.2% in 2009) (Source: CBS, Statline).

This is why in 2009 the SEV commissioned TNO and the University of Utrecht to conduct an evaluation of 10 years of experiments in self-commissioning and co-housing. The aim was to generate insight into the benefits of self-commissioning and co-housing (e.g., cheaper, more qualitative and diverse housing, and increased social cohesion), and to investigate whether barriers to self-commissioning and co-housing were to be found in financial, political, or institutional settings or perhaps even in Dutch culture. The suggestions this study made was that although the Netherlands used to have a rather strong cooperative culture, cooperative practices in the housing sector were largely lost during the emergence of large-scale governmental-led housing development when housing shortages were a national challenge during the second half of the 20th century (SEV, 2010).

Simultaneous to this evaluation study, I was setting up the structure of this thesis, and looking for referential case studies in neighboring countries.

Especially Danish practice came to my mind, as the strong Danish cooperative culture could perhaps be a potentially enabling condition for co-housing. Over the years, I had become acquainted with Denmark through frequent visits to the country. Visiting friends, I had stayed in self-commissioned houses, a kollegiet (student community), and later also a cooperatively owned apartment building (andelsbolig, see section 6.13). At first, I thought these were all very peculiar forms of housing, but over time I became aware that these forms of collectiveness and self-commissioning were actually pretty normal in Denmark. This is why, after finishing the SEV research in 2010, I decided to conduct field work in Denmark in the spring of 2011, together with two Master's students in planning from Utrecht University. Initially, I was mainly interested in cooperative housing forms, but while I was looking for cases of co-housing that stood out for the challenges they had encountered when dealing with planning authorities, I came across three recently materialized co-housing projects. I visited two of these projects in the spring of 2011, and the third in the spring of 2013. This chapter is based on the findings from these field trips and additional desk research.

*My expectations of collective forms of housing in Denmark were formulated in Boonstra and Boelens (2011) in *Urban Research and Practice*, which was written before conducting the actual case study research. I presented my first findings of that study at the 11th meeting of AESOP's thematic group on "Complexity & Planning – Self-organization and spatial planning: In-depth analysis," Aveiro, May 2–3, 2013 (Boonstra, 2013b). An article based on the case findings, combined with elements from the diagram of processes of becoming, is currently in review.*

This chapter is set out according to the following structure. First, an elaboration is given on the contextual differences for co-housing in the Netherlands and Denmark, explaining what features of planning and housing practices in Denmark could potentially be enabling conditions for co-housing. In the second part of this chapter, three co-housing initiatives in Sjælland (Denmark) are described and analyzed according to the diagram of processes of becoming. The third part contains the conclusions and a reflection on the case findings, and articulates lessons from Denmark for planning strategies in an age of active citizenship.

1

THE NETHERLANDS AND DENMARK: A DIFFERENT CONTEXT FOR CO-HOUSING

The challenge for Dutch co-housing

The 2010 SEV study was not the first to point at the structural barriers to co-housing in the Netherlands. Compared to individual self-commissioning, in which large-scale building practices are sidelined by the direct acquisition and development of plots by individual citizens, co-housing initiatives are even more a challenge for Dutch planning practice. The collective element of such projects makes them not just a housing issue, but also a spatial planning process. Communal facilities, communal (or even public) spaces, and several houses instead of one, make it necessary to assess which program is allowed and best at what site, both from the municipal planning perspective and from the point of view of the initiating citizens. Moreover, each co-housing project is highly contextual and specific, receives differentiated input from its members and stakeholders, and sometimes even redesigns financial models (Tummers, 2011: 167-168). A highly routinized planning system would be unable to meet this complexity, and Dutch building customs and regulatory planning frameworks would thus be a major obstruction to the emergence of co-housing projects. Dutch planning regulations would lead to drawn-out planning processes and high financial risks for initiators and other stakeholders. Initiating citizens would often have to go through challenging processes to keep their co-housing group together and materialize their projects. Developers, housing corporations, construction parties, and even municipalities and their spatial planners would remain hesitant about these new forms of building, housing, use, and management of public space (Tummers, 2011; Qu & Hasselaar, 2011; Hasselaar & Qu, 2011).

Recommendations to stimulate co-housing were often related to these structural barriers, and pointed out the importance of designating sites in the legal land use plan for self-commissioning, establishing a pre-funding scheme for private commissioners in order to reduce the financial risks, implementing a knowledge campaign (SEV, 2006), reducing the number of regulatory frameworks, and reconsidering the distribution of financial and institutional risks (SEV, 2010). However, it remained to be seen whether recommendations and measures that focus solely on institutional contexts, regulations, and routines would be enough, as these still did not address the dynamics and specificities of the projects themselves.

Therefore, a perspective that would reason from the point of view and interest of self-organized initiatives instead, might open additional views on what could be enabling conditions and enhancing planning strategies (SEV, 2010; Boelens & Visser, 2011). Adri Duivesteijn – the initiator of the Duivesteijn resolutions and a former alderman for Housing in Almere, where he turned private commissioning into a common practice – also pleaded for more attention to be paid to planning routines and the self-organized collective aspect of co-housing. In February 2012, Duivesteijn took part in a televised debate on the stagnation of the Dutch housing market (*Buitenhof*, 02/26/2012). During the debate, he urged society to bring “housing” closer to the people again, and to stimulate people to take more responsibility for their living environments and houses, not only as individuals but also in small self-organized building groups. According to Duivesteijn, such a focus on co-housing would draw the attention away from what policymakers want to achieve, toward the actual goals and motivations of the commissioning citizens themselves. This line of reasoning (reconsidering planning routines and the self-organized aspect of co-housing) is followed in this chapter. On the one hand, the initiatives for co-housing can be theoretically framed as self-organized: Emerging networks trying to find a best fit between the self of the initiative and an environment in which it could materialize. Tracing the trajectories the initiatives took toward materialization, their behaviors, intentionalities, and the behaviors and intentionalities of other actors with which the initiative associates in its process of becoming, would shed new light on the conditions and strategies that enable and enhance co-housing initiatives. On the other hand, contextual planning practices are taken into consideration not by looking at Dutch initiatives, but by turning toward co-housing initiatives within the Danish context. Why Danish planning and housing conditions would indeed be enabling and enhancing context for co-housing initiatives is explained below.

Denmark: A planning practice of local negotiations

The Danish and the Dutch planning systems have many things in common. Although international comparisons tend to categorize the Netherlands and Denmark differently (Dutch as a Napoleonic system, Danish as a Nordic system), they also stress the similarities between the systems (Nadin & Stead, 2008). Both the Netherlands and Denmark are considered to have a “continental legal system” – systems that create a complete set of abstract rules and principles in advance of decision making, that focus on plans and systematization (Zweigert et al., 1987). The European Commission thus classifies both planning systems as “Comprehensive Integrated” (other classifications are “Land Use Regulation,” “Regional Economic,” and “Urbanism”).

Both systems are predominantly public sector driven and plan-led. All governmental levels (local, provincial, and national) are involved through a formal hierarchy of plans. Power resides with the national government, although certain responsibilities may be delegated to government departments for specific territorial units of local government (CEC, 1997). National government provides perspectives, plans, guidance, strategic frameworks, and regulatory instruments. These instruments are then used and enacted by local authorities (the municipalities) or regional groupings of local authorities. The main focus of the system is on the coordination between public sector activities on various scales, which however, interrelate in a rather fused way: There is a strict hierarchy among them, but they also operate in relative autonomy and are used to work in co-government (Newman & Thornley, 1996). In both countries, municipalities provide strategic visions for land development (*Kommune Plan* (DK), *Structuurplan* (NL)), and translate these (together with guidelines received from national and regional governments) into legally binding frameworks (*Lokal Plan* (DK), *Bestemmingsplan* (NL)) (CEC, 1997). Municipalities issue building permits (*Byggetilladelse* (DK), *Bouwvergunning* (NL)), which are needed for construction, building, change of use, subdivision, and demolition, and are assessed on their compliance with general building regulations and the legally binding local plan. Both countries allow little discretion and flexibility to deviate from plans once they have been approved, and planning objectives and policies are relatively close to the development that actually takes place (CEC, 1997). Thus, overall, the Danish and Dutch planning systems are comparable to a high degree.

Looking at the two systems in more detail, however, reveals differences. Overall, as part of the Scandinavian planning family, Danish planning practice puts a slightly stronger emphasis on local self-government than Dutch planning practice (Newman & Thornley, 1996). Two major differences relate to the way in which local planning processes are organized. The first concerns civic involvement in planning procedures. In both the Netherlands and Denmark, the right to appeal against plans and public involvement are legally embedded in the planning system, but in slightly different ways. Dutch planning practice does not have a legal obligation to consult citizens in advance of planning approval (apart from public announcements), but does allow citizens to appeal afterward on content-based issues. Danish planning practice, on the contrary, does not allow for such appeals afterward. Instead, more public involvement in advance is mandatory, and this extensive early consultation is generally thought adequate (CEC, 1997). Therefore, the Danish planning systems allows much more civic involvement before plans are approved, on the basis of which one can assume that Danish planners have, in general, more experience of open civic-public negotiations compared to Dutch planners.

The second major difference concerns the development of legally binding local plans – the Bestemmingsplan in the Netherlands and the Lokal Plan in Denmark. In the Netherlands, the Planning Act obliges all municipalities to develop and regularly update the Bestemmingsplan for its whole territory, and to ensure that – through the Bestemmingsplan and its legally binding status – all developments within the municipality are in line with the Structuurplan (the strategic vision) made by the municipality. In Denmark, the Lokal Plan has a similar legally binding status. However, it is by no means a legal obligation to provide such plans for all the territory. Lokal Planer are developed only when a large or important development is proposed, or when the municipality wants to promote a certain area. Moreover, the Lokal Plan is often developed in close negotiations with the intended land purchasers or developers, before the plan is approved by the municipal council (Newman & Thornley, 1996). The negotiations with these end-users, developers, or land purchasers take place at the same time as the civic involvement, all before a Lokal Plan is officially approved and building permits can be issued. It is therefore usual in Denmark that the negotiations between the purchasers of land and current residents are the responsibility of the former: Planning permission (a revision of the Lokal Plan and building permits) is granted only when the land purchasers have been able to show that their plans met with the approval of the neighboring residents. Thus, the regulatory framework of the Lokal plan evolves from rather than precedes these negotiations.

Because the Dutch regulatory planning frameworks are said to be leading to extensive planning processes and are thus a major obstruction to the emergence of co-housing projects, the Danish planning practice based on open negotiations between citizens, purchasers of land, and the municipality could be an enabling condition for co-housing initiatives. These contextual differences in planning practice therefore make Danish co-housing initiatives an interesting reference for the Dutch situation. New planning laws in Denmark (Ministry of the Environment, 2007) and the Netherlands (Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 2008) delegated more responsibilities to local governments, but did not bring about any fundamental changes to the practices described above.

Denmark: A practice of do-it-yourself housing and communal living

At first sight, the Danish and Dutch housing sectors also appear to be quite similar. Even though the growth of population in the second half of the 20th century varied significantly between the two countries (a population increase of 37.5% in Denmark and 80.7% in the Netherlands between 1945 and 2011)

(source: Danmarks Statistik; CBS), the housing institutions shaped in this period did not diverge that much. Both countries have explicit policies on housing set by the national government (CEC 1997). Under the influence of social-democratic governments, a strong expansion of non-profit housing, and a complex system of tax reliefs encouraging home-ownership emerged during the second half of the 20th century (Boelhouver & Van der Heijden, 1993; Nielsen, 2010) – to be downscaled by conservative-liberal governments at the beginning of the 21st century. As a result, the housing stocks of the two countries also have quite similar compositions (see table 6.1).

Ownership form	Denmark	The Netherlands
Private ownership	60%	60%
Social rent	20%	31%
Private rent / other	12%	9%
Andelsbolig (see below)	8%	—

FIGURE 6.1 Composition of the total housing stock by ownership (2011)
 (source: ABF Research and Statistics Denmark)

However, by elaborating in more detail on the housing practices in both countries, some significant differences also become visible. These differences concern individual self-commissioning, and forms of collectiveness in the living environment. A first remarkable difference between the Dutch and the Danish housing practice is the normality of individual self-commissioning. In contrast to large-scale Dutch housing development, in Denmark between 2005 and 2007, 93% of the newly built houses were developed as individual projects, and of the remaining 7% multi-dwelling programs, 49% were small projects of only 2–4 dwellings (McKinze & Company, 2010). Housing projects are thus small in Denmark. Land allocations are small, too, and available plots are tendered to individual households or have restrictions on how many houses each buyer is allowed to build. Moreover, as new dwellings constructed in the period 2005–2007 were mainly owner occupied (85%) (Danmarks Statistik), it can be assumed that in Denmark, the larger part of housing development happens through individual self-commissioning. Individual self-commissioning in housing is not just a niche in Denmark, but a common practice. Danish clients typically leave planning and design to advisors (engineers and architects) and bring in construction companies late in the process to execute the plan. As a result, each new house has its own characteristics and is designed with detailed specifications. This has made Danish residential areas, and the Danish building sector, highly

diverse and fragmented (McKinze & Company, 2010). One can thus assume that the institutions that are believed to obstruct the private commissioning in the Netherlands – developers and housing corporations – play a minor role in Danish self-commissioning, and both professionals and citizens are much more accustomed to the idea of individual self-commissioning in general.

A second remarkable difference from the Netherlands is the collective character of Danish housing practice. In general, Danish society has strong collective features. Associations (*foreninger*) abound in everyday Danish life, and they are so familiar to the Danes, that they are often beyond noticing as something particular. As a result, civic power and networks are strong, and mutual trust among citizens is high (Mikkelsen, 2002: 13). *Foreninger* may concern any aspect of civic life. They can be *gruppeinteresser* (organized around a shared responsibility), *sagsorienterede forening* (organized around a political or societal goal), *aktivitetsbestemte forening* (organized around a certain activity), or *kooperative forening* (organized around cooperative ownership) (Andersen 2002: 207). Such *foreninger* are also present in spatial issues, housing, and living. There are for instance *bolig-*, *lejer-*, and *grundejerforeninger* (home, rental, or landowners associations). In these *foreninger*, individuals living in a building or area collectively maintain their shared facilities. In rental housing, residents are associated in *lejerforeninger*, small self-governed units where local tenants have a high degree of self-management and a voice toward their board (Bengsston & Ruonavaara, 2010; Jensen, 1995). In a *grundejerforening*, people privately own houses and plots, but collectively take care of their shared environment (a road, a garden, etc.).

Concerning housing, an *andelsbolig* is a form of *kooperative forening* and an *andelsboligforening* is a cooperative form of home ownership. The roots of this home ownership are considered to lie in the rural cooperative tradition, which was taken to the Danish cities in the early 20th century, when industrialization led to rapid urbanization and new houses were urgently needed. Workers established building societies (*byggeforeninger*) and built terraced houses for themselves and their families. When the workers had paid off their loans, they turned themselves into cooperative housing associations that owned the buildings collectively (Bruun, 2011). This form of associative home ownership became an in-between form of private ownership and tenancy. The apartment building is owned by a democratically governed association, and in order to obtain an apartment one has to become member, buy a share (the apartment), and pay a monthly membership fee. If one moves, the share is sold back to the association, which is responsible for the maintenance of the building (Kristensen, 2007). In addition to these cooperative form of ownership, *andelsboliger* often have communal facilities, and

social activities as well (Bruun, 2013). The concept became popular again among students living in Danish cities during the late 1960s and 1970s, who established cooperative associations, and collectively bought regular apartment buildings or former workshops to retrofit and maintain them. Groups of existing tenants would also start such cooperatives when their apartment building was put up for sale. Over the years, there emerged a complex set of legal measures, frameworks, tax reliefs, and subsidies supporting this particular form of cooperative ownership. Laws gave residents the first option to buy, municipalities sold large amounts of their public housing stock to such cooperatives, urban renewal programs were set up to support the *andelsboliger* in their retrofitting activities, and subsidies were granted to build new *andelsboliger* (Otter, 2012).

Over the years, the *andelsbolig* became the most financially supported form of housing in Denmark. *Andelsboliger* became so attractive and popular, that buying into one was virtually impossible, and the people living in them were there only because their friends or families had owned shares in the cooperative for years (sometimes even as far back as the early 20th century, or the 1960s/1970s) (Bruun, 2013). The *andelsbolig* turned into a well-known and common form of housing in Denmark, amounting to 8% of the total housing stock in 2011 (Danmarks Statistik), and in the inner city of Copenhagen even as much as a third (Bruun, 2011; Kristensen, 2007). However, at the start of the 21st century, conservative-liberal governments reduced the tax reliefs and subsidies for the *andelsboliger*. As a result, many people put their *andelsbolig* apartments up for sale. But still prices for these popular houses increased enormously, and the growing market for *andelsbolig* apartments to a large extent undermined the previously strong collective features of the *andelsboliger* (Bruun, 2013).

Another particular form of collectiveness can be found in the *bofælleskaber*. These are communities of people sharing residence (in one building or in separate entities) with a high degree of communal facilities, such as communal kitchens, rooms, gardens, etc., and social activities in which all members participate, also financially. These collectives come in different forms: They can be organized around an intentional lifestyle, such as eco-communities, they can even share an economy together, and be a commune, but they can also be pragmatic, such as a senior *bofælleskaber* (Marckmann, 2009). There are no statistics on this form of housing, but estimates indicate that this form of living is not uncommon in Denmark. During the late 1960s and 1970s, this form of living became very popular among the Danish youth, and the movement of commune-dwellers grew from about 10 people in 1968, to about 100,000 people in the late 1970s, up to 2% of the total Danish population (Skardhamar, 2008). Since these heydays, the number of people living in *bofælleskaber* has not grown significantly, although new *bofælleskaber* are occasionally established.

To summarize, the Dutch and Danish housing sectors seem to be quite similar at first sight. However, the Danish housing practice features many more forms of collectiveness than Dutch housing practices do. These forms of collectiveness concern the shared maintenance of living environments, cooperative ownership, and joint social activities. The extent to which these forms of collectiveness penetrate society, makes one assume that Danes in general are quite accustomed to collective living environments. Again, this could be an enabling condition for co-housing projects.

Summary

Several factors were mentioned as being major obstructions to self-commissioning and co-housing in the Netherlands. Dutch building customs perpetuate the monopoly of developers and housing corporations in housing, making it difficult for individual households or groups to enter the commissioning stage. Regulatory frameworks in planning practice make it difficult for co-housing initiatives to find a match between their own objectives and local planning frameworks. There is a general lack of financial and institutional frameworks to support co-housing initiatives. In Denmark, however, local negotiations between citizens and future land owners over spatial developments, the common practice of self-commissioning, and the various forms of collective living, provide a different context for co-housing. Without going into detail whether co-housing indeed happens more often in Denmark (as this would require complicated statistics), there are reasons to assume that there are simply more path dependencies for co-housing projects in Denmark, smoothening their processes of becoming. This makes Danish co-housing projects interesting reference in the question what planning strategies fit an age of active citizenship. Do the distinctive conditions in Denmark indeed enable and enhance co-housing initiatives? How do co-housing initiatives gain robustness and resilience over time, and what planning strategies are developed in this different context? These questions are now answered in detail making use of three examples of co-housing initiatives in the Danish context.

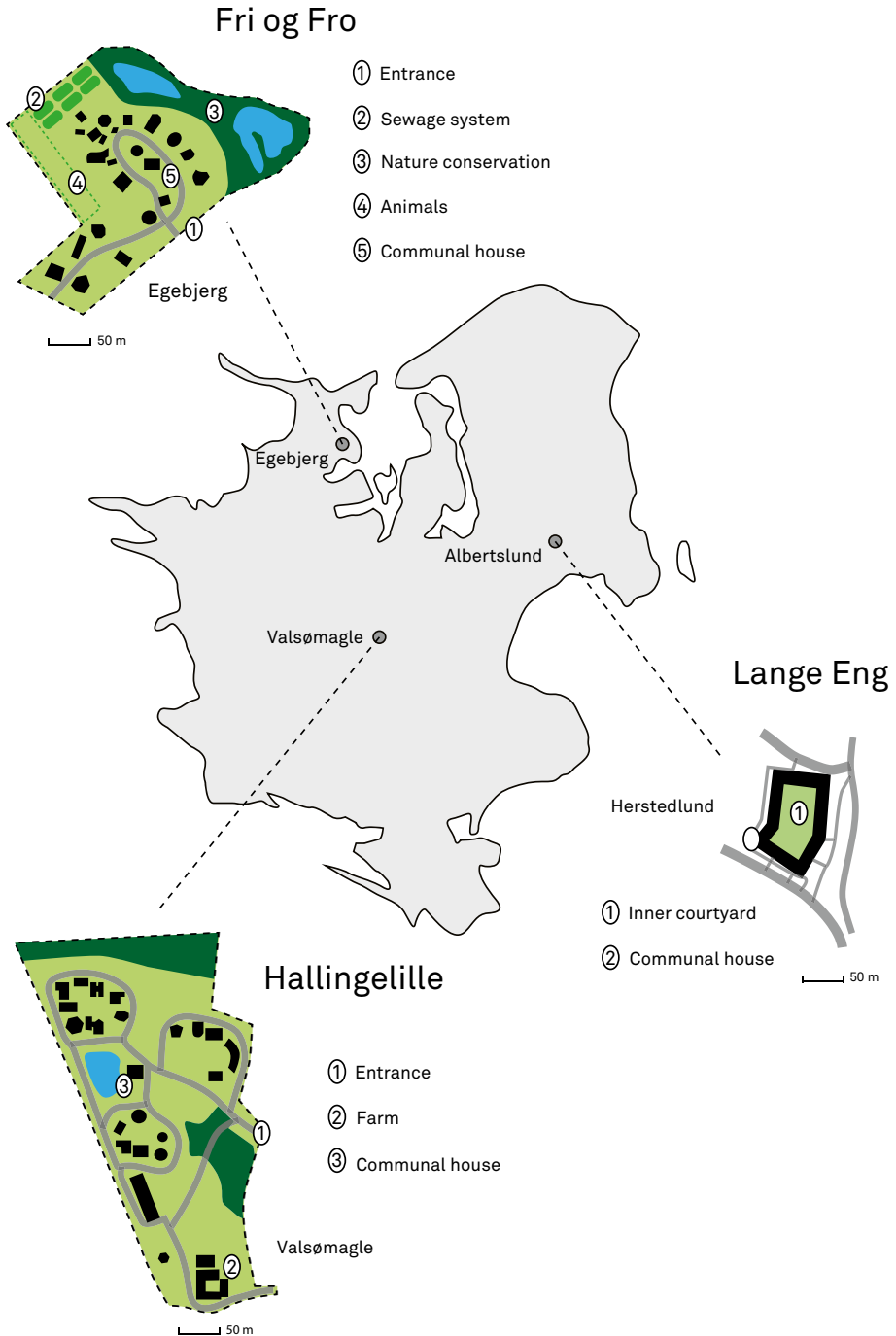


FIGURE 6.1 Overview of the co-housing initiatives in Sjælland, Denmark

2

THREE CO-HOUSING PROJECTS

Three co-housing initiatives in Sjælland (Denmark) were traced. These cases were chosen because of the different planning processes they went through. Lange Eng in Albertslund experienced a smooth planning process, and stood out only for its unusually large scale compared to regular housing projects in Denmark. Fri og Fro in Odsherred also experienced a rather smooth planning process, in which the residents took a prominent and leading role, adding to the do-it-yourself character of the initiative. Hallingelille in Ringsted stood out for its long, drawn-out planning process, because time and again the program requirements of the initiative could not be accommodated within local planning conditions. These three cases thus provide a diversity of planning experiences with co-housing initiatives, potentially also providing insight into a diversity of conditions, trajectories, and planning strategies. For each initiative, interviews were held with residents who took part in the planning process, and the involved planning officer from the municipality. In addition to the interviews, documentation such as publications, brochures, websites, etc. were used, in accordance with multiple case study analysis (see Chapter 5). The trajectories of the initiatives were then plotted on the diagram of processes of becoming (see Chapters 4 and 5). From there, reflections on the research questions could be given.

Lange Eng

Lange Eng is a co-housing initiative in the municipality of Albertslund, which is close to Copenhagen. This bofælleskab consists of 54 individual households and is pragmatically organized around a shared everyday life. The houses are all in individual ownership, but the residents have communal dinners six nights a week, a variety of social activities are organized, and the inner court of the building complex is jointly owned and maintained. Even though the large size of the project was rather unconventional, the development, planning, and design process of the initiative turned out to be quite regular. Lange Eng materialized in 2008, after two years of ideation and two years of building activities. Their process consisted of four phases. The first round concerned the ideation and definition of the core values (2004–2005). The second round concerned the planning and designing of the building (2006). The third round concerned the building activities, ending with the initiators moving in, and the bankruptcy of the developer (2006–2008). The fourth round concerned the actual living in the co-housing community since 2008.



FIGURE 6.2 *The external facade of Lange Eng*



FIGURE 6.3 *The inner communal courtyard Lange Eng*

Ideation (2004–2006)

The initiative for Lange Eng started with four friends who had to move out of their city apartments in Copenhagen, as these became too small when their children were born. The initiators wanted a good and safe environment for their children to grow up in, and a social environment for themselves as adults. No such a place was easily found, in the tight housing market of that time. Existing *bofælleskaber* either had waiting lists or were considered too idealistic by the four friends, as they preferred a more pragmatic way of sharing an everyday life. It could thus be said that the four initiators decoded from the existing housing stock in the Copenhagen area.

After this initial decoding, **contraction** became dominant. Other co-housing initiators had advised the four friends to initiate their co-housing project, and to focus on core values first. In the fall of 2004, the ideas for a co-housing project were still rather vague; in May 2005, they became more serious; and in September the initiators realized that if they really wanted to take things forward, they would have to meet more often than just once a month. Ambitions were tuned up and in September–October the core values and expectations were defined by the four initiators. In late November 2005, the first big meeting with about 40 families was held in Copenhagen. From the very beginning, the initiators **coded** as a *bofælleskab* with shared facilities, a shared social life, and communal dinners – a concept with which all the initiators were personally familiar (Interview with resident LE, 2011; Website LE, 2011; Lange Eng, 2006).

Meanwhile, **expansion** also took place. The initiators emailed friends and acquaintances, placed Google ads, newspaper ads, published a website, and organized meetings. Most people who joined came from their personal networks. A process consultant was hired to recruit, which gave credibility to the project (the consultant also assisted in the **contraction**: To prioritize, find a site, and figure out financial matters). But once the group was formed, there was no longer a need for a consultant. Other co-housing groups were visited for advice, guidance, and inspiration (Hallingelille in Valsømagle, Absalons Have and Munkesøgaard in Trekroner, and Overdrevet in Hinnerup). Looking for a site, contact was made with the municipalities of København, Ballerup, Roskilde, and Værløse, the Bycirklen municipal cooperation, and several real estate developers and investors (Ørestadsselskabet, Skanska, Sjælsø Gruppen, De Forenede Boligselskaber, Bedre Billigere Boliger, Refshaleøens Ejendomsselskab, and Freja Ejendomme).

Lange Eng

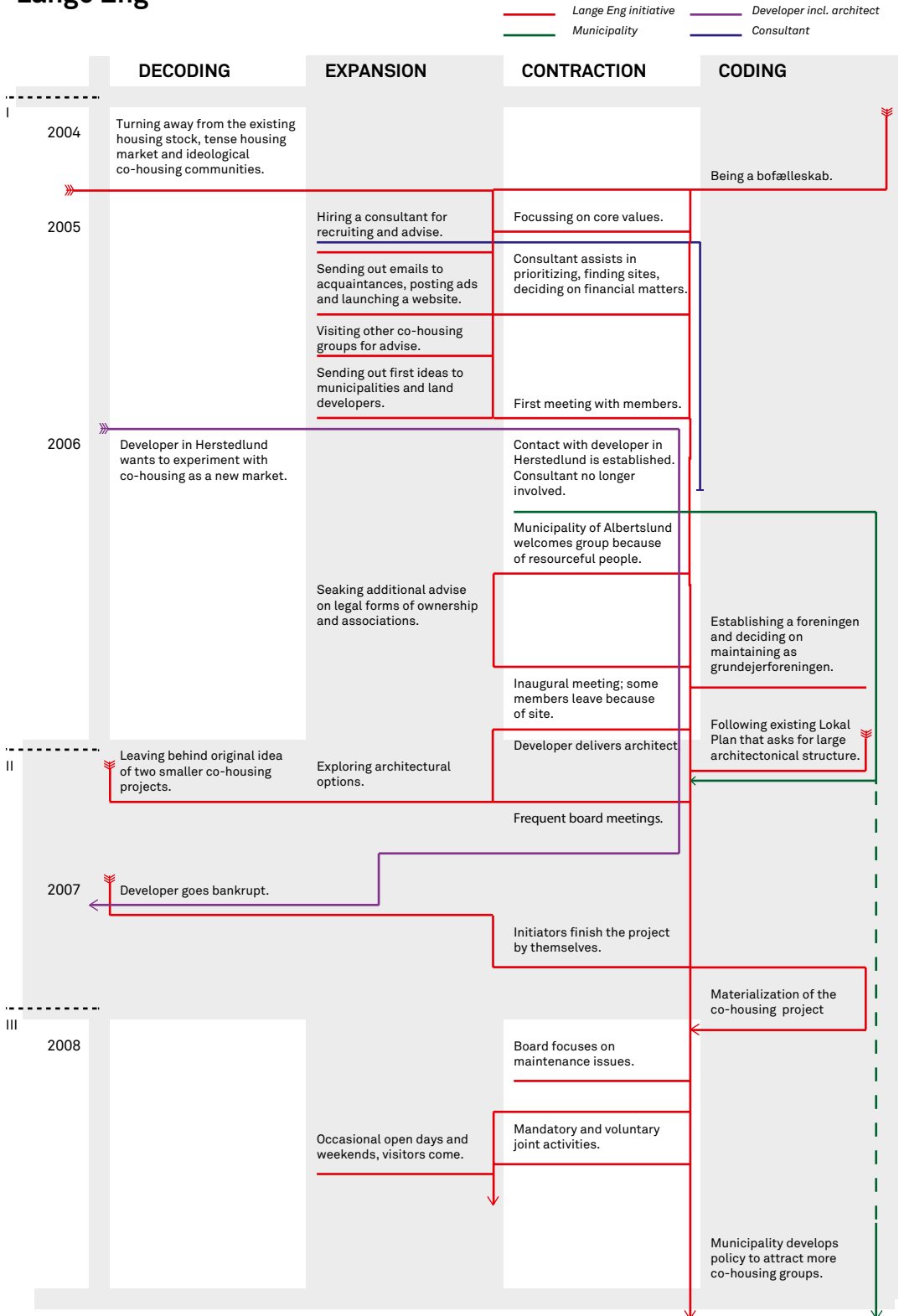


FIGURE 6.4 The becoming of Lange Eng

Planning and designing (2006)

This round started with **contraction** in January 2006, when the group came into contact with a developer who owned land in Albertslund. This developer was planning a co-housing project, but was still looking for a group of future residents. The municipality was developing the area of Herstedlund as a whole and favored the development of a large architectonic structure at the site. This architectonic idea fitted the idea of the initiators, who then named their initiative Lange Eng (“Long Meadow”). The municipality of Albertslund was eager to cooperate with the initiative, as the group consisted of resourceful people who were considered welcome in the socially struggling municipality. Many co-housing initiatives at the time found sites in the neighboring municipality of Roskilde, which was specifically recruiting co-housing groups for their new urban extensions. Therefore, Albertslund considered itself lucky with this initiative. The initiators in their turn felt rather lucky to have found this site, and did not further investigate any other options. **Decoding** in this round was done by the developer, who wanted to experiment with co-housing as a potential new market.

Then, a process of simultaneous **expansion**, **contraction**, and **coding** took place. **Contraction** continued, because in February the final decision to go ahead with Albertslund was made. **Expansion** happened as legal forms of ownership and association were considered, with help of some legal advisors. A forening was necessary to purchase the land and take the responsibility, risk, and mandate for the project. Of the various forms of collectiveness, an andelsboligforening was considered less attractive than a grundejerforening, to which the initiators eventually **coded**. This legal form would enable them to own the communal land as a group, but still have the financial benefits of private home ownership. **Contraction** continued as in April 2006 the inaugural meeting for the forening was held, and in May the new board was elected. In further **contraction**, and because of all the quick decisions and the work to be done, the board met once a week, and its membership rotated every three months, so that most members would be in charge and represent the group at least once in the process. Meanwhile, the four initiators remained the spokesperson for the whole group to the outside world. **Contraction** and **expansion** alternated as architectural options were explored with the architect selected in negotiation with the developer. The original idea to construct two co-housing buildings was abandoned (**decoded** from), and it was decided to build one big building, since all architectonic decisions were made together anyway, and the large size of the site allowed for this. A bank was found that was able to make 54 individual loans as part of one project. Some families left the project due to the decisions being made, but new recruiting took place based on the core values and the site, and soon a waiting list had to be made. The initiative established a contract with the

developer, and **coded** to the Lokal Plan, saying the site only allowed for one big architectural structure, and the planning framework for Herstedlund saying the area should be owner occupied (which ended up in the contract for the land, and in the Lokal Plan), and maintained as a grundejerforeningen (which is the Lokal Plan) (Interview with Kommune Albertslund, 2011; Interview with resident LE, 2011; Website LE, 2011).

Building (2006-2008)

In June 2006, all planning decision had been made, codes had been set, and building activities commenced. But then, a week before the group was able to move in, **decoding** happened as FB Gruppen (the developer) went bankrupt, and the residents were forced to finalize the building activities themselves. **Contraction** was needed then as well, and frequent meetings were held because of the bankruptcy and the finishing of the buildings. The municipality was worried, but the project turned out to be well done without financial loss. After all, the development process had followed all regular procedures, and was fully coded to the usual planning practice (Interview with resident LE, 2011; Interview with Kommune Albertslund, 2011).

Living (>2008)

Once materialized and with all families in occupation, Lange Eng became more and more focused on **contraction**. The board switched its focus to maintenance and the shared everyday life, and lowered the frequency of meetings. An intranet was set up for internal matters. People participated in the mandatory joint activities (cooking shifts, communal dinners, shared maintenance) and the voluntary joint activities (football, movies, parties). Although at the beginning the ambition was to be a diverse group in age and education, in the end the group turned out to be quite homogeneous. Today, **expansion** has decreased. Occasional open days and open weekends are held. Students, researchers, and other co-housing initiatives visit every now and then, but no further significant contacts with other groups are made. The Lange Eng facilities are only used by the group itself. The external website has been adjusted and now speaks of an existing community with a shared lifestyle. At the time of the field work, five families had moved out temporarily, and three houses were for sale. Meanwhile, the municipality is looking for a way to code their experience into new policy that could facilitate co-housing groups even more, following the example of the municipality of Roskilde (Interview with resident LE, 2011; Interview with Kommune Albertslund, 2011, Website, LE).

Trajectories

The main trajectory of this case is, of course, that of Lange Eng itself. It all started

in 2004 when four friends were in urgent need of new housing. But as the available housing stock did not meet their demands, they decided to take things forward themselves. They defined their core values right from the beginning, which formed the self of the initiative during the rest of its trajectory. The group of interested people grew quickly, but the four friends remain in the lead. In 2006, a match was found with a developer willing to experiment with a co-housing initiative, and municipality that wanted to attract resourceful people. These trajectories materialized in the building of Lange Eng in Herstedlund, Albertslund. First, it was thought more convenient to develop two structures, but later during the negotiations with the developer and architect the two structures appeared to be turning out so similar that it was decided it might as well be one major structure. Once materialized and occupied, people started to live their regular, communal life. Most of the core values defined in the beginning are still held, and are recognized in the buildings and in the rules of the community. Quite satisfied with the project, the municipality is now thinking about specific policy to support future co-housing projects even better.

Fri og Fro

Fri og Fro is an eco-village in the municipality of Odsherred, north-west Sjælland. The core values of the community are based on social, economic, and environmental sustainability; houses are self-built with natural and recycled materials. This co-housing stood out for its unconventional planning and building process: The initiators had very explicit ideas concerning their buildings, and were encouraged by the municipality to do the planning process by themselves, which is unusual even in the local negotiations of Danish planning practice. The materialization of Fri og Fro took place in three rounds. The first round concerned the ideation of the eco-village and the group formation process led by the initiating couple (2001–2002). The second round concerned the designing and planning process, and negotiations with the municipality, after the site in Odsherred was found (2003–2004). The third round – building and living together – started when the land was officially purchased and the people of Fri og Fro moved in (2005). Then, landscaping and the building of the individual houses and the shared facilities started, and was still going on at the time of the field work in 2011.

Ideation and group formation (2001–2002)

The couple who initiated Fri og Fro (“Free and Happy”) started with an explicit decision to lead a sustainable lifestyle, **decoding** from the way they lived before. They were inspired by Friland, a well-known eco-village in Denmark that had been on a national TV show. The initiating couple wanted to live such a distinct lifestyle, too, and **coded** themselves to the Friland values. Right at the beginning, they



FIGURE 6.5 *A sustainable life style and ongoing building activities in Fri og Fro*



FIGURE 6.6 *Architectural diversity in Fri og Fro*

established a building association (*byggeforeningen*), and became a member of the national association of eco-villages (LØS). Simultaneously, **expansion** took place as a website was made to interest people in joining the initiative, and **contraction** happened as the initiating couple prepared a project draft. This draft included the core values and ideas for the eco-village: A self-built sustainable community, a debt-free life, and a shared everyday life. These core values were further discussed and elaborated by the members of the association, who met each month in Copenhagen. The group felt that living together would make a sustainable lifestyle easier. One of the things they agreed upon at this stage was fixed prices for the houses (per square meter) in order to prevent speculation in times of a booming housing market. Some people left the group due to this decision. At the end of this round, **expansion** again took place as the project plan was sent to a number of municipalities in Sjælland, and other eco-villages were visited for inspiration (Elm & Dilling-Hansen, 2003; Martinussen, 2010; Interview with residents FF, 2011; Website FF, 2011).

Designing and planning (2003–2004)

This round started when municipalities responded to the project plan. Among the municipalities were Tølløse and Trundholm, which had sites for sale that were seriously considered by the initiators. **Contraction** happened as Tølløse was not chosen because many of the municipality's architectural requirements did not correspond with the ideas of the initiators. Instead, the site in Egebjerg (Trundholm) was chosen. Egebjerg had a local school, kindergarten, and supermarket, and the initiators considered the site as a nice place to settle, with great views over the surrounding landscape. Contraction continued as during the monthly meetings, themes such as financing, the sewage system, the local plan, playgrounds, landscaping, the communal house, PR, and land development were further discussed and agreed upon. More families had joined by the time the field work was carried out in 2003, and goals for economic, social, and environmental sustainability had been defined. Contraction became mixed with **coding**, as the initiators started to develop the Lokal Plan in negotiation with the municipality. To a large extent, the governing Lokal Plan from 1984 was followed, and for the small adjustments made to the Lokal Plan, conventional planning procedures were used. It was agreed that the group would also privately own and maintain the publicly accessible land and nature conservation area, which is quite common in Denmark. In addition to the byggeforeningen, also an andelsforeningen was established to get a collective loan and purchase the land.

Decoding during this round was done not so much by the initiators as by the municipality. The municipality had envisioned a development of 60 houses, but agreed to only 17 houses, and the boundaries for rural and urban area were

Fri og Fro

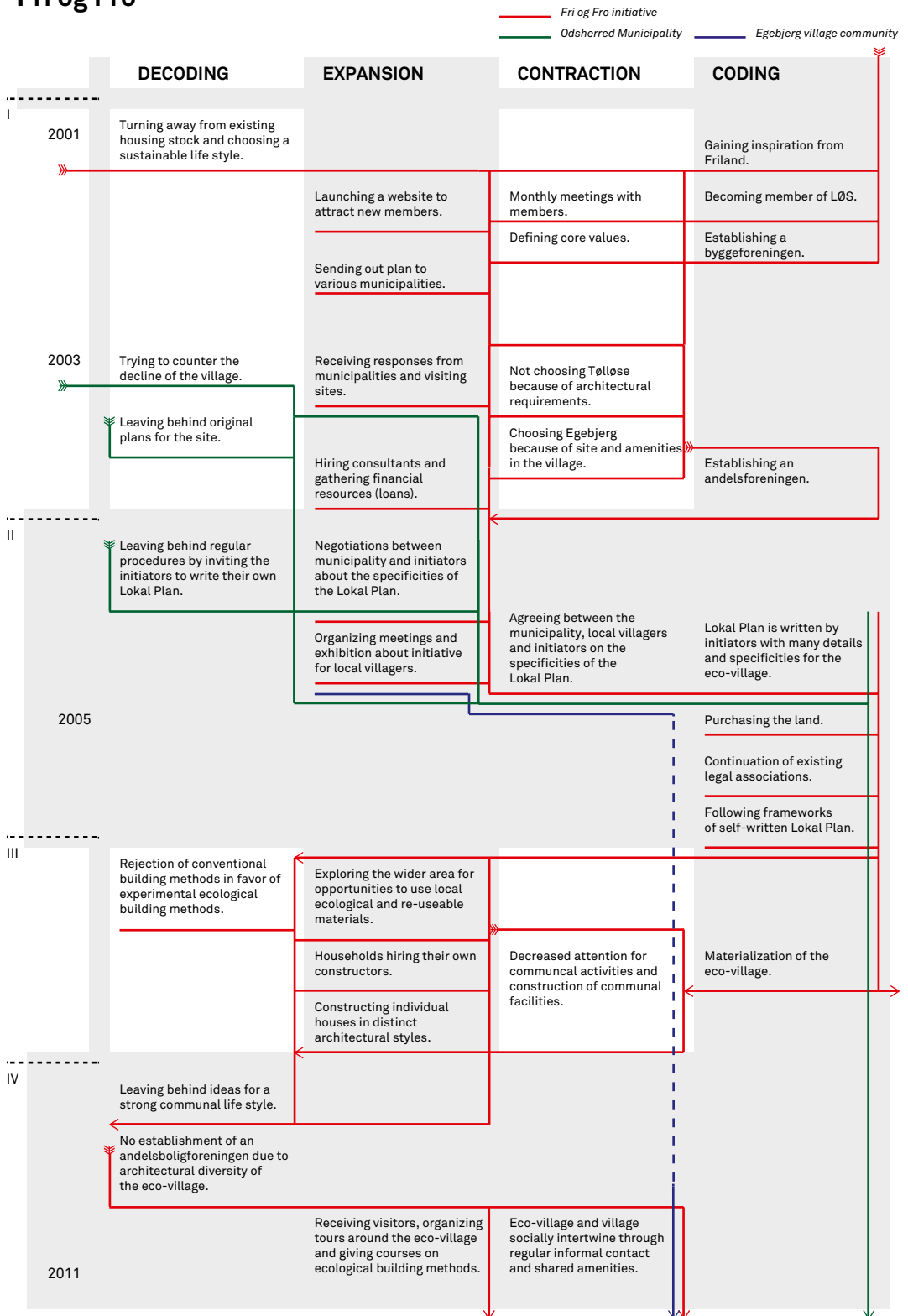


FIGURE 6.7 The becoming of Fri og Fro

slightly changed. However, the municipality openly acknowledged that it lacked the capacity to write a legal Lokal Plan that could address all the group's specific requirements. Therefore – and this made the initiative special – the municipality asked the initiators to write the new legal local plan themselves, with the municipality in a supervising role. As a result, unusual things were included in the Lokal Plan: Building plans for individual houses were to be collectively approved by the group, and everyone was obliged to use natural or recycled materials for the buildings. The sewage system (willow based) was unconventional for the municipality as well, and in potential conflict with the drinking-water well just outside the Fri og Fro area. But the initiators worked it out technically, and convinced the technical department of the municipality to approve the sewage system. Another specialty of the Lokal Plan was the allowance of temporary houses for three years, something usually forbidden in Danish Lokal Planer. This was decided so that the people could live in the area while building their permanent houses. Overall, the self-written plan had many more specificities than any regular Lokal Plan written by a municipality. The municipality was very willing to cooperate with the initiators and to decode from its usual way of working, as it was in its interest to attract new families to the declining village, and thus keep the local school and supermarket running. The municipality was also easily convinced because the initiators were well acquainted with the technical and legal aspects of their plans, due to their own professional backgrounds.

During this round, **expansion** took place as the website was maintained and updated when the land in Odsherred was found, to attract more families (there were 12 involved now; 17 were needed). Several advisors were consulted: A legal advisor (who considered the legal form of an andelsboligforeningen, which had never been used as a legal framework for an eco-village before) and builders (who made detailed building plans for the houses, based on designs made by the families). Some families hired architects; one of the group members was an architect himself. As it was considered impossible to get a loan from a conventional bank, a bank focused on sustainability was found that was willing to invest in the experimental project. More expansion happened as the initiators organized a meeting and exhibition of their plans at the local school, bringing their children with them, which created a lot of sympathy for the initiative among the local villagers of Egebjerg. The round ended in **coding**, when in October 2004 the Lokal Plan was approved, and in November 2004 the land was officially purchased (Elm & Dilling-Hansen, 2003; Interview with Kommune Odsherred, 2011; Interview with residents FF, 2011; Website FF, 2011).

Building and living (2004-2011)

Then, the third round started, dominated by **decoding** and **expansion**. The site was cleared and the sewage system was built. Contractors were hired (expansion) to build a road and the water, electricity, and sewage systems, and to make the site ready to build. After that, the families brought trailers to the site and moved in in the summer of 2005. Decoding was strong then, as unconventional building methods and building materials, such as straw bales and recycled materials, were used. For the initiators, it was also the first time they had used such methods and materials. Expansion continued as one of the initiators went around the region picking up left-over materials from building sites, for self-use but also to distribute among the other families. Building courses were given for interested visitors, and several sustainability organizations sent people to support the individual building activities. Open houses were held several times a year and occasional conflicts with local community on nuisances were solved informally.

Compared to all this decoding and expansion in this round, **contraction** happened only to a limited degree. As the building activities on the individual houses continued, the group gradually lost interest in the envisioned communal life. Communal dinners, annual parties, and work weekends on the land, the communal house, and the sewage system became less and less well attended and were even delayed. The goals for sustainability were felt to have been too broad, and not binding enough to withstand the demanding individual building processes. Disagreements emerged on the fixed house prices when some houses were put up for sale after divorces. The houses had turned out so different from one another that a fixed price no longer made sense. Some group members argued that prices were individual matters, and that there was no need for fixed prices after the housing market had collapsed. Concerning **coding**, some of the initial ideas were abandoned. The earlier chosen coding of an *andelsboligforeningen* was considered to be no longer suitable for the architectural diversity of Fri og Fro. Instead, it remained an *andelsforening*, of which every member owned 1/16 (*andel*) and to which all residents paid monthly contributions. This *andelsforeningen* owned the land and the shared facilities, giving all members the right to use 1/16 of the land, on which the individual house was built. Landownership as an *andelsforening* was unconventional, but in practice not so different from other forms of private ownership. The houses were not part of the *foreningen*, and a separate *forening* was established for the maintenance of the sewage system.

When building activities came to an end, Fri og Fro had turned out architecturally very distinctive from its environment. Sightseers came to take a look, and tours were frequently organized (**expansion**). Meanwhile, **contraction** took place between the villagers of Egebjerg and the residents of Fri og Fro, and the

two communities became quite socially intertwined. Most people had become acquainted with each other, as their children went to the same local school. Fri og Fro did not cause any policy changes in the municipality of Odsherred, but the local shop did start selling more organic products than before (Interview with Kommune Odsherred, 2011; Interview with residents FF, 2011).

Trajectories

The main trajectory in the case of Fri og Fro is, of course, that of the co-housing initiative itself. This trajectory started to individuate in 2001, when the initiating couple first expressed their ideas and plans. This first definition of the self of Fri og Fro was preceded by the inspiration gained from Friland, which strongly coded the Fri og Fro initiative. Quite early in the process of becoming, a match was found between the trajectory of Fri og Fro and that of the municipality of Trundholm (now Odsherred). The trajectory of the latter had stagnated as the site envisioned by Fri og Fro had been on sale for decades, and the local community was in decline. Associating itself with the trajectory of Fri og Fro, meant that the trajectory of Egebjerg could start moving forward again as well. Eventually, when Fri og Fro materialized in Egebjerg, the two communities became socially intertwined, although they remained architecturally very distinct. Other trajectories met with Fri og Fro on a more temporary basis, for instance the consultants and contractors, the municipal spatial planner, and technical departments. All these encounters did not really change the self that was defined at the beginning of the process, but provided a further materialization and actualization of the values and ideas that make up Fri og Fro. Some elements of the self, defined at the beginning, did not materialize in the actual eco-village. Especially those concerning communal living and communal ownership, fixed house prices, and ideas about sustainability appeared to be unfeasible in relation to the architecture and building trajectory that was followed, and were thus left behind.

Hallingelille

Hallingelille is an eco-village in the municipality of Ringsted, mid Sjælland. It consists of 18 individual households. The core values of the community are based on sustainability and permaculture. The houses and buildings were individually designed, and built using natural and recycled materials. As a co-housing initiative, Hallingelille stands out for its long, drawn-out planning process. The first round concerned the initial ideation of an eco-village by the main initiator, and her efforts to find allies and a site (1998-1999). The second round concerned the planning for a site in Skjoldnæsholm, which failed, and in Jystrup, which also turned out to be infeasible (1999-2001). The third round concerned the planning



FIGURE 6.8 Ecological architecture and communal playground in Hallingelille



FIGURE 6.9 Entrance to Hallingelille – no cars allowed

for Valsømagle in Ringsted, which again turned out to be very challenging, although in the end the initiative, the local community of Valsømagle, and the municipality reached an agreement (2002–2005). The fourth round concerned the building process of the communal buildings and the individual houses (2005–2010). The fifth round concerned the actual living, which started around 2011 when most of the buildings were finished, and was still going on at the time of the field work in 2013.

The ideation of Village2000 (1994–1999)

The initiative of what at first was called Village2000 was started in 1994 by a woman who had taken a course given by “Denmark Education,” a movement for personal development and empowerment. She defined a dream of an ecological community living in the countryside, with likeminded people, and facilities for both children and the elderly: “From cradle to grave.” Her **decoding** concerned a lack of places – both in urban and rural areas – where one could live in an ecological, social community with sufficient facilities for children and the elderly. Right after having defined her own dream, she turned to **expansion**, advertising at the health fair in Brønshøj in March 1999. Soon interested people contacted her and signed up for the first meeting. The initiative **coded** itself as the foreningen “Village2000”, and membership of LØS was obtained. **Contraction** happened as the first meetings of the foreningen were held every other week, starting in April 1999. The initiator and the members of the foreningen further decided on the outlines of the initiative: A site in Mid Sjælland, an area of approximately 50 hectares, and around 100 dwellings with various shared social facilities. Permaculture and an eco-spiritual community would bind them together. The ideas of the initiative were then sent around in **expansion** to various municipalities in Mid Sjælland: Hvalsø, Ringsted, and Lejre (Elm & Dilling-Hansen 2003; website HL, 2013; Interview with resident HL B, 2013).

Planning for Skjoldnæsholm and Jystrup (1999-2001)

Contraction with a site seemed easy when most municipalities responded negatively, and only the landowner of Skjoldnæsholm, in Jystrup, was interested. However, to build in this area required a revision of the rural-urban boundaries, something that neither the county nor the municipality approved of. Through a short instance of **expansion** by the county, a new site was found in Jystrup in the spring of 1999. In another attempt at **contraction**, negotiations over the price were started with the landowner. In the fall of 1999, the group organized several weekend meetings to decide on the planning of the Jystrup site. However, a conflict over the site then came the light. The conflict had been on-going for eight years between the local residents and the municipality on one side, and the county on the other. The initiators negotiated for nine months with the

Hallingelille

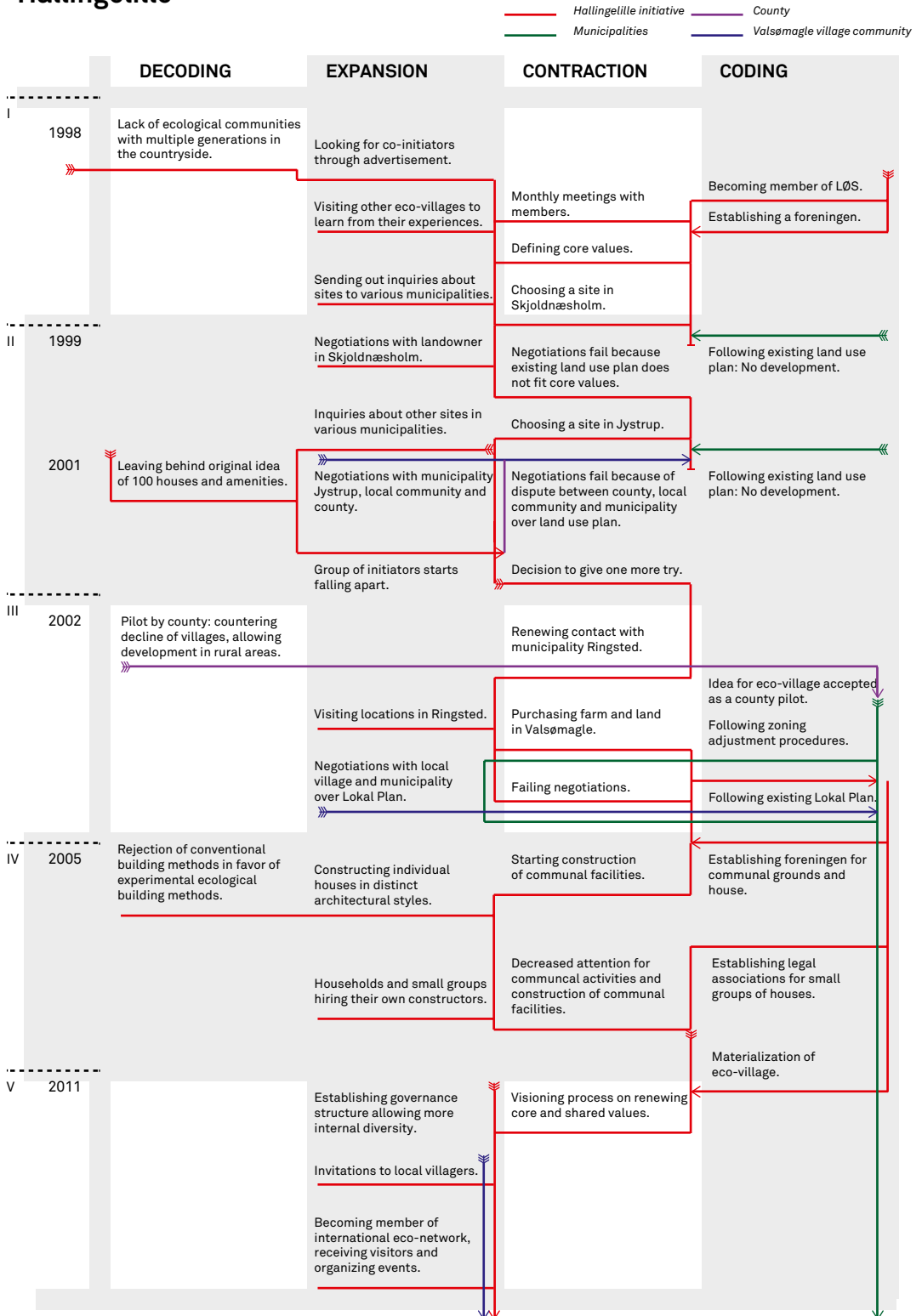


FIGURE 6.10 The becoming of Hallingelille

local residents to solve this conflict and actually reached an agreement on a smaller community (not 100 dwellings) and fewer facilities, arguing that the eco-village would be so close to the existing village that these extra facilities were not necessary. But then, however, the landowner decided not to sell after all. Because of these sequential setbacks, the group started to fall apart (Elm & Dilling-Hansen, 2003; Website HL, 2013; Interview with resident HL B, 2013).

Planning for Valsømagle (2001–2005)

After these setbacks, the general meeting decided to give it one more try. **Expansion** led to a renewed contact with the municipality of Ringsted, which was still interested as it thought the initiative could bring new life to the countryside, more cultural activities, and children for the local school. The group visited all the potential sites in the municipality, and chose one in the village of Valsømagle. The site included a 1,000 m² farm and a 15.2 ha forest. The land was bought at an auction in the fall of 2001 and taken over in March 2002 (**contraction**).

Planning permission (**coding**) was needed to actually build the eco-village. However, a new community of 100 dwellings on virgin rural land remained unconventional in Danish planning. But then, the county decided to **decode** from this rule by setting out a pilot project that would allow revisions of the urban–rural boundaries, in order to stimulate development in rural areas that did not have any significant bio-diverse or landscape values. The initiative hoped it could make use of that option, but even though the county approved of the eco-village, regular planning procedures were to be followed, and formal consultations with the residents of the village had to be organized. **Contraction** with the villagers, however, was not an easy thing. Most local villagers were suspicious of the ecological and spiritual focus of the group (fearing they would be a sect), hesitant about the increased traffic it would bring, and some politicians feared the rough and cluttered looks of a self-build eco-village. The city council therefore disapproved of the adjustment of zoning boundaries in April 2003, and the initiative had to code itself to the boundaries of the existing Lokal Plan. This forced the initiative to **decode** from its original plans for 100 dwellings and facilities. This is when the name Hallingelille (“Small Slope”) was chosen. Eventually, Hallingelille was planned for 18 dwellings and no facilities other than a communal house and the farm. Promises were made to the local village about more school busses and street lightning, and after extensive lobbying by the initiators, resistance decreased. The villagers now realized that the initiative would indeed bring new life and amenities to the area (Interview with resident HL A, 2013; Interview with resident HL B, 2013; Interview with Kommune Ringsted, 2013).

Then, negotiations with the municipality were started about the final Lokal Plan, a process of **expansion**, **contraction**, and **coding** that lasted for another two years. The municipality helped the initiators to make decisions, as the group tended to change its mind regularly, for instance on collective or individual ownership, or on a shared or individual sewage system. An andelsforeningen was considered, but individually owned plots with a grundejerforeningen turned out to be more practical. The people from Hallingelille could have as many meetings they wanted, and the municipal planning officer passed on all questions about technical issues to the respective specialists within the municipal organization. Together, the municipality, the initiators, and a landscape architect specialized in permaculture made the Lokal Plan, including architectural regulations for the buildings, the communal land, landscape design, parking spaces, and the roads. The architecture was developed in order to fit the character of the existing village in size and color. The paths from the village to the forest were kept and maintained. In February 2005, the Lokal Plan was finally approved (Interview with Kommune Ringsted, 2013; Interview with resident HL B, 2013; Interview with resident HL A, 2013; Elm & Dilling-Hansen, 2003; Website HL, 2013).

During this round, people again joined the initiative, attracted by the idea of an eco-village, the collectiveness, and diversity of the group (**contraction**). There was no selection procedure, as anyone who wanted to join could do so by starting to attend the initiative meetings. But many people left the initiative again when things turned out to be twice as expensive as first expected, and people had to formally buy into the initiative. In the end, the community did not become as diverse as aimed for, but the initiators still felt satisfied with the final plans (Interview with resident HL B, 2013; Interview with resident HL A, 2013).

Building Hallingelille (2005-2010)

After the Lokal Plan was approved, building permits could be obtained. Whereas the initiators defined **codes** for the natural and recycled materials to be used, the municipality imposed codes on general architectural and construction requirements. In need of some **expansion** while dealing with the building applications, municipal planning officials visited other eco-villages to see what to expect. This eased the process of giving out permits, including those for the temporary sheds. Some of these building permits were challenging due to the unconventional materials used and the unusual layout of the eco-village with small clusters of houses.

Building activities started. The inhabitants of Hallingelille moved into their sheds in October 2006. First, the communal house was built in order to have at least some shared facilities. A start was made with clearing the land and building the

road and the sewage system. All this was done by the group, under the guidance of an experienced group member. However, when the group found out he had been swindling them, he left the eco-village. Construction mistakes appeared, and building materials turned out to be unpaid for. Eventually the group hired a professional company to finish the communal land. Everyone designed their own house; some did so collectively in small groups, whereas others hired architects. The seniorbofølleskaber was developed by a local investor specialized in ecologically built long houses, who is now renting out the individual apartments. The earlier chosen **codes**, such as the permaculture guidelines, now materialized in the communal sewage system, renewable energy, low energy houses, use of sustainable and natural building materials, cultivation of forest and crops, and a landscape design that fitted the original landscape. During this round, new ideas for the area were sometimes brought up by newly arrived members, but now the initiative was restricted to the Lokal Plan. The **decoding** in this round related to conventional building customs, as all households experimented with new sustainable building techniques (Interview with Kommune Ringsted, 2013; Interview with resident HL A, 2013; Interview with resident HL B, 2013; Website HL, 2013).

During this round, the individual households focused on their individual building activities, and instead of the earlier focus on consensus, togetherness, and spirituality, the sphere in the eco-village turned pragmatic and individual, although meetings continued to be held (Interview Resident HL B, 2013; Website HL, 2013).

Living together (>2011)

After most of the individual houses were finished, the Hallingelille residents realized that they had lost some of their collectiveness and organized a visioning process as an act of **contraction** in 2011. At the same time, they realized that the consensus democracy and the tendency to do and own everything together would prevent some good ideas from being materialized. It was therefore decided there should be more flexibility for smaller groups. During the visioning weekend, it was decided that “where the energy flows” would be the new vision. From that moment, people could just work on what they wanted to work on; consensus would no longer be necessary on everything, and not everything had to be jointly owned. The contraction of the visioning process thus allowed for further internal diversity and expansion. Hallingelille materialized as a community of 64 people, organized in four groups with 6-8 houses, a communal house in the middle, a lake, and part of a forest. People work together on the communal land, especially during the obligatory working weekends once a month, and hold meetings in the communal house, during which decisions on maintenance, money, activities, etc.

are made. There are communal dinners several times a week, and dancing and yoga groups. Several people keep sheep, and others jointly own horses. When someone has an idea, he or she can suggest it during a meeting, see how many people are interested, and perhaps receive some kind of loan from the association (Interview with resident HL A, 2013).

In this last round, **expansion** was also prominent. Hallingelille opened up to the local village by organizing projects and courses (e.g., on gardening) in which the villagers can participate, children go to the same school and play together, and sometimes people from Hallingelille buy goods from the village. The level of hostility had decreased and the municipality had grown more enthusiastic. When Hallingelille was finally finished, an opening event was organized and the mayor attended it. He became enthusiastic, and a year later he even promoted the community on national radio, as a good example of ecological thinking. The eco-village now has many visitors from across Europe: Researchers, and people looking for inspiration to form an eco-village themselves. Hallingelille has become part of an international network of eco-villages, and to accommodate meetings of this network, the municipality has co-financed the construction of a new building. The possibility of making a tourist brochure for the eco-village was under discussion at the time of the field work in 2013 (Interview with resident HL B, 2013; Interview with resident HL A, 2013).

Trajectories

The main trajectory has, of course, been the initiative for Hallingelille itself. It started in 1994 as a vague idea, became more focused in 1998 under the name Village2000. However, rapid contraction in program requirements and core values (the self), and a site (the environment) time and again proved unsuccessful. Program requirements were too demanding for the (often heavily) coded local planning schemes, and the trajectory ran blind in local planning disputes. Finally, the decoding of the county enabled a match between trajectories and the possibility for the initiative to move forward. Land was purchased, but again the program requirements did not match with the ideas of the local villagers and the city council. Eventually, the initiative decoded from its initial ideas, coded to the Lokal Plan and became Hallingelille. Building activities were started and other actors (architects, developers, constructors) moved in and out again. Some of the collectiveness was lost during this process. But when all the buildings were more or less finished, the residents of Hallingelille contracted again around their shared vision on permaculture, but also opened to their direct environment (the village, the city council) and to an international network.

3

CONCLUSIONS

Having plotted the behaviors and trajectories of these three co-housing initiatives on the diagram of processes of becoming, it is now time to look for conclusions. In this section, an analyses is made of the conditions that gave rise to the co-housing initiatives, the ways in which these initiatives gained robustness and resilience over time, and the planning strategies that were developed in and in response to the initiatives. Towards the end of the section, a reflection is given on what can be learned from these referential Danish case studies, that can be of use in the Dutch context.

Conditions that gave rise to the initiatives

The first research question – *Under what conditions did the initiatives emerge?* – is answered by looking at the fields of coding and decoding, especially at the start of the initiative, but also during later rounds. Coding reveals the conditions that enabled the co-housing initiatives to become, whereas decoding reveals the conditions that the initiators wanted to change. These conditions set the initiative in motion. It is therefore important that this movement is picked up by others, and that associations are formed around decoding with other trajectories.

In all three cases, more or less the same conditions appear to have been important in setting the initiatives in motion, albeit in various forms. A first condition related to decoding is a “dissatisfaction with the available housing stock.” For Lange Eng, this dissatisfaction concerned the lack of places where one could live as individual families but also as a community, without a specific ideological focus. For Fri og Fro this dissatisfaction related to places where one could live ecologically and in self-built (not just self-commissioned) houses. For Hallingelille, this dissatisfaction concerned the lack of places where one could live ecologically, with all age groups together in a rural community with facilities for both children and the elderly.

The second condition that set the initiatives in motion is “inspiration and capacity,” which relates to coding. Hallingelille was started after the initiator had taken a course given by Denmark Education. Fri og Fro was very clear in stating they coded to the example of Friland, and it was initiated by people who were, due to their professional backgrounds, well prepared and educated for the do-it-yourself process.

A third condition that gave rise to the initiatives explains why the movement was picked up by other actors, and is related to decoding. This condition is the willingness of other actors to “experiment with local planning conditions.” For Lange Eng, this willingness to experiment came from a developer who had taken an option on a site, and wanted to explore the potential of co-housing. However, the need to experiment was not so great, as the site was in a new development area. For Fri og Fro, this willingness to experiment came from the municipality, who saw an opportunity to finally develop an area that had been for sale for years, and was willing to tweak the local planning conditions a little in order to accommodate the initiative. For Hallingelille, this willingness to experiment came from the county, which had agreed to adjust the urban–rural boundaries. In all the cases, the local planning authorities were willing to accommodate the initiatives as these would bring new life to declining rural communities. As such, a project could give the area a “socioeconomic uplift” – a fourth condition related to decoding that explained why the movement of the initiative was picked up by these municipalities.

Gaining robustness and resilience

Once the initiative is set in motion, the second research question – ***How did the initiatives gain robustness and resilience?*** – can be answered. Robustness and resilience are achieved by a combination of the internal strength of the initiative and its embeddedness in its environment. Internal strength is achieved by coding and contraction, and associations that lead to a merging of trajectories. Embeddedness in the environment is achieved by coding and expansion, and associations with other emerging and existing trajectories that run parallel to the trajectory of the initiative. As shown below, the behavior of expansion and contraction are usually strongly intertwined, and therefore difficult to describe separately.

The trajectory of Lange Eng gained internal strength when, soon after its first decoding, the initiators coded their plans and ideas as core values. These internal codes were complemented by a collective framework (bofælleskab, forening) and an organizational structure. This, together with the regular meetings in which all future residents participated, enabled the initiators to make swift, sharp, and agreed upon decisions. Every decision (contraction after short and targeted moments of expansion) contributed to the internal strength of the initiative. Consultants and other actors who brought in certain resources (knowledge, money, etc.) moved in and out the initiative. More and more resources (members, a site, loans, an architectural design, planning permission, etc.) were gradually gathered and the initiative’s internal strength grew. Through the decisions

being made, the initiative also became increasingly embedded. The municipality was willing to facilitate the initiative, but not much support was needed in the planning process as this was mostly settled between the developer and the municipality, and the architectural demands of the initiative fit nicely to the frames of the Lokal Plan and the Kommune Plan. A match was found between the site and its planning and architectural requirements, and the core values of the group. The embeddedness of the initiative was also derived by coding. The collective frameworks made the initiative recognizable as something common and known, and coding to the Lokal Plan turned the initiative into something permitted and authorized. At some moments during the process, members left the group due to certain decisions that were made, but the initiators considered this not as problem, but as something inevitable. At these moments, new members were soon recruited, whereas the core values and the decisions made remained in place. Due to the strong commitment and organization of the initiative, the group was able to follow through, even after the developer went bankrupt. Also after materialization, the group remains strong due to its organizational structure in which all residents mandatorily and voluntarily participate.

The trajectory of Fri og Fro gained internal strength because right from the beginning, core values on sustainability and communal life were defined and then formulated in a project plan. This internal strength enabled the initiators to communicate openly about their ideas and intentions, and thus helped in finding the necessary resources (members and land) and embeddedness to materialize their ideas. The coding to various forms of forening were useful in finding the most suitable legal forms to purchase land, obtain collective loans, and build collective amenities (e.g., the sewage system and the communal house), adding both to the internal strength (organizational structure) and to the embeddedness (being recognizable as a legal entity) of the initiative. What also added to the embeddedness were the negotiations with the local villagers at an early stage in the planning process for Egebjerg, and the willingness of the municipality and the initiators to write the new Lokal Plan themselves. This enabled a match between the core values of the group and the planning requirements of the site. Over time, the embeddedness of the initiative grew even further as Fri og Fro and the local village became more and more socially intertwined (even though they are architecturally very distinct). The internal strength of the initiative was a bit challenged during and after the building activities. The concept of coding Fri og Fro as an andelsboligforening was dropped because this legal form did not fit with the architectural layout of the eco-village. Individual building activities started to outweigh the core values on communal life and sustainability, and the core values on sustainability were not felt to be strong and focused enough to bind the community. However, the materialization of Fri og Fro now holds the community together.

The trajectory of Hallingelille had a hard time gaining internal strength and becoming embedded in an environment. The trajectory actually shows how internal strength and embeddedness go hand in hand. At the start of the initiative, as well as during its later rounds, much of the internal strength came from the ideas defined by the initiator, and her perseverance during the whole process. Again and again, the program requirements of Hallingelille proved to be too ambitious to match with local planning conditions, and to overcome local disagreements between local residents, local councils, land owners, and the county. Sequential setbacks almost led to the disintegration of the whole initiative. The group of initiators almost entirely renewed, whereas the initial ideas remain in place and the initiator persevered. When a site had been found and the land and farm bought, the group started to form in a more permanent setting. Now the land and the farm gave the initiative and its trajectory internal strength, as did ideas on permaculture and eco-spirituality, consensus-based democracy, and the frequent meetings.

However, the initiative was still not fully embedded as planning permission was still needed, and eventually the initiative had to scale down its ideas considerably in order to fit with local planning conditions and be accepted by the local villagers. But overall, the initiative was by now strong enough to continue to make efforts to materialize at least parts of the original idea. The municipality was an important facilitator of the process, as the local planning officials continuously negotiated and met with the initiators regarding the planning process and the building permits, helping the initiators to make decisions and find ways in which the ideas about ecologically self-built houses could be matched with the architectural requirements of the Lokal Plan. During the whole process, the concepts of forening and bofælleskab gave internal strength and embeddedness to the initiative. When the initiative eventually materialized and was fully embedded in its environment, the group realized that some of the cohesiveness of the initiative had diminished, and they initiated a new process of contraction through a collaborative visioning. The outcome of this visioning process is that from that moment on, they would have to allow for more internal diversity in order to improve the initiative's internal strength.

In order to learn how the initiatives were able to gain robustness and resilience over time, the trajectory of each initiative and its route through the diagram of processes of becoming has been described, with special attention paid to the conditions and other trajectories that make the initiative move forward. In all cases, the energy to set things in motion and to head in a certain, and often new direction, came from the initiating residents. They are the ones who turned their intentions and ideas, their personal dreams, passions, and inspiration, into

action and materialization, and who grasped the unique opportunities offered by a certain time and place. The original decoding remained an important binding factor in all initiatives, but especially when these ideas were defined in internal codes for the initiative at the start of the trajectory. All three initiative also coded to the various legal frameworks of Foreningen and the well-known concept of *bofælleskab* (*grundejerforening* in Lange Eng, *byggeforening*, and *andelsforening* in Fri og Fro, a general forening and a *grundejerforening* in Hallingelille). Using these frameworks and concepts provided internal strength, as they enabled the initiators to set up and execute a certain organizational structure that was recognized by the members, and they provided embeddedness as using these frameworks and concepts also turned the initiative into something recognizable and widely known. But even though these frameworks and concepts gave internal strength and embeddedness to the initiative, they were not motivating in themselves.

Most of the robustness and resilience in the trajectories was built during expansion, contraction, and coding. The initiators brought in networks, skills, and experiences, gathered and built these along the way, together with the other resources necessary to materialize their project. The most important aspect in this is whether a match could be found between the core values and ideas of the initiative, and local planning conditions including the agreement of the inhabitants of the existing local community. Whether this match can be found, depends largely on the extent to which the municipality is willing to facilitate the initiative, but in all studied cases, this willingness was apparent. Having one fixed contact point on the side of the initiative and the municipality, who led the negotiations but was able to connect to the other initiators and other municipal departments, was also important in all three initiatives. The additional behavior of expansion and contraction around decisions regarding architecture, buildings, and legal frameworks for collective action and ownership, was supplementary. For these decisions, only temporary relationships with various consultants and constructors were made. But what the three cases all show is that as long as these decisions remain unmade, the network of allies remains fluent and elusive. As soon as site, architecture, legal ownership, and costs have been chosen, people leave the initiative but others join. Another challenge to the robustness of the initiatives were the individual building processes that undermined some of the collectiveness of two of the initiatives, but as the initiatives materialized over time, the physical features also became an important binding element.

Planning strategies

The answer to the overall research question – ***What planning strategies were developed in, and in response to civic initiatives?*** – can be answered by filtering the answers to the above two questions on their intentionality, the patterns in behavior, and their relation to planning. What goals were achieved by the various trajectories crossing the map, and what conditions, associations, and controversies were created intentionally in order to achieve these goals?

All three initiatives were full of intent. Their decoding from usual housing conditions was deliberate, and their intention to find a fit between their ideas of optimal living conditions and an environment that could facilitate these ideas was distinct from the very beginning. They networked in order to gather enough members and find the right site, money, materials, knowledge, etc. In other words: Their intentionality was to “network for a fit.” Also the municipal behavior was full of intent, as the municipalities were looking for developers whose ideas would fit the codes of the site, although they were not at all actively looking for co-housing initiatives. Not all matches between the initiatives and their sites were fully intentional though, and they depended on a more or less coincidental coming together of circumstances. Finding a match was easy in the case of Lange Eng, but in the cases of Fri og Fro and Hallingelille this match, or fit, was not obvious, and had to be found during the local negotiations.

Concerning the patterns in behavior, all three initiatives were more or less similar. And because these initiatives were so intentional, and their behavior deliberately chosen, the way in which they gained robustness and resilience over time overlapped to a great extent with the planning strategies used by the initiators. The first rounds started with decoding, but contraction and coding took place right away as well. An organizational form and structure was decided upon, and core values were defined (contraction and coding). Only when this was done, could expansion toward members and sites start. In the second rounds when the sites were found, expansion relates to the exploration of options, the hiring of consultants, the seeking of financial support, etc. But again, contraction and coding were dominant: coding toward the local planning conditions and a legal framework for shared ownership, contraction with the municipality and local communities. When all was agreed upon, and coded in a new Lokal Plan, the emphasis lay on expansion again. New members had to be sought and contractors hired, and individual building activities sometimes undermined the collectiveness of the initiative. When all the building activities were finished, and the initiative had materialized, all three initiatives focuses on contraction again. So to summarize, it could be said that all three initiatives focused mostly on contraction and coding in order to move to materialization as soon as possible.

Expansion only happened for brief periods, and each time it was carefully targeted at a specific goal (hire a consultant or contractor, find members, find a site).

The pattern of behavior of the municipalities involved is also quite similar in the three cases. For all three municipalities, coding was the most important aspect. The local negotiations with the initiators were focused on contraction and finding an agreement, but with the goal of finding a match with the existing codes. The municipalities helped the initiative forward by exploring options and linking them to the right municipal departments, which is expansion, but again they did so with the goal of making the initiative fit the existing codes. The municipalities were willing to invest time in the initiatives and support them in their decision-making process, as they believed the initiatives could serve the socio-economic interest of the community as well. In two of the initiatives, a revision of the existing codes came under discussion, but in only one were the codes actually adjusted (and only to a small degree). It could thus be said that for the municipalities, the behavior of coding was dominant, but that they were quite open to taking short and targeted outings to other kinds of behavior, in order to find an optimal fit between the initiative and the site.

	Lange Eng	Fri og Fro	Hallingelille
Civic initiative	<i>Coding and contraction, targeted expansion</i>	<i>Coding and contraction, targeted expansion</i>	<i>Coding and contraction, targeted expansion</i>
Municipality	<i>Finding a fit in coding</i>	<i>Finding a fit in coding</i>	<i>Finding a fit in coding</i>

FIGURE 6.11 *Planning strategies in, and in response to, the co-housing initiatives*

Learning from the Danes

In the introduction to this chapter, Denmark was presented as a country with a housing and planning system very similar to that of the Netherlands, but with some slight differences that might provide better conditions for co-housing initiatives. In the Netherlands, such initiatives are often said to be obstructed by a rigid planning system that, due to its history of large-scale governmental-led building practice developments, lacked the flexibility to move along with the complexity and specificity of co-housing groups. In Denmark, such a rigid

planning system is combined with a practice of local negotiations with a prominent role for civil society and local initiators, and housing is characterized by self-commissioning and collective living schemes. The Danish combination of a rigid and governmental-led planning system, combined with a local practice of negotiations and a housing practice of do-it-yourself, together would provide an interesting referential case study on the question what planning strategies fit an age of active citizenship. The Danish context thus opens up a new perspective on the question what conditions enabled the co-housing initiatives to materialize, and what planning strategies were developed in an in response to these initiatives. The Danish referential case study is not meant as a comparison, but rather as a check on the conditions that are enabling for co-housing initiatives, in a context that lacked some of the obvious constraints of Dutch practice. This final section reflects on whether the specific Danish conditions that were expected to be enabling for co-housing initiatives, indeed played an important enabling role in the actual co-housing initiatives studied in this chapter.

Danish planning practice of local negotiations has two characteristics: the negotiations between municipalities and future landowners, and the consensus-based civic-public negotiations, both before legal plans are approved. Concerning the negotiated legal plan, the cases indeed show that these negotiations were enabling for both the initiative and the municipalities in finding a fit between the various demands and the eventual legal plan. They had not allocated any land for co-housing before they were approached by the initiatives. Instead, the initiatives suited the general planning intentions of the municipalities (and the resourceful people it would bring to the municipality), giving the municipalities the arguments to prefer these initiatives to no development at all, and the willingness to invest time to help the initiatives find a fit with the sites and their planning demands. The negotiated legal plan also enabled the initiatives to have their specific ecological or other demands legally framed and secured. Surprisingly, in all cases, the eventual divergence from the usual ways of working was not as big as might have been expected. In Lange Eng, conventional planning procedures were followed, and a satisfactory match between the demands of the group, the plan, and the housing scheme was soon found. In Fri og Fro, the content of the Lokal Plan is unconventional, but since the municipality was open to the ideas of the community (out of self-interest!), and the initiators were well educated in what was expected from them, the demands of the initiators and the planning schemes of the municipality satisfactorily merged into the legal document of the Lokal Plan. Eventually, all obligatory planning procedures were followed as usual, and only small adjustments to the land use zoning were necessary. In Hallingelille, there was eventually hardly any divergence from the usual planning procedures. Local conditions obstructed the original ideas of the initiators, which in the end were adjusted to fit the local planning conditions.

Concerning the civic-public negotiations, the three cases showed that these mostly concerned a desired consensus between the new co-housing initiative and the existing local community. For Lange Eng, no negotiations were necessary since there was no local community when Lange Eng was developed. In Fri og Fro, the initiative worked hard to be accepted by the local community. In the Hallingelille case, the negotiations between the initiative and the local residents were problematic for all the sites they applied for, and at first as a result of an already existing disagreement between the residents and the planning authorities, and later on as a result of the local villagers' suspicion of the eco-minded spiritually oriented group of people. Whether these deliberations are thus enabling or obstructive to the initiative, therefore depended mostly on local planning conditions and the ability of the initiators to develop a good relationship with the local community.

The Danish housing practice of do-it-yourself also has two main characteristics: The prevalent practice of self-commissioning in small projects, and collective schemes for maintenance, ownership, and everyday life, make the Danes well accustomed to collective living environments. Concerning the practice of self-commissioning, the cases indeed show that no problematic encounters took place between the initiative and contractors based on individual commissioning. However, the initiators of the cases did point out that the more these external actors are acquainted with co-housing initiatives, the better and more fruitful these temporary relationships are, and they specifically sought such contractors and consultants. The more difficult relationship between Lange Eng and its contractor was due to the large scale of the project (52 houses in one architectural structure) rather than to the non-professional commissioning. And for both Fri og Fro and Hallingelille, difficulties obtaining loans, contractors, and legal advice had more to do with the communal and ecological character of the initiative than with the private commissioning. Concerning the collective forms of living, all three cases indeed benefited from the collective schemes provided by Danish law. These schemes were supportive in various ways: They helped in finding loans and purchasing the land, they helped to define shared goals and norms for the people in the initiative, and to define these in self-written statutes, and they helped in appointing spokespersons for the initiative that could deal with all negotiations and deliberations with planning officials, and they gave the initiators a structure for the internal organization of the group. The only controversy around these schemes happened in Fri og Fro: The initial idea to become an andelsboligforening was abandoned, because the architecture of the project proved to be incompatible with this legal form of ownership.

These cases thus indeed show that the presumed enabling conditions of Danish planning and housing practices were indeed enabling conditions for the co-housing initiatives. The co-housing initiatives were, however, not without turbulence or challenges. The initiatives arose in response to a tight housing market or a general lack of suitable houses for certain individuals. Finding allies, resources, and a site to build on were hurdles faced by all initiatives. For the initiators, it was of major importance to stay close to their initial goals, and to find a site, a framework, and a plan that fit their idea; if no allies are there yet, they will come eventually when most decisions have been made. All actors involved in the initiatives were subject to different and multiple trajectories, and acceptance and acknowledgement of these differences can make deliberations easier and changes less disappointing.

It is therefore difficult to pinpoint what exactly can be learned from these Danish examples for Dutch co-housing practice. The negotiated legal plan is certainly a form of adaptiveness that could be beneficial for the Dutch planning practice. Instead of trying to fix everything beforehand (including allocating certain sites for co-housing only), it might be more effective to try to make Dutch planners more accustomed and open to, and familiar with, small-scale local initiators, and the accompanying negotiations. It might also be worth considering how the large-scale building sector in the Netherlands could somehow become more like the diverse, small-scale, fragmented but specialized sector it is in Denmark. And thirdly, it might be worth exploring how forms of collectiveness can become more promoted and legally supported in the Netherlands, in order to help initiatives to get organized, become and remain robust, and gain the resources they need.

However, the three cases also show that despite these more structural elements in Danish planning practice, local planning conditions seem to be much more relevant enablers of or constraints on co-housing initiatives than the planning system in general. It is much more important to find like-minded people, and people and parties that are willing to try something new, and not focus too much or for too long on convincing or deliberating with those who regard the initiative as something threatening anyway. Based on these examples of co-housing initiatives, it could be concluded that planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship, perhaps partly relate to setting the right conditions and providing frameworks, but more importantly to the ability of planners to pick up certain movements, ideas, and initiatives, and investigate how these ideas could fit and contribute to their own interest.

A Legal Framework for Collective Action: The Case of Business Improvement Districts, England

On May 1, 2009, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) arrived in the Netherlands. They arrived by means of an experimental law that provided the possibility to establish BIDs for two years (2009–2011). BIDs started during that period would then function and be monitored for five years. If these BIDs were successful and an overall positive experience, the experimental law would be turned into a permanent law (Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 2009).

Expectations of the BID legislation were high. It was hoped that the legislation would enable local, collective business initiatives, by providing a legal framework for collective action among local entrepreneurs. This would create a shared responsibility and co-investment among businesses and governmental actors, and generate quality of place, economic prosperity, and sustainability in urban business environments (Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 2009). It was this line of expectations that, at the time, left me wondering whether BID legislation could be considered an enabling condition for self-organization in urban development. Would local businesses engaged in a BID sooner or later aim at physical interventions as well, and if so, what planning strategies would be developed by the BID and in response to the BID? This question led me to England. There, BIDs had already been in operation since 2004 and would thus offer more learning experiences than the Dutch BIDs had so far. Moreover, in England, planning practice seemed to be more receptive to private sector-led initiatives for spatial interventions and community-led planning compared to Dutch planning practice.

In this chapter, time and place are crucial. First, because BIDs can be regarded as a travelling and still unfolding concept, crossing times and spaces, meeting new local contexts and institutional settings, time and again reshaping the workings and the understanding of BIDs. The local BID experiences are also continuously unfolding, both in the Netherlands and England. The BID concept, the BID experiences in local settings, spatial policies, and political views in the cities and countries where BIDs are located, the scientific community trying to grasp the significance of BIDs – all co-evolve with each other in a constant mode of experiment. The second reason why time and space are crucial in this chapter, is because the actual information I gathered and used as research material, is time- and place-bound around two specific periods. The first starts in the summer of 2009, when the idea of incorporating BIDs in this thesis was formed. At the time, I had just encountered BID-like experiments in a project on neighborhood economy in Rotterdam (Boonstra & Roso 2009), the new BID legislation in the Netherlands had just been put into operation, and Utrecht University was preparing a research trip to the United Kingdom and asked me to participate. This concurrence of circumstances led me to England in the early spring of 2010 for exploratory fieldwork, together with five Master's students in planning from Utrecht University and several Dutch planning practitioners who were interested in the BID concept. During this trip, I collected my first set of data and interviews on BIDs in Birmingham, Coventry, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Hartlepool, and Liverpool. The second instance in time and place extends from the summer of 2012 to the summer of 2013, when this text and chapter were written, including a second round of data collection on BIDs in Birmingham in the spring of 2013.

*Traces of this chapter can be found in other publications, and traces of other publications can be found in this chapter, as these co-evolved in time. My own expectations regarding BIDs and self-organization are formulated in Boonstra and Boelens (2011), which was written before I went to the UK. In the weeks directly following the first field trip to England, I wrote down my first impressions in Boonstra (2010) in *Stedenbouw en Ruimtelijke Ordening (S&RO; Magazine for Urbanism and Spatial Planning)*. A reflection on one particular BID in Birmingham (Broad Street) in comparison with a Community Trust in Caterham-on-the-hill (Caterham Barracks) is made in Van Meerkerk, Boonstra, and Edelenbos (2013). In 2013, I published an update on the Birmingham BIDs in comparison with several Rotterdam BIDs, again in *S&RO* (Boonstra, 2013a).*

This chapter is organized as follows. First, the concept of BIDs in general in England and the Netherlands is explained. As is shown, the actual existence of a “BID concept” is highly ambiguous. Its development can be seen as a trajectory through place and time, constantly shaping and reshaping its actual appearance in local contexts. Secondly, why the BIDs in England would provide interesting learning experiences for the emerging BIDs in the Netherlands is explained: The longer lifespan of the English BIDs, differences in planning practice and supporting frameworks for collective action and active citizenship, which are presupposed enabling conditions for civic initiatives. The individual BIDs traced in this chapter are all located within the city of Birmingham, and their descriptions and analysis make up the third part of this chapter. The fourth part of the chapter is concluding and reflective on the case findings of the individual BIDs, and on the lessons that these BID experience can provide for planning strategies in an age of active citizenship.

1

BIDS: A TRAJECTORY WITH MANY AMBIGUITIES

In this thesis, BIDs are seen as a form of civic initiatives in spatial development, more specifically urban regeneration led by local non-profit business collectives. Rhetoric aimed at promoting BIDs, both in practice and academia, addresses the concept’s potential for community-led development and a distribution of responsibility among local stakeholders. However, this presumption can be

contested, as not all BIDs are organized independently of governmental policies, and are not even always initiated by local businesses themselves. If there is one thing to say about BIDs, it is that they are ambiguous in many ways. This first section attempts to decompose these ambiguities, before the second section argues why English BIDs provide an interesting referential case study on planning strategies in an age of active citizenship.

The ambiguities are threefold. The first ambiguity concerns whether the origin of BIDs can be seen as singular, or as dispersed in local practices across the world. The second concerns whether BIDs can be seen as a general concept, or as local performances. The third ambiguity concerns whether BIDs can be seen as a promising approach to tackling urban challenges, or as a possible threat to public values. These ambiguities are decomposed in this section, using the perspective of BIDs as a travelling concept (cf. Tait & Jensen, 2007). In this perspective, the development and spread of BIDs is seen as a proactive translation of a concept from one location to another, through dynamic and changing relations, and interaction between concepts, people, objects, and institutions. This translation implies displacement, alteration, reconfiguration, not only changing the concept itself but also changing the relationships and capacities of the actors involved (Tait & Jensen, 2007). Through time, a trajectory is created by actors in the policy transfer of the BID legislation from the USA, to England, and to the Netherlands. This trajectory is followed in this section, and covers 2001–2003 in England, and 2005–2009 in the Netherlands.

On the origins of BIDs

In England, the Labour government first announced BIDs in the White Paper “Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services,” which was published in 2001 (Lloyd et al., 2003). In the following years, BID legislation was drafted by a steering group under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and put up for formal and informal consultations (Deputy Prime Minister, 2004). Final legislation was passed in November 2004, enabling the creation of BIDs in England and Wales from that moment onward (Dawkins & Grail, 2007). In the Netherlands, a first draft of BID legislation was proposed by the Secretary of State for Economic Affairs in July 2007, as part of the policy set out by the Balkenende IV government and titled “Samen werken, samen leven” (“Work together, live together” – see also Chapter 1; Min AZ, 2007). During 2007 and 2008, BID legislation was shaped and adjusted following the recommendations made by the Council of State, House of Representatives, Senate, and business representatives. An experimental law of limited duration (two years) was enacted in May 2009, under the name *Bedrijven Investeringszones* (BIZ; businesses investment zones). When in practice

it appeared that the establishment of a BIZ took longer than anticipated, and that due to the Property Value Assessment system, BIZs could only be put into operation in January of the respective year, the minister of Economic Affairs and the House of Representatives decided to prolong the experimental period until the January 2012. Evaluation of the BIZs took place during 2012, and based on the outcomes, the Ministry of Economic Affairs decided to transform the experimental law into a permanent law, which became enacted in 2014 (Staatsblad der Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 2014).

Important as these periods of legislative introduction are in England and the Netherlands, they of course do not explain the origin of BIDs, which is one of the major ambiguities of BIDs. One perspective on the origins of BIDs, often used by advocates of the concept, mythologizes the origin of the BID as a singular, almost magical beginning: The “birth of BIDs” in Bloor West Village, Toronto, Canada, in 1971. According to that story, local store owners asked the municipality to help them set up a system that would distribute the costs of investments in public space, and the local municipality in its turn asked the state of Ontario to embed this legally as Business Improvement Areas. This mythology is especially told in places where advocates of the concept tried to convince other stakeholders, using the story of how BIDs provided solutions in other places in other times before, to comparable problems found in the locality at hand. Such descriptions of origin are used as strategy, stressing not the intrinsic importance of the idea, but the relevance of the idea in matching local needs and requirements (Tait & Jensen, 2007). Both the English and the Dutch rhetoric that accompanied the establishment of a national BID law, indeed pointed out this origin of BIDs, emphasizing how local store owners in Toronto developed a community-led approach to deal with a retrenching government, a degradation of public space, unsafety, and the migration of people and businesses from inner city locations.

From this story, the concept and its legislation gradually spread through Canada and the USA from the 1980s onward (Lloyd et al., 2003; Houston, 2005; Menger et al., 2005; Dawkins & Grail, 2007; Cook, 2008; Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 2009; Glasze et al., 2012). The introduction of BIDs in England during the early to mid-2000s was the direct result of a deliberate policy transfer of the concepts by the New Labour government and the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM). The ATCM represented the interests of town and city center management partnerships across Britain and Ireland (its members included government, regional agencies, local authorities and leading business interests), and maintained relations with the International Downtown Association (IDA) from the USA. Together they organized meetings, congresses, and study trips to several east-coast USA BIDs during the mid-1990s and, for the sake of

convenience, these BIDs were taken as the general BID model that could function as an example for the English context (Cook, 2008). After implementation in England, the story of this single birth place of BIDs in Toronto was continued by Dutch policy brokers, who took the English and the USA east coast BIDs as reference (Menger et al., 2005; Ter Beek & Mosselman, 2006). The positive experiences with BIDs abroad were also seen by the Dutch as an example of how business collectives could tackle issues concerning employment, vacancy, and crime, if only businesses were empowered and enabled to initiate collective action (Menger et al., 2005).

The other perspective on the origin of BIDs emphasizes the highly varied character of locally grown practices of BID-like concepts, almost-BIDs, pre-BIDs, and the various acronyms that are used in different places for similar practices, and parallel developments took place in different localities (Ward, 2006). Such descriptions of origin rather stress the suitability of the concept for localities at hand, where such pre-BID schemes were already an existing practice. Even in the USA, BID-like laws have evolved over time and were developed at the state level, leading to such a complex set of possible organizational forms that it is almost impossible to speak of one BID definition (Morçöl & Patrick, 2006; Morçöl & Gautsch, 2013). When the “first” US BID was established in 1975 as the Downtown Development Districts of New Orleans, a hybrid was made between the “Bloor West Village” mythology, and the frameworks of “Special Purpose District” and “Special Assessment Districts,” a special purpose governmental unit that operates independently of general purpose government and has existed since the 1960s (Glasze et al., 2012). Also in England a local, home-grown framework existed: Town Centre Management (TCM). This framework was introduced in the early 1990s. It enabled voluntary schemes of local authorities and the private sector aimed at countering economic decline of downtowns, by privatizing public services and making urban regeneration more area-based and property-led (Reeve, 2008; Cook, 2008). TCM schemes were expected to “unleash an efficient, innovative and market-sensitive approach to the governance of city centres” (Cook, 2008: 778). TCM schemes, however, were criticized because their voluntary schemes encouraged free-riding and showed little evidence of a return on investment. This criticism led to the introduction of BIDs, whose legal structure would enable partnerships to formalize their structures and secure contributions (Cook, 2008; 2009; Reeve, 2008; Lloyd et al., 2003; Houston, 2005). Many of the BIDs established in England are rooted in earlier TCM schemes (Dawkins & Grail 2007; Lloyd et al., 2003).

In the Netherlands, the BIZ stage was also set by home-grown concepts, for instance, Park- en Winkelstraatmanagement (business park or shopping street

management, organized in areas with single landownership, obligatory contributions, and membership, levies through rent or transfer provisions, activities executed by local government), Beheersverenigingen (management associations, organized in newly developed business park, where landownership and real estate ownership is evident and contributions and membership can be arranged through new contracts), and Ondernemersfondsen (entrepreneur funds, which are non-territorial, or at least they are applied to the whole of a municipality and not for specific locations or areas within that municipality). Local BID-like experiments had also been undertaken in Rotterdam and Leiden, and according to the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the BIZ legislation, businesses and municipalities wanted to continue, enhance, and formalize such schemes of cooperation and co-investment (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430 - Nr. 3). Many current Dutch BIZs are rooted in these earlier BID-like schemes (Doornbos et al., 2011; Doornbos & Kreijen, 2012).

What BIDs are and what is made of them

A second ambiguity concerns what BIDs are and what is made of them. Again, there are two perspectives on what BIDs are: One emphasizes the generic definition of BIDs connecting all the different local practices of BIDs over the world, and the other emphasizes the use and application of BIDs in specific localities, making them contextual, embedded, engaged and performative in local matters and contexts.

Many researchers have engaged in finding and defining “the common binding principle,” the resemblance among local BID and BID-like practices. Despite the diffusion of BIDs and BID-like schemes in, for instance, the USA (Morçöl & Gautsch, 2013), a common essence binds these practices together as “publicly sanctioned yet privately directed organisation that supplements public and private services to improve geographically defined, outdoor public spaces and business services” (Hoyt, 2006; Cook, 2008: 773-4), and as “self-assessment districts that are initiated and self-governed by property or business owners and authorized by governments to operate in designated urban [] areas” (Morçöl, 2006).

In the policy transfer of the BID concept from the USA to England, the definition of BIDs became further specified as consortiums of businesses that elect to make a collective contribution to the maintenance, development, and promotion of their commercial districts, and aim to improve business opportunities by interventions in their neighborhood through targeted and ring-fenced investments, additional to public services (Deputy Prime Minister, 2004), and as:

... areas within which projects specified in the BID arrangements are to be carried out for the benefit of that district or those who live, work or carry on any activity in the district. Those projects are to be financed (in whole or in part) by a BID levy imposed on the non-domestic ratepayers, or a class of such ratepayers in the district. A business improvement district may only be established where those entitled to vote approve the BID proposals.

In the Netherlands, BIDs became BIZs – *bedrijveninvesterings zones* – defined as an “area-based charge for additional activities by cooperating entrepreneurs in the public interest” (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430 – Nr. 3 – translation by author). These definitions were still in line with the general description of the BID concept. However, in the policy transfer of the BID concept from the east coast of the USA to the English context, and later to the Dutch context, the concept was further adjusted – sometimes narrowed down, sometimes transformed, and sometimes diversified again.

The first adjustment made in the transfer from the USA to England and the Netherlands was a narrowing down of the diversity of BID and BID legislations in the USA, into one uniformed single body of legislation. In England, the BID regulations contain the general rules and requirements, and prescribe what needs to be included and taken into account when developing and implementing a BID. The BID legislation prescribes that BID proposals should be explicit regarding the content of the BID (works or services to be provided, the type of body the provider is, existing baseline services by billing or other public authorities, geographical area covered by the BID, who should pay how much BID levy, duration, and commencement date), prescribes the democratic and business-led character of the BID (a business-led board takes the final decisions, and businesses democratically control the board’s actions and decisions), and the ballot requirements (a minimum turnout of 30%, of which 50% should vote in favor of the BID, representing a minimum of 50% of all ratable value in the BID area) (Deputy Prime Minister, 2004).

In the policy transfer to the Netherlands, these requirements were even further narrowed down. Requirements for sufficient support became substantially higher: 50% turnout, of which two thirds should vote in favor of the BIZ and the sum of the property values of the contributors in favor of the regulation had to be more than the sum of the property values of the contributors who voted against the regulation. The reason for these higher requirements is the doubling in local taxes: Whereas in England the BID levy can be seen as a local tax additional to centralized business tax, businesses in Dutch BIZs are already taxed locally. In order to prevent overcharging, BIZs can thus only be established in places where

a large majority of businesses are in favor. In the Netherlands, there is also a legal clause stating that the municipal council has to withdraw the regulation as soon as possible if there is sufficient support for withdrawal among the contributors (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430, Nr. 3). Both in England and the Netherlands, BIDs are reviewed every five years and automatically terminated unless businesses again vote in favor of them in a new ballot.

A second adjustment and transformation of the BID concept in the policy transfer from the USA to England and the Netherlands concerns the dominant actors in a BID. Whereas in the USA the dominant actors are land and property owners, in English BIDs business occupiers became the dominant actors (Blackwell, 2008; Dawkins & Grail, 2007). This is due to the differences in taxation systems. In the USA, taxation is based on ownership and is locally determined, whereas in England taxation is based on occupation (Lloyd et al., 2003). In England it was decided that the new BID levy would be arranged via this existing business rates system, as it was considered too complex to introduce a new taxation system for the BID legislation only (Dawkins & Grail, 2007). Concerning the inclusion of property owners only, a system of guidance was included in the regulations (Lloyd et al., 2003). Also in the Netherlands, BIZs were originally constitutionally impossible, as taxes did not allow for a geographical differentiation, but when in 1994 a new valuation system for real estate was established, basing taxation on occupation, BIZs could be related to this Valuation of Immobile Property Act (Wet Waardering Onroerende Zaken, WOZ).

A third adjustment made in the policy transfer from England to the Netherlands concerns the specifications of what the legal entity a BIZ should be, which is rather a diversification of the BID concept. Whereas in England, a full set of legal clauses were created for BIDs, the Dutch legislation makes many references to existing laws. These laws are the Municipal Law (Gemeentewet), the General Administrative Law (Algemene Wet Bestuursrecht), and the law on associations (Wet Verenigingen/Stichtingen) (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430 - Nr. 3). In England, all BIDs are independent not-for-profit companies whose boards are dominated by representatives from the private sector, and in the Netherlands BIZs are publicly sanctioned non-profit private business associations, and use is made of the already existing Dutch *vereniging* (association) or *stichting* (foundation). Both *verenigingen* and *stichtingen* have members, but in a *vereniging* members are represented by a democratically elected board, whereas the board of a *stichting* is not elected, and has a final say. Though every BIZ should be a *vereniging* or *stichting*, the BIZ and the *vereniging*/*stichting* are not the same legal entity. The BIZ is an area-based entity, and all business – as defined in the BIZ proposal – are obligated by law to contribute to the BIZ

financially, after they have approved the BIZ through the BIZ ballot. It is, however, not mandatory for a business to be a member of the vereniging or stichting: Membership is voluntary and additional to being a financial contributor to the BIZ and voter in the BIZ ballot. The vereniging or stichting is only the executive organization of the BIZ activities within the framework of an “implementation agreement” with the municipality, which also provides subsidies. Legal requirements in the Dutch BID regulation are thus the local BIZ proposal, an implementation agreement, and the statutes of the vereniging or stichting (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430 - Nr. 3).

These stories of policy transfer from the USA to England to the Netherlands show how time and again, conditional factors in the destination country (e.g., existing taxation systems and legal frameworks for collective action) reshape the concept into a new form. The general concept, or the resemblance between BIDs in various places, remains, and in each policy transfer, the concept of the BID is further detailed and determined. But despite their uniformity in legal terms and regulation at national government level, the BID regulations in both England and the Netherlands still allow businesses to be innovative, and to address the particular needs and problems of a local area. BIDs thus become performative only when the general BID concept is specified into a local setting.

Great expectations – or contested concept?

The third ambiguity of BIDs concerns the expectations that have been projected on them by researchers and policymakers. Proponents stress the opportunities BIDs offer that did not exist before, whereas opponents warn of an erosion of public values.

Both in England and the Netherlands, the expectations projected on BIDs by their proponents concern their ability to solve problems of free ridership in existing voluntary schemes, their ability to empower local businesses and create shared responsibility for urban areas among businesses and local authorities, and the contribution BIDs could make to urban regeneration.

- 1 *Solve problems of free ridership in existing voluntary schemes for collective action among businesses.* In England, TCMs – formal and informal local public–private partnerships responsible for the management of town and city centers – were introduced on a large scale during the 1990s. It was expected that TCMs would make centers more economically competitive and would license out state power to the private sector for overall efficiency. Although they were quite successful, there was also discontent

with the voluntary financing mechanisms causing freeriding behavior, and the reluctance of retail chains and independent retailers to contribute financially (Cook, 2008). In the Netherlands, the Explanatory Memorandum (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430 – Nr. 3) accompanying the BID law, acknowledged that many business-led initiatives failed to materialize because of a lack of organizing capacity and haziness around the division of responsibilities among businesses and municipalities, especially in inner city areas where landownership is dispersed. Existing legal frameworks did not tackle these issues, and subsidies only created dependency (ibid.). In both countries, a BID scheme was considered to be relevant to tackle these issues of freeriding and inefficacy, making financing schemes mandatory, business-led, and more robust and continuous (Cook, 2008; Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430 – Nr. 3).

- 2 *The ability to empower local businesses and create shared responsibility for urban areas among businesses and local authorities.* The business-led character of BIDs was expected to create a shared responsibility among businesses and local government. In England, it was argued that BIDs would promote partnerships between local authorities and local businesses, strengthen the role of local authorities as community leaders, improve links with their business communities, and get businesses more involved in decision making (Deputy Prime Minister, 2004). In the Netherlands, it was argued that BIDs were a proven instrument for generating co-investments among businesses and local governments to improve spatial quality (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430 - Nr. 3). In contrast to governmental-led participatory procedures or the earlier discussed voluntary schemes, BIDs would be much more business-led. Even though BID legislation allows for BID initiatives to be taken also by parties with an interest in land (landowners or landlords), bodies with a purpose to develop BID proposals, or the relevant billing authority (district, county, or city council), BID legislation still ensures that a BID can only be established when the majority of businesses are in favor it, and that the majority of members of the BID's board should be the owners of local businesses (Deputy Prime Minister, 2004). The Dutch BIZ regulation even states that no BIZ should be established if there is no well-organized entrepreneurial initiative. The municipality, chambers of commerce, or real estate owners can also suggest the idea of a BIZ to entrepreneurs, but the actual BIZ must be performed and supported by businesses in the area itself (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430 – Nr. 3).

- 3 *Contribution to urban regeneration.* In England, the BID legislation was understood to enable businesses to become key players in the “regeneration of once-depressed downtowns,” like in the USA (Cook, 2008: 932). It was argued that the main aim of a BID would be to improve the economic conditions of a business area, making the area more prosperous. It was argued that by making areas cleaner, safer, more attractive, and better promoted, footfall and dwell time would increase, as would spending, making individual businesses more prosperous as well (Dawkins & Grail, 2007). In the Netherlands, stories of success and of positive results were told about increasing employment, reducing criminality, and the vacancy of real estate (Menger et al., 2005). It was noted that in the USA and England, BIDs mostly spent their budgets on cleanliness, safety, and maintenance, and smaller parts of the budget on marketing of the business areas and providing solutions for specific local problems, such as accessibility. It was therefore expected that the Dutch BIZs would also contribute to safety, environmental quality, or other public interest in the public space of the geographical area of the BIZ (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430 - Nr. 3). Such contributions would then be additional to activities and services provided by local public authorities. This additivity is ensured by legislation: In England, the BID proposal lays down the baseline services to be provided by the local authorities (Deputy Prime Minister, 2004), and in the Netherlands, the municipalities have to assess the BID agreement on its contribution to the public interest (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 31 430 - Nr. 3).

Opponents of BIDs argue against these great expectations, and warn of an irreversible privatization of public space, a threat to public values, the exclusion of minorities, non-businesses, and the underprivileged, and the undemocratic, unaccountable character of BIDs (Morçöl et al., 2008; Hochleitner, 2003). Also the business-led character of BIDs is contested, as BIDs arise from top-down government policy incentives, rather than from locally driven needs (Blackwell, 2008), and as BID officials are only empowered when serving public purposes, and “officials who grant BIDs their limited power to promote local business and economic development can also [] take that power away. Even within the limited sphere of business improvement, BIDs are not sovereigns” (Hochleitner, 2008: 100). As BIDs empower businesses in local governance (Justice & Skelcher, 2009), they can cause a privatization of public space (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006), with commercial interests in the lead (Zukin, 1995; Ronneberger, 2000; Mitchell, 2003 in Glasze et al., 2012). And they can cause an erosion of public services and the retrenchment of local government, since BIDs allow localities to succeed in the absence of city government (Lloyd et al., 2003). Public planning institutions, which

seek to benefit all groups in society, and not merely business interests, might become disadvantaged when BIDs gain influence (Ratcliff et al., 1999; Ashworth, 2002; Lloyd et al., 2003).

Moreover, BIDs could disadvantage citizen interests, and civil liberties and disadvantaged groups such as the homeless and unlicensed street traders could become threatened (Katz, 1998; Mitchell, 2003; Coleman, 2003; Topfer et al., 2007; Marquardt & Fuller, 2008; Lippert, 2009; Glasze et al., 2012). BIDs could even disadvantage business groups. Tenants in a BID pay a levy based on rental value, but as the attractiveness of an area increases, so too will the rent they pay. Businesses that are less in need of location quality could therefore be forced to move out of the BID (Lloyd et al., 2003; Blackwell, 2008). BIDs could thus even lead to a marginalization of areas where increased taxes cannot be afforded, and be a threat to the fiscal health of some businesses. Another inequality in gains generated by BIDs is the dual voting arrangement, whereby “majority” means both a majority of businesses and a majority of ratable value, making it possible for a small number of larger businesses to either vote for or enforce the BID, and depriving smaller businesses of such power (Lloyd et al., 2003).

The intensity of the arguments given by both the proponents and the opponents of BIDs show not only how contested the BID concept is, but also how strategic the policy transfer to England and the Netherlands has been. A very selective process of policy transfer that did not include any negative or failed BIDs and was unaware of BIDs’ shortfalls and failures, and in which information and nuances easily became lost (Cook, 2008), has only increased the uncertainty about the effects and the outcomes of BIDs.

The ambiguity of BIDs as civic initiatives

This first section has elaborated the trajectory of the BID legislation at a national policy level. Stimulated by policy events emphasizing the need for BIDs, the myth of the original BID travelled along with the policy entrepreneurs from North America to England and the Netherlands. In this process, the concept became merged with pre-existing legislation, practices, and locally grown concepts for business involvement in geographically defined areas: TCM schemes in England and a variety of schemes in the Netherlands. These reshaped the BID concept into its typical English or Dutch form (cf. Justice & Skelcher, 2009). The general BID description used in the policy transfer toward England did not do justice to the diversity of BIDs in the USA, and created a single and uniform legal BID scheme, and a deviation from property owners to business occupiers as the main members of a BID. These adjustments were followed in the Netherlands, where more severe

ballot requirements were added. But still, these adjusted legislations enable local businesses and local authorities to perform the exact same activities. This shows the consistency of the BID concept running through national legislations and local BID practices, as well as how specific BID legislation can become when actualized in differentiated legal settings and local practices. The BID concept proves to be adaptable to the vagaries of different locations without losing its recognizability. Despite their differences, the same tendencies are visible in BIDs across the world.

Many reasons can be given why BIDs are not civic initiatives for spatial development: BIDs are legitimized by public law, national legislation, and policy schemes, and thus take place within a framework of regulatory control. A BID is only authorized by local government if it will serve the public interest. The expectations that BID legislation would turn businesses into leading actors in urban regeneration, creating a high-quality urban environment that serves both business and public interest, can be seen as a mere instrument of public policy. Framing BIDs in this way, one could consider them as governmental-led, rather than as self-organized community-driven, business-led civic initiatives.

However, BID legislation is not a compulsory urban governance scheme, nor is it prescriptive about the projects and services a BID should deliver (Cook, 2008). BIDs are non-profit private organizations that are driven by the self-interest of businesses and their community (Glasze et al. 2012; Lloyd et al. 2003; Justice & Goldsmith, 2008; Houston, 2005). BIDs cannot be created against the will of the majority of businesses (Morçöl & Zimmermann, 2006b), and are examples of how businesses can self-organize when they face common problems (Morçöl & Zimmerman, 2006a: 77-78). It is the BID legislation that actually enables businesses to take collective action and to locally self-organize. The BID concept is used in local settings and particularities, and enables local actors to achieve their ambitions for their localities. Most BIDs are established through close deliberations among businesses, local authorities, landlords, landowners, and other interested parties, and they create shared responsibility between businesses and local public authorities. As such, BIDs blur the divide between public and private interests, and the boundaries between public and private spheres become fluid – they are “in between,” (Morçöl et al., 2008) “networked” (Glasze et al., 2012), and “polycentric” (Baer, 2008) urban governance.

Whether BIDs can be framed as initiatives that originate in civil society, as autonomous community-based networks of businesses, thus remains ambiguous. Although BIDs do not get organized entirely outside government control, they are initiated by local business occupiers who engage in developing their

business environments out of self-interest, in self-governance, and using their own resources. The spatial interventions initiated by a BID are community-led, business occupiers can be seen as civic actors, and their interventions contribute to urban regeneration. The introduction of BID legislation is thus an attempt to promote civic initiatives among local entrepreneurs in order to bring about urban regeneration. Moreover, as the establishment of BIDs embodies the emergence of new structure out of fairly unstructured beginnings, their processes of becoming can be described by using the notions of self-organization. Tracing the trajectories local BIDs took toward establishing and the materialization of their ideas into spatial interventions, their behaviors and intentionalities, and the behaviors and intentionalities of other actors with which a BID associates in its process of becoming, would shed new light on the conditions and strategies that enable and enhance local business-community initiatives. The tension and ambiguous relationship between the enabling framework for business-led collective action addressing specific local needs and challenges, and the uniform, governmental-led legislation and publically sanctioned practices, make BIDs an interesting case study with respect to planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship.

2

AN ENGLISH REFERENTIAL CASE STUDY

As elaborated in the previous section, BIDs can at least to some extent be considered community-driven, business-led civic initiatives that aim to achieve urban regeneration. As such, their emergence in local settings can be analyzed according to the principles of self-organization. In the UK, between 2004 and 2011, 129 BIDs were established; of them, 115 are in England. Some of them have already had their first (fifth-year) renewal (54) or even their second (tenth-year) renewal (4), making 94% of the BIDs successful in their continuation. BIDs are said to create positive outcomes and they are growing in number, importance, and scale. There is even talk of further innovation, for instance toward property owner BIDs (British BIDs & University of Ulster, 2010; British BIDs, 2011; 2012). In the Netherlands, during the experimental period of the BIZ legislation from 2009 to 2011, a BIZ initiative was mooted at 235 locations. At 112 of these locations, a BIZ actually materialized. In the first few years, the results of these BIZs were not that visible, but over the course of time the number of initiatives grew, as did their success rate and results. Confidence in the value of BIZs, trust among businesses

and local authorities, acquaintance with the legislation, and satisfaction with the results and improvements BIZs could generate in their environments all increased (Doornbos et al., 2011; Doornbos & Kreijen, 2012; Berndsen et al., 2012).

However, back in 2009, there were several reasons why conducting a case study on English BIDs made sense, and in 2013 several more reasons could be added to them. These reasons were based on several presupposed enabling conditions that would allow the English BIDs to be more proactively involved in urban regeneration and spatial development compared to the Dutch BIZs.

BIDs mature over time

The first reason concerns the activities of BIDs, and how BIDs mature over time. Concerning their core activities, the English BIDs and the Dutch BIZs at first sight do not seem to be so different. The core activities of the English BIDs are mostly aimed at creating an attractive public realm, better accessibility, safety and security, clean, green, marketing, and events. Dutch BIZs also target spatial quality and making the area more attractive by performing activities related to traffic, street furniture, maintenance, being clean, neat and safe, and field marketing, promotion, and events (Doornbos et al., 2011; Doornbos & Kreijen, 2012). However, Dutch BIZ legislation and the kind of activities it allows for, is criticized for be too narrow in its definition of “public interest,” as it only seems to allow for those mentioned activities (Berndsen et al., 2012). It seems that the English BID legislation is more flexible regarding the activities BIDs should perform and the way in which other actors can become involved, and thus allows for more local innovation.

Indeed, the activities of the English BIDs extend as far as collective purchasing, managing vacant premises (by, for instance, using them to display art or advertisements, or letting charities use them), and contributing to environmental issues such as carbon reduction, and tourism policy. Moreover, the English BIDs also perform activities directly aimed at regeneration by attracting inward investment. They proactively encourage property owners to contribute financially, try to attract additional funding from local government, property owners, transport authorities and development corporations, through sponsorship and events, and aim at attracting additional investment in an area, focused on regeneration. There even seems to be a growth in income generation as BIDs mature (British BIDs & University of Ulster, 2010; British BIDs, 2011). As many already started in 2004 and 2005, English BIDs tend to be more mature and the evaluation in both countries shows that as BIDs mature, they also tend to become more proactive and innovative (British BIDs & University of Ulster, 2010; British BIDs, 2011; 2012).

They also provide longer and more profound experiences, and are thus perhaps better equipped to contribute to urban regeneration.

Differences in planning styles

The second conditional difference in the English context that could stimulate BIDs to take a proactive role in spatial or urban development, is related to the English planning style. International comparisons of European planning systems often make strong contrasts between the planning system in the United Kingdom (as part of the Anglo-Saxon legal and planning families) and continental planning systems, to which the Dutch planning system belongs (Davies et al., 1989; Nadin & Stead, 2008). This contrast is based upon two elements that could be considered enabling conditions for BIDs to take a proactive role in urban regeneration.

The first difference concerns legal traditions. Whereas the Dutch legal tradition is typified as continental, largely based on civic law, the English legal tradition is typified as Anglo-American, largely based on common law. In the common law tradition, the role of the state and other authorities is limited, and mostly concerns reactive conflict-solving and coordination, in order to support existing social practice (Damaška, 1986) “[...] common law could be associated with the slow process of gradually accumulating experience and with custom growing spontaneously from social circumstances rather than with obedience to rigid technical rules” (Damaška, 1986: 42). Law is built up decision by decision, through experience, precedents, and empiricism of the considerations of the relationships between parties and their rights and duties. This is also characterized as a “cautious evolutionary approach” (Newman & Thornley, 1996: 32) and creates a high degree of administrative discretion (Thomas et al., 1983; Nadin & Stead, 2008). Even though common law also exists within the Dutch legal system, it is not the most dominant form. In the civic law tradition, which is dominant in the Dutch, continental approach, the role of the state and other authorities is seen as broad and proactive. State activities are focused on hierarchical policy implementation in order to pursue and impose particular views of the good society and to lead society in desirable directions (Damaška, 1986). This legal tradition thinks about matters in advance, creates a complete set of abstract rules and principles in advance of decision making, makes plans, regulates things in advance, and draws up rules and systemizes them (Newman & Thornley, 1996; Zweigert et al., 1998; Nadin & Stead, 2008).

The difference between the British common law tradition and the Dutch civic law tradition permeates planning practice. In England, each planning application is

considered on its merits, and decisions are made as and when proposals arise. Development control is based on an assessment of applications, which are based on local circumstances and policy frameworks (development plans and land-use policies) that are not legally binding (Newman & Thornley, 1996; Nadin & Stead, 2008). In the Netherlands, planning happens through a very systematic and formal hierarchy of plans from national to local level, which coordinate public sector activity across different sectors, but focus more specifically on spatial coordination than on economic development. There is political commitment to the planning process and public sector investment is often leading. Decisions are made based on and through legally binding plans (Nadin & Stead, 2008; CEC, 1997). The difference in legal traditions between England and the Netherlands has thus created a planning practice that is much more open, local, and ad hoc in England compared to the Netherlands. This difference might thus also allow much more room for authorities to cooperate with local initiatives such as BIDs, or the initiatives put forward by BIDs.

The second element of the contrast between the English and the Dutch planning systems concerns the dominant actors in spatial planning issues. Both England and the Netherlands are unitary states, meaning that power resides with the national government, although certain responsibilities may be delegated to government departments for specific territorial units or to local government (CEC, 1997). However, in the Netherlands, local authorities have substantial autonomy in spatial planning issues, making the Dutch system rather decentralized (Newman & Thornley, 1996). In the British administrative system, however, the state government has a strong centralized authority. Local authorities in England mostly act as agents carrying out central governmental policies and central government regulations. Local regulatory plans are not legally binding, and are only prepared when needed, that is, when sites are undergoing development and land use change, or statutory protection for vulnerable areas, is required (CEC, 1997). Thus, English local authorities have only a rather minor role in spatial planning issues.

Moreover, in English planning practice there are much stronger linkages between the public and the private sector compared to the Netherlands, especially in urban regeneration. In the Netherlands, spatial planning is predominantly public sector-led. Most land assembly and servicing of development land is undertaken at the municipal level in accordance with an approved legally binding plan (CEC, 1997). Urban development occurs on large scales and far fewer special ad-hoc agencies and partnerships are created. In the Dutch system, the roles of developer and state sometimes overlap (as public authorities act as developers too, and developers enact public policies), but the relationship is mostly based

on working in partnership (Newman & Thornley, 1996: 71). In England, on the other hand, the implementation of plans is predominantly led by the private sector. Most development, especially in urban regeneration, is private sector dominated, but within a strong publicly controlled framework. This makes the relationship between local authorities and applicants conflictual, even though governmental authorities are largely dependent on private initiative and funding. Urban development or regeneration is based on initiatives that are formulated and implemented by various governmental and ad hoc agencies, and that are in constant flux (Newman & Thornley, 1996: 111-112; CEC, 1997).

These two differences in planning style between England and the Netherlands are another conditional difference that make the English BIDs an interesting case study to learn from. The difference in legal style allows for more overall flexibility and dynamism (ad-hoc and evolutionary) in planning, and more room and flexibility for BIDs to develop step by step and to become gradually involved in planning issues – a flexibility and dynamism that the Dutch BIZs wish for. The minor role that English local government has in planning leaves room for BIDs to fill this gap in local governance, and a shift to a proactive role of business-led civic initiatives is perhaps not so radical at all in a planning context in which private actors already have a significant role.

But what is even more interesting is that both the Netherlands and England are currently experiencing considerable changes in attitudes and values in society and in the role and guiding principles of their planning systems and planning challenges (Nadin & Stead, 2008: 40). While Dutch planners are trying to move away from the strongly governmental-led planning system toward a more evolutionary system, as discussed in Chapter 1, English planners are trying to move away from a regulatory system toward a more development-led and strategic system. The reduced role of local authority, property-led, and bidding approach to land development and urban regeneration is rooted in the years of Thatcherism (Newman & Thornley, 1996). More recently, in 2004, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act was introduced in an attempt to reform these routines, offering planning authorities more room for initiative, more effective engagement of stakeholders, plan-led development, coordination of private investment, and effective public interventions (Nadin & Stead, 2008). Because of mutual rapprochement of English and Dutch planning, an English referential case study is even more interesting, and less unseemly.

Advocating community and Big Society

The third conditional difference in the English context that could stimulate BIDs to take a proactive role in spatial or urban development, is related to the introduction of “Big Society.” Big Society concerns a comparable transition toward “community,” collective civic and local action, as seen in the Netherlands (Chapter 1), but it backs up this transition with legal frameworks and provisions in the planning system, through the Localism Act (2011) (Cameron & Clegg, 2010). This conditional difference, which did not exist in 2009, influences the context in which BIDs operate, and could perhaps stimulate the involvement of BIDs in planning and urban regeneration. Moreover, as Dutch policymakers currently look at Big Society with a certain zest (Van der Lans, 2011; Kruiter & Blokker, 2011), this conditional difference makes the English BIDs even more interesting to learn from.

Big Society is a major ambition of the current coalition government. The Conservative Manifesto (Cameron, 2010) introduced Big Society as a redistribution of power and control from the central to the local, from politicians and bureaucracy to individuals, families, and neighborhoods. Big Society is understood as:

... a society with much higher levels of personal, professional, civic and corporate responsibility; a society where people come together to solve problems and improve life for themselves and their communities; a society where the leading force for progress is social responsibility, not state control (Cameron, 2010: 37).

Civil society is seen as its “little platoons,” the institutional building blocks of the Big Society (ibid.: 38). In this line, the Localism Act (2011) promotes decentralization and is aimed at ending the era of top-down government by giving new powers to local councils, and at moving from ad hoc reactive planning to proactive planning as part of overall programs (Bishop, 2010). The Localism Act creates community empowerment by allowing communities to carry out services provided by the council, to purchase privately owned assets with community value, and to develop neighborhood plans. These plans are compulsory for local councils to adapt, after they have passed an inspection stage and a local referendum (Localism Act, 2011; Bailey & Pill, 2011). These plans address:

... a wide range of issues judged by people within a geographical community to be important to their current and future quality of life, that includes overall aims as well as actions (some for the community to deliver, some for others) and which is initiated by and produced primarily through the efforts

of those local people but working also with others from outside, especially from the public sector (Bishop, 2010: 613).

Neighborhood plans transform the community engagement and community planning promoted under the New Labour government (Communities in Control (CLG 2009)) into an actual community-led and “from the bottom up organized” planning system (Bishop, 2010).

BIDs are recognized as “localism in action,” as they are local business communities. BIDs are, however, older than Big Society and localism. They were introduced under Labour’s Third Way (1997–2010), which also promoted a turn to community and an impulse for neighborhood governance through third sector trusts, community and resident-participation, a return to civic self-help, and emphasis on partnerships (Bailey & Pill, 2011; Newman & Thornley, 1996; Bishop, 2010). But Big Society and Localism can change the context in which BIDs operate. The nationwide BID surveys of 2010 and 2011 acknowledge that this government policy encourages greater business engagement, and that the emerging localism agenda could provide BIDs with increasing importance (British BIDs & University of Ulster, 2010). When BIDs alter their orientation at renewal, they can become more innovative, reflecting local priorities, and seek to adjust and adapt to the localism agenda in delivering on service provision, public realm investment, crime reduction, marketing of their areas, and regenerating the high streets (British BIDs, 2011). It remains to be seen, though, whether BIDs will actually seize these new opportunities, whether they will become part of neighborhood plans driven by residents, and whether they will take the opportunity to even drive such plans themselves.

Summary

From a Dutch perspective, looking at the English BIDs is of interest because of three conditional differences that make it more likely for English BIDs to be proactive in urban regeneration than the Dutch BIZs. The first relates to the five year advantage English BIDs have over Dutch BIZs, making the English BIDs more mature. The second conditional difference relates to differences in planning styles, especially the English private sector-led land use development planning system, which creates perhaps a more receptive environment for business-led initiatives. And the third relates to the promotion of community-led development by Big Society, backed up by the institutional arrangements from localism. The emergence of individual BIDs are real-life manifestations of a contemporary phenomenon, and for this reason and all the reasons mentioned above, the English BIDs provide an interesting case study to learn more about the emergence of civic initiatives and their interactions with the planning system.

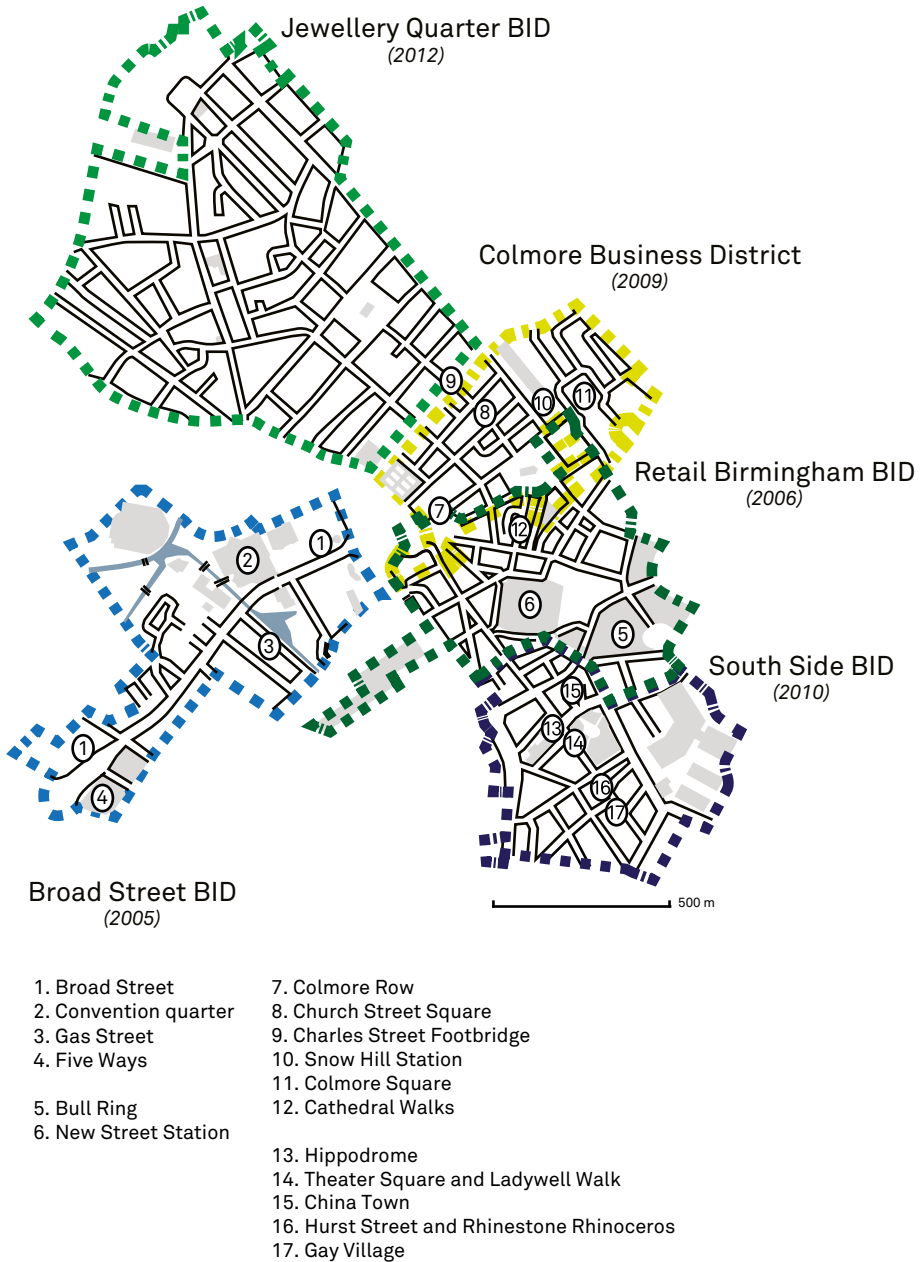


FIGURE 7.1 Overview of the BID initiatives in Birmingham city center, England

3

THE BIDS OF BIRMINGHAM

So far, the transfer and development of BIDs has mostly been discussed at a national level. It is now time to turn to some of the actual implementation, establishment, and practices of local BIDs. Five BIDs in Birmingham city center were traced. These BIDs emerged between 2004 and 2013, and stood out for two reasons. Firstly, they were clustered geographically and all emerged within the same institutional local context, which both made them comparable and made the field work more convenient. Secondly, already in 2010 but even more so in 2013, the Birmingham BIDs stood out for their engagement in spatial development and urban regeneration compared to other English BIDs. Data on the BIDs were collected through observations during two field visits in 2010 and 2013. For each BID, interviews with key players were conducted, preferably two persons from the BID's board and/or management office, supplemented with interviews with neighborhood representatives, the City Centre Partnership (in 2010 and 2013), and planning professionals from the Birmingham City Council Planning and Regeneration Office (2013). Additionally, documents produced by each BID – such as proposals, reports, newsletters, websites, memos, newspaper items, etc. – and documents produced by the council on the BIDs and on planning and regeneration in the city center were studied, in accordance with multiple case study analysis (see Chapter 5). The trajectories of the initiatives were then plotted on the diagram of processes of becoming (see Chapters 4 and 5). From there, reflections on the research questions are given.

Broad Street Business Improvement District

The Broad Street (BS) Business Improvement District was the first BID in Birmingham and was set up as one of the pilot BIDs of the National BID Pilot Programme in 2004. The aim of the BID was to find a solution to the diverging interests of the businesses, nighttime economy, and residents in the area. The BID developed in three rounds: The period leading to the setup and the actual setup itself (> 2004), the operation of the BID during its first term (2004–2009), and the preparation for and operation of the second term of the BID (2010–2013).

Preceding and setting up the BID (<2004)

The area around Broad Street had been developed as the Convention Quarter since the 1990s. The area included convention facilities, business and service economies, city center living, and an increasingly successful nighttime economy.



FIGURE 7.2 *It all starts with clean streets: Broad Street BID street furniture*



FIGURE 7.3 *First attempts to regenerate Broad Street by covering up vacant buildings*

It was a successful mix, but it also raised new challenges. In 2002 and 2003, businesses and residents were increasingly confronted with anti-social behavior, alcohol-related disorder, and a general increase in recorded crime (BS BID, 2008; Interview with BS BID, 2010). Broad Street's image suffered, as did businesses and real estate values (BS BID, 2004). When a person was killed in a fight, public and private stakeholders decided it was time to come together and **decode** from the conflict between "drunks and bankers" (Interview with BS BID, 2010). This matched with the businesses' ambition to take a leading role, work in partnership with the council and the police, and have a more influential voice in local issues (BS BID, 2004; Interview with BS BID 2010), the City Centre Partnerships' ambition to move toward a more proactive and committed form of city center management (Interview with CCP, 2010), and the residents' desire to have their interests in the area better articulated and heard (Interview with BS NF, 2013).

Expansion started with the deliberations between the businesses of Broad Street, the West Midland police and the Birmingham City Centre Partnership, exploring ways to deal with the problems between "bankers and drunks" in the area. In 2004, three Broad Street Summits provided opportunities for businesses, local agencies, and other groups (Broad Street Association, Birmingham City Centre Partnership, Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Police, licensees, taxi associations, and local residents) to raise issues of concern and explore a range of new initiatives (BS BID, 2004). During one of the summits, the City Centre Partnership brought up the idea of starting a BID, which was met with great enthusiasm. A website was set up and newsletters were published, further consultations were held, and questionnaires were sent to businesses (Interview with BS BID, 2010) and residential representative groups (Interview with BS NF, 2013).

The decision to become a BID and write a proposal were acts of **contraction**. Once decided that a BID should be developed, the City Centre Partnership invested people, money, and time to develop a BID. Representatives from the Broad Street Association, Birmingham City Centre Partnership, Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Police, licensees, taxi associations, and local residents formed a Steering Group and prepared the BID proposal (BS BID, 2004). The general concept of the BID legislation was met with the local parameters of Broad Street (Interview with CCP 2010). Consensus was found in the common vision that Broad Street should be a vibrant, 24-hour part of the city, a bright, safe, and clean environment that supports a diverse and thriving business community and encourages a mix of people to visit the area during the day and in the evening (BS BID, 2004; Interview with BS BID, 2010; Interview with BS NF, 2013). Priorities of the BID, its organizational structure and its boundaries were discussed and

Broad Street BID

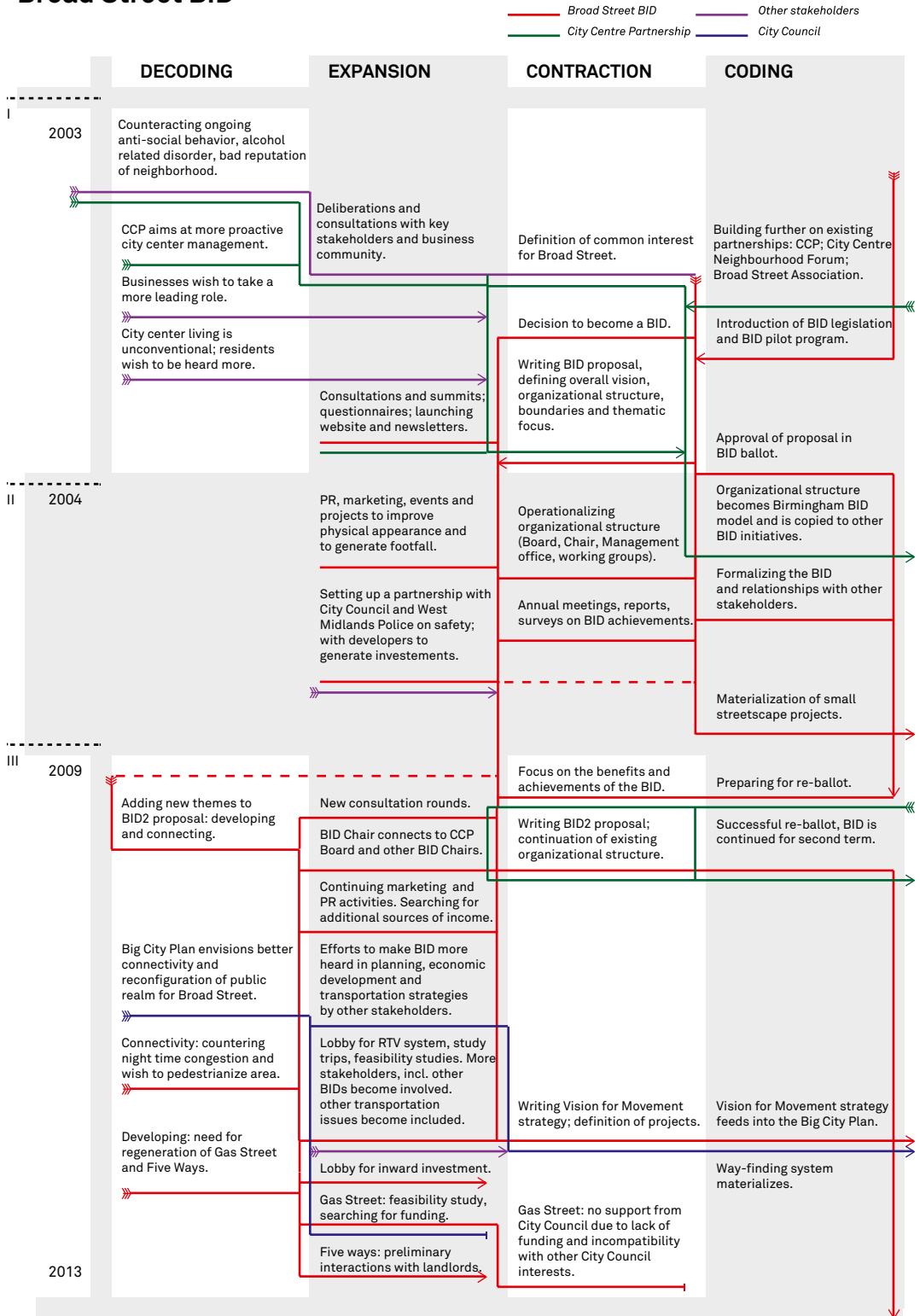


FIGURE 7.4 The becoming of the Broad Street BID

decided upon (BS BID, 2004). The challenge of “drunks and bankers” remained leading, which was reflected in, for instance, the higher levy paid by BID members located in the vicinity of the Broad Street “spine” compared to the levy paid by businesses further away. The BS BID boundaries were set to include major stakeholders like the Arena, but not predominantly residential areas (Interview with BS BID, 2010). The concern of “drunks and bankers” was also reflected in the themes the BID decided to work on, namely safety (night-wardens, a doorman training policy, and a radio communication system between businesses), cleaning (flower displays and deep cleaning), and image building (marketing campaign and events) (Interview with BS BID, 2010; BS BID, 2004).

In 2003, BID legislation had just passed under the Labour government, and the Broad Street BID initiative is **coded** as one of the 22 pilot BIDs set up by the national government (BS BID, 2004). Accordingly, further interactions of the Broad Street stakeholders were coded to the procedures set out by the BID legislation. The BS BID proposal formalized and **coded** the workings of the BID. It functioned like a contract for the BID board and members, and also formalized the relationships between the BID, the council, and the police (BS BID, 2004) and was the main point of reference for the direction and activities of the BID (Interview with CCP, 2013). A partnership and a services agreement were prepared to establish the on-going commitment of Birmingham City Council and West Midlands Police, respectively, and to define baseline service specifications and performance monitoring arrangements. This was done to ensure that BS BID resources were directed toward delivering real added value (BS BID, 2004; Interview with CCP, 2010).

Operating the first BID term (2004-2009)

After a successful ballot (65% turnout, 92% in favor (BS BID, 2005)), the BID was formally established in July 2005 as Broad Street Partnership Limited, the first of its kind in Birmingham and one of the first BIDs in the UK (BS BID, 2004). **Contraction** happened as the organizational structure of the BID became operational. The board, comprising representatives from the business community and key stakeholders, oversaw the strategic direction of the BID (BS BID, 2012). A BID manager was employed as the main contact point for businesses and stakeholders, leading a day team concerned with communication, strategic delivery, and promotion of the area, and a night team consisting of wardens patrolling the BID area and occasionally managing events (Interview with BS BID, 2010). The businesses participated in working groups, or communicated issues of concern to the BS BID manager. The annual assembly reported about the deliveries of the BID to its members, the levy payers (BS BID, 2012).

Expansion happened continuously in this round as well. The BS BID gave its actions exposure in order to establish a positive reputation for the area, through a website, marketing campaign, events, and close contact with press agencies. Projects and events improving the physical appearance of the area (such as cleaning, street furniture, floral displays) helped to generate more footfall. Some examples: The Walk of Stars (since 2007), a New Broad Street website (since 2008), the Newsletter B:NEWS (since 2008), an Arts Market, a half marathon, and a poppies campaign in 2008. Moreover, the BS BID explored and set up partnerships with other stakeholders: The campaign BSafe was set up together with the council and the West Midlands Police, and the BID, developers, and the council jointly set up WestSide Birmingham – a strategic partnership to promote the emerging business district in order to promote more inward investment and attract other investors (BS BID, 2008).

No significant **decoding** took place by the BS BID in this phase, as the challenge of “drunks and bankers” was still the situation the BID was trying to move away from. New ideas were occasionally adopted and executed, but only when they fit the clearly demarcated lines of the BS BID proposal. **Coded** to this proposal, the BID started delivering on its promises and making achievements on the themes brighter, safer, and cleaner. Over time, these themes materialized in hanging baskets, a Walk of Stars, an annual Best Of Broad Street (BOBS) award, a lighting scheme, night wardens, a radio link, taxi wardens, a deep cleaning scheme, branded litter bins and street furniture, windows of vacant units covered with promotion banners, and an award-winning contribution to Britain in Bloom. The only council grant that was used was a minor S106 grant at the start for lighting (Interview with BS BID, 2013; Interview with CC, 2013). Crime figures dropped and the area was increasingly experienced as safe (BS BID, 2009; BS BID, 2008). The Broad Street BID was positively feeding back into the national BID Pilot Program. BID legislation was continued in England and Wales, as well as in Birmingham. After the success of Broad Street, more BIDs were established throughout the city. The organizational structure of Broad Street BID and its connection to the CCP became the Birmingham BID model, to which these other BIDs coded (Interview with CCP, 2013).

Preparing for and operating the second BID term (>2009)

Due to its **coding** to BID legislation, after five years a re-ballot was mandatory before a second term could start. The BS BID started preparing for this. The re-ballot in November 2009 was successful, and the second term started in April 2010 (BS BID, 2010). Many of the activities and themes of the previous BID term and its objectives were continued – a brighter, cleaner, and safer Broad Street – as was its organizational structure (Interview with BS BID, 2010; 2013; BS BID, 2010).

In the preparation for the re-ballot, attention was paid to the earlier benefits and key achievements of the BS BID, so as to reinforce its necessity (BS BID, 2009), thus exercising *contraction* in the network of the BS BID. Again, *expansion* took place as well, in the form of consultations among BID members and stakeholders (BS BID, 2009). Once in its second term, the BID continued with the PR and marketing activities and events as before, and a Broad Street app (2010) and a Broad Street journal called “The Word” were launched (2011) (Interview with BS BID, 2013; BS BID, 2011). The expansion of the BS BID in its second term also relates to potential sources of income. In addition to the contributions from the council and BID members, commercial sponsorships and voluntary contributions from property developers and real estate owners were sought. Opportunities for further investment in the area through the Big City Plan were explored (BS BID, 2009). The BS BID was consultee and representative on planning applications, and regular meetings were held with the council in order to speed up developments (BS BID, 2011). Effort were made to make the BID more heard in planning, economic development, and transportation strategies made by other (public and private) actors outside the BID (Interview with BS BID, 2010). In this round, the BID aimed to widen its scope beyond the original challenge of “drunks and bankers” and the regular BID activities of cleaning, safety, and marketing. Apart from continuing with the on-going work under the theme of “Enhancement,” two new themes were introduced: “Developing” (targeting vacant buildings, regeneration in partnership with West Midlands Advantage) and “Connecting” (lobbying for a rapid transport system (RTV) and better connections for pedestrians and public transport). These new issues brought in new *decoding*.

- *Connecting*. In order to *decode* from the frequent nighttime congestion on Broad Street and to improve the public realm through pedestrianization, the BID started lobbying for a rapid transport vehicle (RTV), to run along Broad Street and connect to New Street Station (Interview with BS BID, 2010; BS BID, 2009). The BS BID and the Westside Partnership believed that an RTV system could provide a high-quality, cost-effective rapid transport solution for the city center (BS BID, 2009). With this RTV connection, the BS BID and the Westside Partnership hoped to exploit economic opportunities arising from the developments around New Street Station, the extended metro, Centro’s plan to “transform bus travel,” and Birmingham City Council’s Core Strategy (Birmingham City Council, 2010). The lobby, an act of *expansion*, at first targeted the council and Centro (the transport authority) to get them to invest in the project. Consultations were held with them and with residents (Interview with BS BID, 2013; Interview with BS NF, 2013). In 2009, a preliminary study on the RTV was conducted (BS BID, 2010). Later on, the BID lobby expanded toward parliament and

- councilors in Birmingham and Walsall. National Express West Midlands joined the initiative. In 2011, study trips were made to Belgium, France, and the Netherlands. A delivery team started undertaking the technical work for the first phase, which was expected to be operational by 2015 (BS BID, 2011). Planning the RTV system for Broad Street went through various forms of **coding**, as the “normal” procedure was followed that starts with a visioning document (2010), followed by a preliminary study, a feasibility study (2011), and a study on the technical details.
- **Connecting.** Gradually, as more stakeholders became involved, the idea of having an RTV system **expanded** into a broader vision on transportation in the city center. As more and more themes were added – such as pedestrianizing the public realm, cycle routes, and way-finding systems – the Vision for Movement strategy emerged. It was launched in November 2010 (Birmingham City Council, 2010). More and more stakeholders became **contracted** into the Vision for Movement: the council, Centro, Colmore Business District, and Retail Birmingham (Interview with BS BID, 2013). The aim of the Vision for Movement strategy was a well-connected, efficient, and walkable city, the prioritization of pedestrians, and the development of an integrated public transport system. The Vision for Movement document defined various projects that could help materialize these aims, such as parking, road junctions, street signage, and the RTV system. The document **coded** toward the earlier developed strategies by the other stakeholders involved, such as the developments around New Street Station, the extended metro, Centro’s plan to “transform bus travel,” and Birmingham City Council’s Core Strategy (Birmingham City Council, 2010). In its turn, the Big City Plan coded toward the Vision for Movement document. The Vision for Movement strategy was adopted as the “Connectivity” chapter in the Big City Plan, and some parts of the Vision for Movement strategy can be found in the “Walkability” chapter of the Plan (Birmingham City Council, 2011)
 - **Developing.** This theme started with **expansion**, as it focused on lobbying and promoting the Broad Street area and exploring possibilities for economic regeneration. In 2011, footfall cameras were placed around the BID area in order to provide data with which potential investors could be informed (BS BID, 2010; 2011). Two target areas were defined for regeneration: Five Ways and Gas Street. Both streets areas had dereliction and vacancies to decode from. For Gas Street, the BID saw the potential to provide linkages between Brindley Place, the Cube, the Mailbox, and the Gas Basin, and to provide an interesting destination with open water,

historic buildings, and an urban garden (Building Design Group Limited, 2011; Interview with BS BID, 2013; Interview with BS NF, 2013). **Expansion** took place in the form of a feasibility study (2011-2012) and deliberations with the council (BS BID, 2012). At the beginning, the council seemed to favor the idea, but it later found it incompatible with other issues in the area, such as conservation and traffic management. The council also addressed the lack of funding for the project, and was thus not keen on supporting it (Interview with CC, 2013). So far, the proposal for the regeneration of Gas Street had not reached **contraction**. New **expansion** took place as the BID applied a new strategy, by applying for funding from English Heritage, and exploring the possibilities of European funding, only to return to the council when such funding was found (Interview with BS BID, 2013). Deliberations with landlords around Five Ways started in 2013 (Interview with BS BID, 2013).

During this round, Broad Street evolved from concerns about clean and safe streets, toward concerns for regenerative programs and transportation programs (BS BID, 2009; Interview with BS BID, 2010). Crime figures continued to fall and vacancy rates decreased (BS BID, 2008; 2010; Interview with BS BID, 2013). The BS BID was acknowledged as the driving force behind the thriving economy of Broad Street and the renewed confidence in the area (BS BID, 2013; BS BID, 2012). But friction occurred to the actual **coding** of the BID as well. Over the years, the BID management was getting more involved in paperwork, and saw itself increasingly functioning as a local authority. The BS BID budgets shrank due to a recalibration of the actually collected levy in 2012 (Interview with BS BID, 2013). Concerns arose over current and future retrenchments in public government that threatened the additionality of the BS BID, as it might be forced to take over public baseline services (Interview with BS BID, 2013; Interview with CCP, 2013; Interview with BS NF, 2013).

Retail Birmingham

Retail Birmingham (RB) was the second BID to be established in Birmingham city center. It was set up in 2006 to serve the interests of the retail businesses within the main shopping area of the city center. The BID developed in four rounds: The period preceding the RB BID and its setup (<2006), the operation of the RB BID during its first term (2006–2010), the strategic turn during its first term (2010–2011), and the preparation and operation of the second term of the BID (>2011).



FIGURE 7.5 Retail Birmingham promoting Retail Birmingham



FIGURE 7.6 Greening the streets in Retail Birmingham



FIGURE 7.7 The new way finding system in the Birmingham city center

Preparing the BID (<2006)

During the first attempt to start a BID in the retail area in 2004, the initiators wanted to **decode** from a situation in which each company and each business partnership worked on its own account and on a voluntary basis, thus lacking capacity, resources, and wider retail engagement. It was believed that by coming together in a BID, city center management could become more business-led, sufficiently resourced, proactive, and effective (RB BID, 2006; Interview with CCP, 2010; Interview with RB BID, 2013). There was also a desire among the initiators to further develop the retail area's potential as the region's principal shopping, leisure, and lifestyle destination and maintain its top ranking position amongst UK retail centers, second behind London (RB BID, 2006; Interview with CCP 2010). Significant private and public sector investments had just been made (such as the opening of the new Bull Rind in 2003 [BB]) and the RB BID initiators wanted to maintain this momentum (RB BID, 2006). **Expansion** happened when in 2004 businesses were consulted on the issues they wanted a BID to address. However, a lack of urgency and understanding among retailers of what benefits a RB BID could bring, prevented further **contraction** into a BID (Interview with RB BID, 2013; RB BID, 2006). Only after the Broad Street BID had achieved its first successes, did the retailers in the city center support the idea of being a BID themselves. Then, it was only a matter of continuing work that had already been done, building further on the track record of existing business organizations, and using the same BID model as in Broad Street (RB BID, 2006; Interview with RB BID, 2013; Interview with CCP, 2010).

In 2006, new **expansion** took place as consultations were again held with businesses and key stakeholders, including the chamber of commerce, City Centre Neighborhood Forum, and the council (with CCP, 2013; Interview with RB BID, 2013). This time, there was **contraction** as support was found from the council, the West Midlands Police/Retail Crime Operation/Citywatch (which see the BID as an effective strategy to improve safety), Marketing Birmingham (which sees the BID as an opportunity to build upon previous cooperation with the City Centre Partnership on Style Birmingham), and the City Centre Neighbourhood Forum (which shares the desire to have a vibrant, clean, and safe city center) (RB BID, 2006). The objectives defined in 2004 were to increase sales and footfall, improve customers' opinions, and reduce crime levels (RB BID, 2006). In 2006, these objectives were further detailed into three themes: Retail Marketing (to build a specific Birmingham retail brand), Street Operations (to improve the customer and visitor experience), and Business Support (to create an influential retail voice and local business support network). In the longer term, the RB BID wants to create a better customer mix and a diversification and development of the retail offer, and a welcoming, attractive, safe, and well-connected area. The

Retail Birmingham (1)

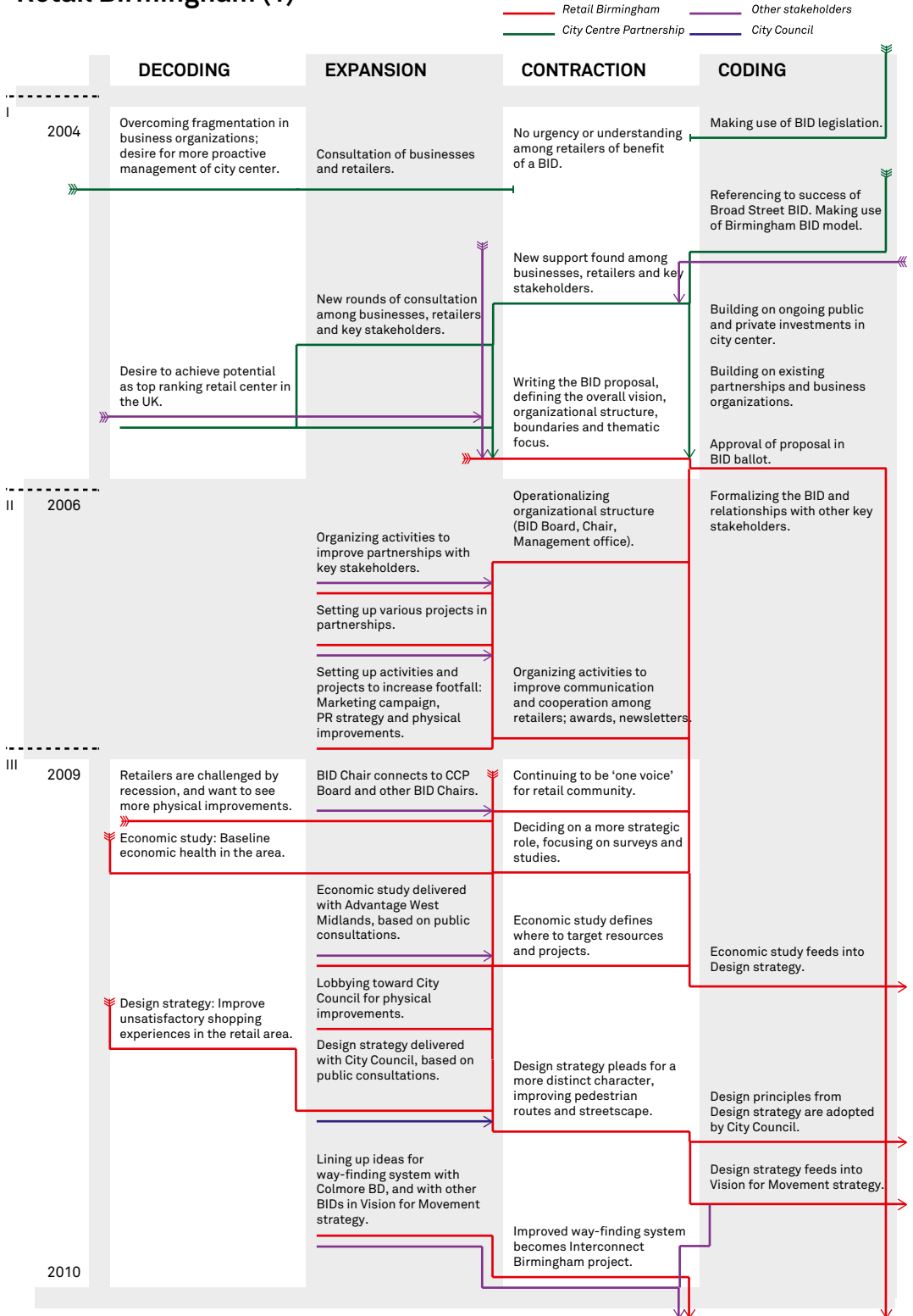


FIGURE 7.8a The becoming of Retail Birmingham (Part 1)

name for the RB BID was chosen because the majority of Birmingham's retailers are located within the boundaries of the RB BID (Interview with RB BID, 2013). The boundaries of the RB BID include the major retail core of the city center and borders the Broad Street BID (RB BID, 2006; Interview with CCP, 2010). The organizational structure was formed, and the levy and ratable value were set. The board included representatives from the council, West Midlands Police, several property owners, shopping center managers, and of course retailers (RB BID, 2006).

After a successful ballot at the end of 2006, the RB BID was **coded** and started on April 1, 2007, as a business-led, not-for-profit partnership company (RB BID, 2006) called Retail Birmingham Limited (RB BID, 2010). Further coding in the RB BID proposal included the framework set for baseline performance data, monitoring, and verification, and reporting to businesses, consumers, investors, and the media.

Operating the BID (2006–2010)

Once started, the RB BID became mainly operational, delivering the promises of the 2006 BID proposal, which was the main document of reference. Both the **coding** and the **decoding** remained the same as in the previous round.

Contraction continued in two ways. Firstly, through the formation of the RB BID board, which was composed of 22 representatives from the council, West Midlands Police, City Centre Neighborhood Forum, shopping center management, big multiple stores, department stores, and the independent traders sector. The executive staff of the RB BID worked from the City Centre Partnership, but were RB BID funded (Interview with CCP, 2010; Interview with RB BID, 2013). Secondly, contraction continued through activities of the BID aimed at strengthening the internal cohesion of the business community. Examples are the Best of Retail award, the Style Awards (since 2007), a Celebrate Independents campaign (since July 2009) to support Birmingham's 100 independent stores, a monthly newsletter, a retailer hotline dedicated to any enquiries, concerns, or issues retailers might have, a retail Birmingham website, master classes, and an SMS service (RB BID, 2010). The RB BID also aims at representing the businesses as one voice (RB BID, 2006; Interview with CCP, 2010).

The activities of the RB BID can be seen as **expansion** in three ways. First, there were activities aimed at improved partnership working, for instance with the police on safety, and with the council on developments and investments. The RB BID represented business interest during lengthy construction phases, property redevelopment, and infrastructure investments, to ensure there was a minimal

Retail Birmingham (2)

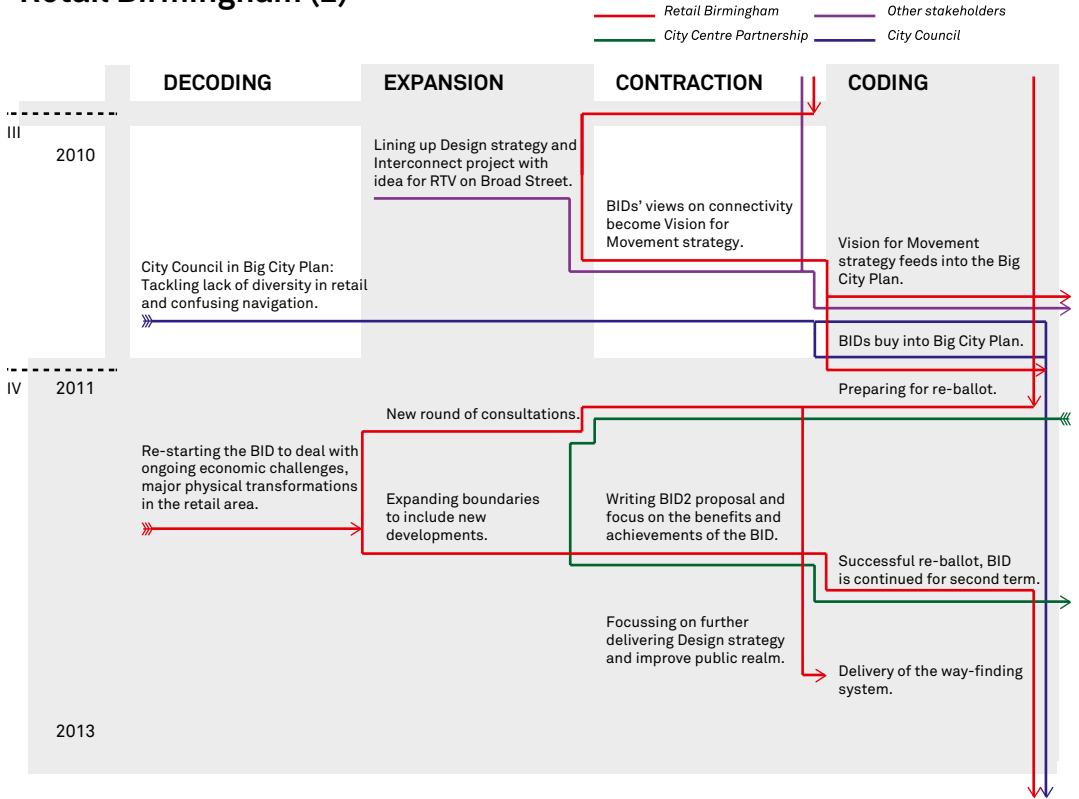


FIGURE 7.8b The becoming of Retail Birmingham (Part 2)

disruption to retail trade when protests, road closures, and events take place. Secondly, specific projects were set up in interaction with other stakeholders: “Marketing” together with Marketing Birmingham, in the Style Birmingham campaign; “Street Operations” in addition to the services provided by the council and West Midlands Police, such as flower displays, warden service, and child safe scheme; and support for individual and independent businesses together with the city council and national celebrities. Additional money came in from such campaigns (Interview with CCP, 2010). Thirdly, activities and projects aimed at increasing footfall to the area can also be seen as expansion. These were aimed at making the area more attractive and safe, and improving the image of the city center. These included the Style Birmingham Magazine, the Style in the City events (April 2008 and September 2009), the city’s first Shopping Guide, listing all the retailers, hotels, theaters, and other attractions within the BID area (introduced by the BID in 2008), and the re-launch in May 2009 of the Style Birmingham website to give shoppers a more interactive retail experience. It also relates to “Street Operations” (as these aim for a more footfall generating area) such as floral enhancements, an award winning Floral Trail in the Britain in Bloom competition, street cleansing and waste removal, street wardens, festive and tree lighting, and a child safe scheme (RB BID, 2010).

The strategic turn (2010–2011)

During its first term, the recession continued to challenge retailers in the RB BID. This motivated the BID to undertake further **decoding**, and to develop a more strategic role, in addition to its operational activities. RB BID members wanted to see improvements in the physical environment of the BID (Interview with CC, 2013). The RB BID and the city council became aware that the RB BID could help the council come to decisions, as the BID could cut through the regulations and bureaucracy to which the city council is bound (Interview with RB BID, 2013). Three strategic studies were undertaken: The Economic Study, the Design Strategy (which during this round would feed into the Vision for Movement Strategy), and the Street Trading Strategy (RB BID, 2011a).

Expansion continued as in the previous rounds. But additional to that, an active lobby was held toward the city council on physical improvements, and the BID is consulted on these matters, too, as a representative. The issues discussed were New Street Station, Midland Metro Extension, city center signage and way-finding system, financial support, tackling street nuisance, and public transport links (RB BID, 2011a; RB BID, 2011b). The RB BID chose to take forward its strategic role by measuring and exploring what happens in the retail area economically and spatially, and what activities are carried out in the area. The idea was to use the information from these surveys to encourage budget holders to further invest in the area (Interview with RB BID, 2013).

Contraction was also continued as in the previous round. The City Center Partnership and all BID chairs met quarterly to discuss their strategies and work, and strategic issues that make sense to the city center in its entirety (Interview with CCP, 2013). The RB BID continued to strive toward being “one voice” for the retail community (RB BID, 2011a). The strategic studies were to provide a robust understanding of the city’s retail landscape and develop a strategic framework for its future growth and development (RB BID, 2010). These strategic studies were “above and beyond” the scope of the original 2006 proposal document, but were felt to be crucial to the success of the city center (RB BID, 2011b).

- *The Economic Study.* To baseline the economic health of the retail area, in 2009 the RB BID commissioned an examination of the retail area and its economic health (RB BID, 2011b; RB BID, 2010). This study looked at areas for improvement, and can thus be seen as an exploration of issues to decode from. **Expansion** took place in business consultations: About 1,000 shoppers and 130 retailers within the RB BID area were questioned. Contraction happened as a partnership for the study was found with the Retail Group, the Local Data Company, and Advantage West Midlands (RB BID, 2011b, 2011; RB BID, 2010). The focus was put on retail turnover, unit occupation levels, footfall, and customers’ views. Moreover, the study gave insights into where resources and projects should be targeted. The study gave rise to some key projects: An increased focus on independent retailers, a continued promotion of the city center retail offer, and a way-finding system to guide visitors around the city center (RB BID, 2011b; RB BID, 2010). In this way, the Economic Study fed into the Design Study, which was also commissioned in 2009.
- *The Design Strategy.* The Design Strategy was launched by the RB BID to provide design principles and an overall vision for the city’s retail core to inform and influence its future development. It fulfilled the objective set at the start of the RB BID, namely to **decode** from the unsatisfactory shopping experience, bad connectivity, and indistinctive identity of the retail area, and to build on Birmingham’s position as a leading shopping destination. The aim of the study was further **contraction** of the retail area, by creating a distinctive character, and expansion by creating a more attractive streetscape and better pedestrian routes (Make Architects, 2010; RB BID, 2010). A partnership was formed with the city council, MAKE Architects, and lighting architects Speirs and Major Associates (SAMA) were commissioned. **Expansion** took place as public consultations were held; and ideas for an improved way-finding system aligned with similar ideas from Colmore Business District (RB BID, 2009; RB BID, 2011b; Interview

with CCP, 2010; RB BID, 2010; Make Architects, 2010). The Design Study **coded** toward the Economic Study that underpinned its business case for delivery (RB BID, 2010). The core set of design principles were intended to further influence city center development and were adopted by the council (RB BID, 2011b; Make Architects, 2010). The ideas of the Design Strategy fed into the Vision for Movement Strategy.

- *Interconnect Birmingham and the Vision for Movement.* The Design Strategy proposed the development of a way-finding system. In a process of **expansion** and **contraction**, this idea was aligned with ideas from the council in the Big City Plan and Colmore Business District, (RB BID, 2006; Interview with CC, 2013). Together and with additional funds, the two BIDs provided the council with money to materialize the system. This became the Birmingham Interconnect Project. Further **expansion** took place, as the Design Strategy and the Interconnect Project (both concerning the connectivity and accessibility of the city center) align with the RTV ideas of the Broad Street BID. **Contraction** happened as these BIDs together developed the Vision for Movement document. They decided to include all their transport issues and aims for improving the connectivity of the city center (Interview with CCP, 2013). The vision kept on growing and expanding. In the Vision for Movement group included not only the BID chairs, but also a number of architects, planners, and transport experts (Interview with RB BID, 2013). In addition to the way-finding system, the Vision for Movement strategy encouraged walking routes, public realm improvements, and public transport (Birmingham City Council, 2010; Interview with RB BID, 2013; RB BID, 2011b). The ideas of the Vision for Movement Strategy fed into the Big City Plan.

Meanwhile, the city council initiated and worked on its Big City Plan, which aimed to **decode** from the same issues as the Retail BID: The lack of diversity of retail offer, the confusing navigation through the city center, and the constraints of the inner ring road on the growth potentials of the city center. It also aimed to exploit the opportunities presented by the transformation of New Street station (Gateway Project) (Interview with RB BID, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2011). The overall vision was to strengthen the role of the city center as a 24-hour city – a thriving shopping, leisure, and business destination that supports the civic and cultural role of Birmingham in a high quality, distinctive, and vibrant environment (Birmingham City Council, 2011). **Contraction** happened as the Vision for Movement Strategy and the Design Strategy fed into the Big City Plan and all BIDs bought into it (Interview with CCP, 2013; Interview with RB BID, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2011). All these aims became **coded** into the Big City Plan document itself.

During this round, the **coding** of the RB BID remained the same as in previous rounds. Results or spin-off from the BID became visible as retail spending increased, vacancy rates continued to be low, new retailers came in, there was a reduction of waste, improved safety, trading and footfall are higher than nationally, there are festive and tree lighting, floral trails, deep cleansing, and the wardens (RB BID, 2010). Before the RB BID started in 2004, Birmingham was sixth in the national retail rankings; in 2010, it was in third place (RB BID, 2011b).

Preparing and operating BID2 (>2011)

In this round, the second term of the BID was prepared, and after a successful re-ballot in October 2011, the RB BID commenced its second term on April 1, 2012. This happened as **coded** by BID legislation (RB BID, 2011b; Interview with RB BID, 2013). The **decoding** remained more or less the same as in the previous round: Challenging economic times and stretched public finances, concerns for the physical development of the city center, and changes in the transport infrastructure in the coming years, were reasons to restart and re-energize the RB BID (Interview with RB BID, 2013; RB BID, 2011b), in order to help its members prosper in difficult times (RB BID, 2011c).

In preparing for the second term, **expansion** took place, as consultations were again held among businesses. A survey was conducted among the RB BID members in the second half of 2010, and a newsletter announcing the ballot was distributed in August 2011 (RB BID, 2011c, Interview with CCP, 2010). The boundaries of the RB BID were extended to incorporate the just finished Cube and the businesses around Moor Street Station into the area (RB BID, 2011b).

Contraction happened as the BID2 proposal confirmed the earlier success and positives of the RB BID: The deliverables of the BID and the value generated from the levy and voluntary contributions. The work on managing, improving, and promoting the city center was continued. The aim for the second term was to further deliver the Design Strategy and improve the public realm. The RB BID would continue to represent the business interest in the development processes going on in the city center. The RB BID continued to be actively supported by and work in partnership with its key partners, including Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Police/Retail Crime Operation/ Citywatch, Marketing Birmingham, private landowners and building managers, the city center shopping centers, the Birmingham City Centre Partnership, and Centro. Issues of contraction mentioned in the previous round were continued, especially the influence on public realm design (RB BID, 2011b; 2011c). The way-finding and signage system (Interconnect) was delivered in 2012 (Interview with CC, 2013; RB BID, 2011b).

Colmore Business District

The third BID in Birmingham city center is Colmore Business District (CBD). Since 2009, CBD has served the interest of businesses within the area, which are mainly engaged in the service economy (financial businesses, consultancies, etc.). These businesses, unlike businesses in most BID areas, are interested not in footfall, but in creating an employee- and business-friendly environment. CBD developed into its current state in three rounds: The setup of the CBD (before 2009), its first CBD term (2009–2013), and currently preparations for its second term (>2013).

Preparing the BID (<2009)

Already in 2004, some stakeholders in the Colmore area started thinking about a BID. But it was only after the successes of Broad Street and Retail Birmingham, that the City Centre Partnership together with Birmingham Forward and Birmingham Future (business interests and network organizations having many members in the Colmore area) proposed a BID in the Colmore area (CBD, 2009; Interview with CBD, 2010). The Birmingham BID model and national BID legislation were followed, and experiences from the other BIDs were built upon (**coding**).

Contraction happened as in 2007 a BID Development Group was formed, consisting of representatives from major and smaller businesses, Birmingham Forward, and the City Centre Partnership (CBD, 2009). **Expansion** took place as the initiating stakeholders visited other BIDs: In the USA, in London, and elsewhere in Birmingham (Interview with CBD, 2010). Birmingham Forward brought in the business connection (it also saw this as an opportunity to increase membership), and the CCP brought in the council connection (Interview with CBD, 2010). Together they organized the consultations with the business community (CBD, 2009). First, the big businesses (about 30) were consulted individually on their interest in a BID. Their “yes” was used as a campaign for the other businesses. A website was set up, and newsletters and letters were sent to individual businesses, inviting them to events or individual consultations. Until September 2008, events were organized with presentations on what a BID could bring and with consultations on the businesses’ views (Interview with CBD, 2010).

Further **contraction** took place, as the consultation process exposed local issues and opportunities that mattered in the area. The common concern and aspiration of the BID was to improve, promote, and sustain the district (CBD, 2009). This was broken down into more detail: Cleaner, greener, and attractive; accessible and connected; branded and promoted (Interview with CBD, 2010); safe and welcoming; networked and community engaged; and business led and managed (CBD, 2009). The boundaries of the BID area were set to include all major service businesses and office areas, beyond the boundaries of the historical district of



FIGURE 7.9 Colmore Business District marketing



FIGURE 7.10 Church Street Square by Colmore Business District

Colmore. The boundaries changed two or three times during consultations, as businesses outside the boundaries wanted to be included as well (Interview with CCP, 2010). In the end, the boundaries were **coded** to the functional demarcation in the Big City Plan (CBD, 2009). Various names were considered for the BID, such as the Business Quarter or The Exchange, but the shadow board ended up coming back and **coding** to the well-known historic name of Colmore: Colmore Business District (CBD) (Interview with CBD, 2010).

CBD aimed to **decode** to three issues. First, the Colmore BID was understood as being different from most other English BIDs, as it targets professional and business services in the area, instead of businesses that depend on footfall (CBD, 2009; Interview with CBD, 2010). Secondly, the BID was seen as a potential vehicle to differentiate the Birmingham business district from the other large professional centers outside London, like Leeds, Edinburgh, or Manchester (Interview with CBD, 2010). A better image for the area and public realm improvements were felt to be important in that respect, as both employers and employees wanted to work toward a more attractive area and promote Colmore and Birmingham as a nice place to work. This relates to the third issue the Colmore BID aimed to decode from, which was the lack of a high-quality public realm (Interview with CC, 2013; Interview with CBD, 2013). Already at its start, the BID took forward a streetscape and public realm study, to be commissioned together with the council, a scheme for further public realm enhancements, and the introduction of a better way-finding system (CBD, 2009). The pursued public realm quality for the area was coded to other business districts, like those of London and Manchester (which were visited by the BID Development Group) (Interview with CBD, 2013; Interview with CC, 2013).

Operating the BID (2009-2012)

After a successful ballot in January 2009, the Colmore BID initiative was **coded** as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, called Colmore Business District Limited (Interview with CBD, 2010). Colmore Business District commenced on April 1, 2009 (CBD, 2010a). **Contraction** happened as the CBD became operational. The board consisted of two groups: stakeholders and businesses. Stakeholder directors had an automatic seat on the board: Birmingham Forward and Birmingham Future, the city council, West Midlands Police, Centro, and a residents' representative. Business directors were interviewed and selected based on the size of their business and their sector (major corporates, medium corporates, independents, property owners/developers, retail/leisure/ hospitality). With this division, businesses outnumbered the other stakeholders when voting, and thus independence was maintained (Interview with CBD, 2010). Despite efforts by the CBD board and management, no resident representative was found

Colmore Business District (1)

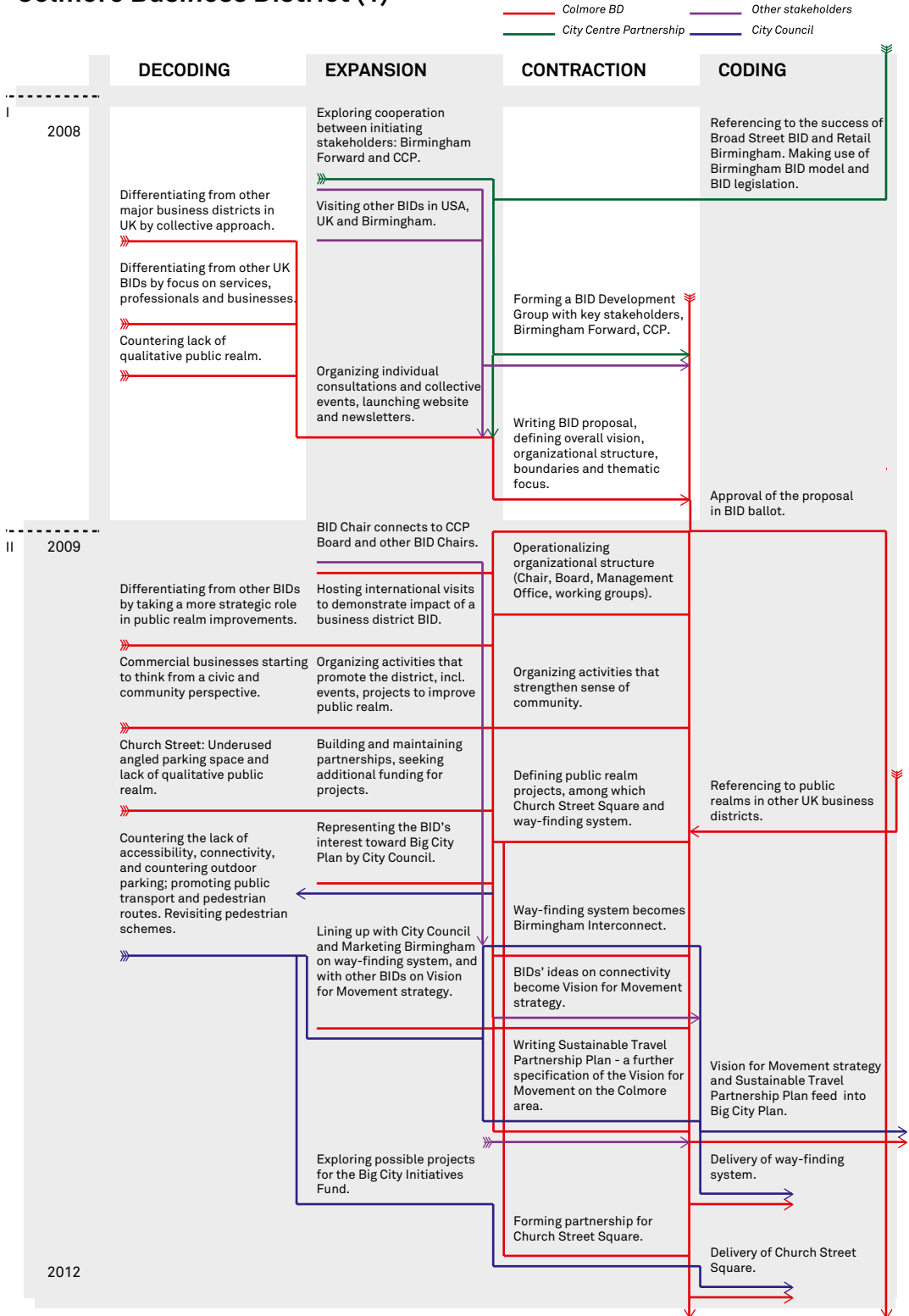


FIGURE 7.11a The becoming of Colmore Business District (Part 1)

for the board, as no resident group existed or emerged in the area (Interview with CBD, 2013). An executive management committee was delegated by the board to oversee day-to-day operations, financial management, and executive decisions. A professional BID manager and an administration coordinator were recruited (CBD, 2009; CBD, 2010a; CBD, 2011). Baseline services were monitored and service contracts set out (CBD, 2009). Working groups were set up for the various themes the CBD focuses on. CBD activities that strengthened the sense of community in the district were an event that drew the attention of PR and marketing professionals to the BID organization; a caretaker service; a baseline survey among CBD members; newsletters and networking events for BID members (CBD, 2009; Interview with CBD, 2013).

In *expansion*, CBD continued to build and maintain partnerships, champion the area's interests at the local and the national level, and sought additional funding for its projects from landlords and property developers, public sector agencies, and grant bodies (CBD, 2009; CBD, 2012). CBD hosted visits from the USA, Norway, Spain, and Liverpool to demonstrate the positive impact a BID can have and to promote the district as the commercial heart of Birmingham (CBD, 2010a; CBD, 2013). Together with the council and local businesses, possibilities were explored for public realm projects (CBD, 2010a). Among these possibilities were Church Street, the unused end of Colmore Row at Victoria Square end, which CBD proposed to pedestrianize (Interview with CBD, 2010); the Charles Street footbridge as the continuation of Church Street toward the Jewellery Quarter (CBD, 2012); the area between Colmore Row and Steelhouse Lane (see Colmore Square below), the Livery Street Subway (CBD, 2013), Temple Street and Cherry Street as the link to the retail area and New Street Station (CBD, 2010a). De-cluttering of the streets was discussed with the city council, events were organized for property agents and developers to discuss how the CBD could work closely with this sector to attract inward investment and new businesses to the district, and possibilities for working together with the West Midlands Police on safety were explored (CBD, 2010a). CBD represented the businesses' interest in the area as consultees on the Big City Plan (Interview with CCP, 2013). CBD activities were aimed at promoting the district's identity (providing information on what is going on in the district) and increasing footfall (with events and a more attractive public realm). These included a CBD Z-Card, a Food and Drink Guide, Welcome Packs for new businesses, the CBD Digest magazine, participation in the annual International Jazz Festival, Taste of Business in 2010, CBD Arts and Crafts Market, CBD Snapshot Photographic competition, street wardens, a pavement cleaning project, floral displays, and Christmas lights (CBD, 2010a). Several studies were conducted in order to create more focus for future projects and activities of the BID: A small public survey on journeys made within the district,

Colmore Business District (2)

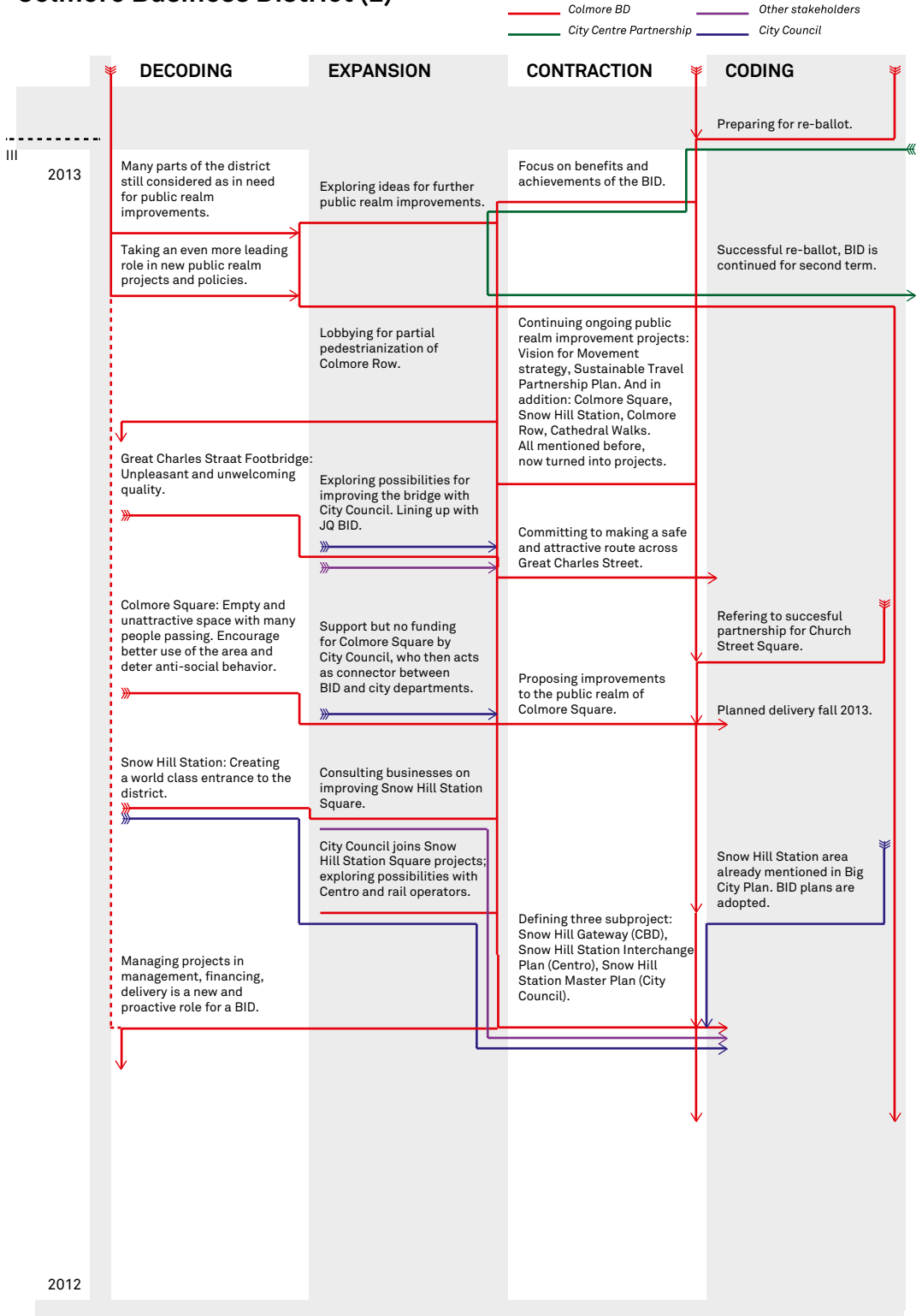


FIGURE 7.11b The becoming of Colmore Business District (Part 2)

an analysis of crime patterns, and an audit of “dark areas.” CBD also funded a feasibility study by MADE on the potential of a Design Centre in the heart of the city (CBD, 2010a).

CBD wanted to take a more strategic role than BIDs normally do, especially related to public realm improvements. The **decoding** related to the public realm was the same as in the previous round. A connection was made to the decoding envisioned by the city council in the Big City Plan, which aimed to promote Colmore Business District as a vibrant 24-hour city and a prestige office location, and recognized the need to revisit the pedestrian schemes and better connections (Birmingham City Council, 2011).

In 2010, further **contraction** happened as projects related to public realm improvements were defined more specifically. These are: Commissioning design work for a public realm scheme on Church Street; enhancing and rejuvenating the pedestrian Great Charles Street footbridge from Church Street to Ludgate Hill; reviewing the junction of Colmore Row and Livery Street; maintenance and repair work to the subway from Livery Street under Great Charles Street; renewing ideas for improvements to the entrance of Snow Hill Station; working with Centro on CCTV at bus stops; lighting scheme; working in partnership on an improved way-finding system – the Interconnect Project (installation of on-street maps); and hosting an on-street photographic exhibition in partnership with the council and other stakeholders (CBD, 2010a). As the decision to do public realm projects was already made at the start of the BID, not all money was spent in the beginning, and every year money was saved up for things like these (Interview with CBD, 2013). The council was willing to invest in the streetscape improvements within the first two years of CBD as well (CBD, 2009).

Being part of the BID, meant that commercial businesses had to start thinking from a civic and community perspective: Focusing not on earning money and making profit, but on spending the money they had, which meant a **decoding** from their usual ways of working (Interview with CBD, 2010). On the other hand, due to the sectorial makeup of the CBD, many business members had a background in planning and strategy, and due to the big office blocks the levy income is high. This gave CBD both the professional expertise and the money to work on strategic issues and public realm projects (Interview with CCP, 2013). In that sense, the businesses in the CBD were able to **code** to their usual ways of working as well. In addressing issues with a long-term perspective beyond a single five-year BID term, the BID also coded to the speed at which the city council worked (Interview with CBD, 2010).

Among the key achievements of the first term were additional street cleaning, floral trails, Christmas lights, and a photographic exhibition that won several national awards. CBD was part of the award-winning Floral Trail in the Britain in Bloom competition (CBD, 2010a; CBD, 2011) and helped the city center to retain its Purple Flag status, an award recognizing excellence in the city's night-time economy (CBD, 2012). Three projects were delivered during this round: Birmingham Interconnect, the Vision for Movement and Sustainable Travel Partnership Plan, and Church Street Square. Other projects were extended into the CBD second term.

- *Birmingham Interconnect.* Among the issues to **decode** from, the CBD proposal addressed the district's lack of accessibility and connectivity, especially for pedestrians. The aim was to improve people's walking experience in the area and make their movement more efficient, more informed, and easier (CBD, 2013). **Expansion** happened as CBD investigated the possibilities for a way-finding system and discovered that such a project had already been envisioned by Marketing Birmingham and the city council, but they had insufficient budget to deliver it. **Contraction** happened as CBD and Retail Birmingham joined this project, and together they provided the council with money for actual delivery. Additional funding came from the council (S106), Centro, and ERDF. The project was named Birmingham Interconnect (Interview with CC, 2013).

- *The Vision for Movement and Sustainable Travel Partnership Plan.* While **expanding** for the way-finding system, CBD's ideas on connectivity aligned with the RTV ideas of Broad Street BID. The three BIDs in the city center came together and, in a process of contraction, they developed a transport strategy for the city, called Vision for Movement. Centro and the council become involved, too (Interview with CBD, 2013; Interview with CC, 2013). The vision is to develop high-quality transport options and sustainable means to travel, broken down in the themes Walkable, Well Connected, and Efficient (Birmingham City Council, 2010). Further specifications of these intentions were presented in the Sustainable Travel Partnership Plan, in partnership with Centro and the council. This plan suggests tangible projects for the Colmore area. It suggests electric vehicles and charging points, car-sharing clubs, enhancing the streetscape, cycling initiatives, travel information, travel pass sales, a TravelWise website, de-cluttering the streets, the Interconnect Project, and a Walking Journey Planner (CBD, 2010b). Expansion was related to the aim of the partnership to encourage businesses in the area to evaluate how their employees travel to and from the workplace, as well as improve accessibility and movement in

- and out of the district, and to develop and deliver projects and initiatives that will help to promote sustainable, efficient, and economic travel options. The plan helped businesses to respond to the growing call to move toward a low carbon economy, and to work collaboratively with organizations in the district to bring transport and economic benefits to the area (CBD, 2010b; CBD, 2011). The **decoding** of the Sustainable Travel Partnership Plan related to countering the expensive indoor parking and public realm-consuming parking space (Interview with CBD, 2013). Looking ahead, CBD believed that this would bring transformational benefits to Birmingham and the district (CBD, 2011). Interconnect Birmingham fed into the Vision for Movement, of which the Sustainable Travel Partnership Plan was a further detailing, and into the Big City Plan (CBD, 2012). The way-finding totems were delivered in 2012 (CBD, 2013).
- **Church Street Square.** Concerning the public realm, specific **decoding** was articulated toward Church Street. Where the street widens, there was rarely used parking space, and a view of the Jewellery Quarter and St Paul's Church. CBD proposed to narrow the street, widen the pavement, and put in some trees and a café (Interview with CBD, 2010), in order to create a place for small events and where people can walk and sit (CBD, 2011; 2012). This aim was matched with the exploration of the city council for public realm improvements as part of the Big City Plan. Church Street Square was considered the biggest and most tangible project (Interview with CC, 2013), and **contraction** around this project was opportune. CBD was keen on such projects, as they have an actual, long-term impact on the area (Interview with CCP, 2013). Church Streets Square was co-funded by the CBD and the council (S106 and BCC Capital Program funds) (Interview with CBD, 2013; Interview with CC, 2013; CBD, 2011). Church Street Square was **coded** firstly to the public realm in other UK business districts, which was used as a reference, such as the new New York Street in Manchester. Secondly, the council was able to build the project into its vision and sell it as both a strategic and a local benefit, also because of the connection to the Jewellery Quarter. Thirdly, despite the partnership working, the council managed the project (Interview with CC, 2013). Moreover, a procurement framework contract by the council was followed (Interview with CBD, 2013). Church Street Square was delivered in 2012. The previously underused area and wide carriageway has been transformed into a new open space with reduced road width, benches, trees, planting, and enhanced lighting. The area is significantly more pedestrian friendly, and a pleasant place for staff and visitors to spend time in (CBD, 2012). It is acknowledged that this project has extended the scope of what BIDs can achieve (Interview with CBD, 2013; CBD, 2012; Interview with CC, 2013).

Preparing the BID2 (>2013)

Coded by BID legislation that prescribes a re-ballot after five years, preparations started for the CBD second term in the spring of 2013 (Interview with CBD, 2013). A re-ballot was planned for October 2013. **Contraction** happened as the statements and successes of the first BID period were confirmed and the BID organization was continued (CBD, 2013). Themes were redefined: Outstanding Places; Business Matters; Accessible and Connected; Safe and Sound; Community Building. Activities related to public realm improvements were continued into the second term. Ideas for improving and pedestrianizing Colmore Square, Snow Hill Station Gateway, Colmore Row, and Cathedral Walks were mentioned before but now also taken forward (CBD, 2013; Interview with CBD, 2010; Interview with CBD, 2013). In **expansion** toward its second term, CBD explored ideas for further public realm investments (CBD, 2013). Projects on Colmore Square and Snow Hill Station were initiated by the BID office and the BID board, in close consultation with the business members. CBD lobbied for a partial pedestrianization of Colmore Row and was primary consultee for the council (Interview with CBD, 2013).

Decoding happened as re-ballot was a time to rethink the role and strategic aims of the BID (Interview with CBD, 2013). Many parts of the district were still considered to be “crying out” for public realm improvements (Interview with CBD, 2013; CBD, 2013), such as Cornwall Street as an extension of Church Street, the lack of trees and planting in Newhall Street, bad connections between Temple Street and New Street Station, restoration and refurbishment of Barwick Street, the lack of a covered outdoor seating area in the district, and the large number of buses on Colmore Row (Interview with CBD, 2013; CBD, 2013). Whereas CBD was a substantial but minor contributor to Church Street Square (which was delivered and managed by the council), it now wanted to take a lead in the delivery of public realm projects and policy setting. In the schemes like Snow Hill Station Square and Colmore Square, CBD was taking much more of the lead in the actual delivery (Interview with CBD, 2013). Like in the first term, CBD engaged in thinking with time horizons that stretch well beyond one or two BID terms (CBD, 2013). Moreover, CBD stepped up into civic space that had been abandoned by local authorities. Together with the longer term strategic thinking and involvement in public realm schemes, CBD is one of the front-running BIDs in the UK (Interview with CBD, 2013).

- *Great Charles Street Footbridge*. The Great Charles Street Footbridge connects Colmore and the Jewellery Quarter, but has an unpleasant, unwelcoming, and unappealing quality. CBD in its BID proposals, the council in its Big City Plan, and later the JQ BID all wanted to **decode**

- from this (CBD, 2012; Interview with CC, 2013; Interview with CBD, 2013) and transform it into a safe, convenient, and attractive pedestrian/cycle route across Great Charles Street (Birmingham City Council, 2011; CBD, 2013). **Expansion** happened as together with the council, an exploration was made of cost-effective improvements for the existing bridge, such as painting, lighting, greening, and street furniture. Investments can be done by the council, but BIDs are welcomed to invest money as well, or deliver things that are funded by the council (Interview with CC, 2013; CBD, 2011). **Contraction** happened as there was a potential for all three organizations to achieve more by working together, to get better value for money, and to share the PR success of the project (Interview with CC, 2013).
- **Snow Hill Station.** Already during the BID's first term, the CBD board and office turned their attention to the environment around Snow Hill Station. The area is a key entrance point to CBD, heavily used by commuters to the District. The BID wanted to **decode** from the fact that this is the only remaining unimproved rail interchange in the city center (after the completion of New Street Station refurbishment and the conservation-oriented treatment of Moor Street Station) (CBD, 2012; Interview with CBD, 2013; CBD, 2013), to transform it into a "world class gateway" to the business district at Snow Hill Station Square, and to improve the movement, functionality, and quality of its public space (CBD, 2012, Interview with CBD, 2013, CBD, 2013). **Expansion** happened as CBD consulted businesses on possibilities to improve Snow Hill Station Square. The council, which at first had not been interested in the project, attended the meetings and started to contribute to the planning. As part of the Big City Plan, the council intended to improve the wider area around Snow Hill Station, and explored possibilities to do urban design work on the area anyway (Interview with CC, 2013). Exploratory meetings were held with Centro, which was conducting a movement study of how passengers transit, and of cycling, pedestrians, and how movement and transport works in that part of the city center. The idea grew into a plan to improve the whole Snow Hill Station area, which was broken down into three subprojects: a movement study, a design for public realm study, and the overall master plan procedure. In 2013, CBD was looking for funding for the square, to add to their own funding and that from the council (Interview with CBD, 2013). This matched with the council aim of increasing the amount of office space in this part of the city center (Birmingham City Council, 2011). **Contraction** happened when it was decided to run the two studies on public realm and transport separately but simultaneously, before merging them into one plan (Interview with CC, 2013). Snow Hill

- Station Interchange Plan, the transport study, was taken forward by Centro. Snow Hill Station Master Plan was the planning study concerning the whole area with a 20-year time horizon (CBD, 2013). The council helped CBD to appoint a designer for Snow Hill Square. A concept design was made in 2013 (Interview with CBD, 2013). All projects were co-funded by CBD, the council, and Centro (Interview with CBD, 2013). The outcomes were shared, so the three stakeholders got more information for their money and moved toward an agreed solution for the area (Interview with CBD, 2013). The council and CBD also shared consultation efforts, getting the major developers and stakeholders to look at the urban design and the transport work at the same time (Interview with CC, 2013). The partnership between the BID and the council was **coded** by the earlier successful partnership for Church Street Square (CBD, 2012). Improving Snow Hill Station area was already part of the Big City Plan, but the way it was initiated by CBD also fed back into the Big City Plan. The project for Snow Hill Square was renamed to Snow Hill Gateway to gain better recognition of the importance of this place as the city's third station and gateway to the Colmore Business District (Interview with CBD, 2013). Snow Hill Gateway was planned to be delivered in two phases, the first phase beginning at the end of 2013 (CBD, 2012; CBD, 2013).
- *Colmore Square*. The current Colmore Square, an area outside the Westly Building, was also something CBD wished to **decode** from. The area was empty and unattractive, with many people passing through. The aim was to encourage better use of the area and to deter anti-social behavior (CBD, 2013). Changing this fitted with the overall intention of CBD to improve the public realm and pedestrian environment within the district. CBD would manage the entire process: Appoint a project manager and a contractor to build it, and supply all the financing. This was a substantial step further than Church Street Square, and an example of a proactive role for a BID (Interview with CBD, 2013). As the city council was keen to provide support, but unable to fund or manage, it was helpful in the **expansion**: As a pathfinder through the departments responsible for the area (the highway department, as it is publically accessible land, and the park department, as it has green areas as well, and Amey being the council maintenance contractor) (Interview with CBD, 2013). **Contraction** happened as CBD proposed a new scheme for the square, with seating, planting, better lighting, and tables with chess boards printed on them (CBD, 2013; Interview with CBD, 2013). A concept drawing was made for the square by Capita Symonds (Interview with CBD, 2013). The plan was to deliver the square in the fall of 2013 (CBD, 2013).

South Side Business Improvement District

South Side (SS) Business Improvement District is the fourth BID in Birmingham city Centre. It was set up in 2010 to serve the interests of businesses located south of New Street Station – a mix of theaters and other cultural businesses, gay night life, Chinatown, and other small independent businesses. The BID developed into its current state in two rounds: The preparation and setting up of the BID (<2010) and its first term (>2010).

Preparing the BID (<2010)

The **decoding** for the South Side BID related to the feeling that the area south of New Street Station was in need of regeneration: There was a poor quality of public space, a lack of maintenance, poor visual identity, and bad connections and accessibility. Its light industrial areas were disused, and the planned relocation of the Wholesale Market would leave the neighborhood with a large redevelopment zone. The transformation of New Street Station with a new entrance to the south will be a major opportunity for the south side area to regenerate, and businesses wanted to take benefit from that (Interview with SS BID, 2010; SS BID, 2010a). Another issue to decode from was the fragmentation in the area. The South Side area had emerged over the previous decade as a mix of restaurants, bars, clubs, cultural venues, retail, commercial and office activities, and residential development. The many interest groups active in the area (Shield for the gay community, Leisure Watch for the pubs, the Chinese community) reflected this diversity. The diversity made the area different from the rest of Birmingham city center (other areas are more closely allied to a certain functionality), but also created challenges in making the area known and attractive (Interview with SS BID, 2010; Interview with SS BID, 2013).

The idea of creating an SS BID was first tested at a South Side summit in 2009. **Expansion** took place as various consultations events followed in 2010 (SS BID, 2010b). During these events it was deliberated whether the businesses wanted an SS BID, and if so, what the focus of the SS BID should be (Interview with CCP, 2010; Interview with SS BID, 2010). Consultation events were held at different times of the day at different venues to ensure that as many people as possible became involved (Interview with SS BID, 2010; Interview with SS BID, 2013; Interview with CCP, 2010). The BID steering group visited bars, restaurants, and clubs to gather information. It also launched a website and sent out newsletters (SS BID, 2010c). Consultations were held with other BID chairs on such issues as whether to have a BID manager (Interview with SS BID, 2010; SS BID, 2010d). Ideas for possible projects were discussed, such as a Chinese archway (Interview with SS BID, 2010).



FIGURE 7.12 *Everyday life in the South Side BID*



FIGURE 7.13 *Street art and urban regeneration in South Side*

During the South Side summits, **contraction** took place and consensus was found on becoming an SS BID (Interview with CCP, 2010; SS BID, 2010). It was believed that the SS BID could create benefits for the area through direct investment and better profiling (SS BID, 2010b), and that it could have impact and buying power as it would be additional and business-led (Interview with SS BID, 2010). Soon after this first summit, the steering group was formed, which is an act of contraction, too. The SS BID group reflected the diversity of the area by including representatives from the City Centre Partnership, the council, West Midlands Police, the Arcadian Centre, Hippodrome, hotels, the Chinese community, the gay community, and businesses (Interview with SS BID, 2010). Decisions were made on the levy, ratable value, and the boundaries of the SS BID, which run from New Street to the Markets to Bristol Street, and include a music venue and a hotel on the other side of these roads (Interview with SS BID, 2010). Furthermore, the steering group prepared an SS BID proposal around the theme “South Side Spirit” (SS BID, 2010a). As the area was not a neighborhood historically, South Side is an artificial name, a first attempt to bring the area together (Interview with SS BID, 2010). “South Side Spirit” was broken down into three themes: Streets (related to **decoding** and public realm, to be more clean, green, safe, and have better signage), Scene (branded and diverse, thus related to **expansion**), and Synergy (informed community, being one voice, thus related to **contraction**) (SS BID, 2010a).

Under the guidance of the City Centre Partnership, South Side also **coded** to the Birmingham BID model, to national BID legislation, and to the experiences of the other BIDs (regarding, for instance, wardens and a BID manager) (Interview with SS BID, 2013). Reference was made to the success of other city center BIDs in Birmingham (SS BID, 2010b). Even before officially becoming a BID, the steering group became involved in several projects and delivered results, showing what an SS BID could possibly do for the area. An example was the regeneration of Hurst Street, a council-led scheme delivered in 2010 that resulted in improved lighting, new pavements, new trees, and some new infrastructure as part of the Big City Plan Initiatives Fund (Interview with SS BID, 2013). The steering group also provided some floral decorations as a taste of what could be achieved with a BID (SS BID, 2010d).

Operating the BID (<2010)

Following a successful ballot in the fall of 2010, the SS BID commenced in April 2011. It was **coded** as an independent and private sector-led not-for-profit company called South Side Business District Limited (SS BID, 2010a; 2010e; 2011a). **Contraction** took place in the setup of the BID organization, which consisted of a board of directors, an executive management committee for

South Side BID

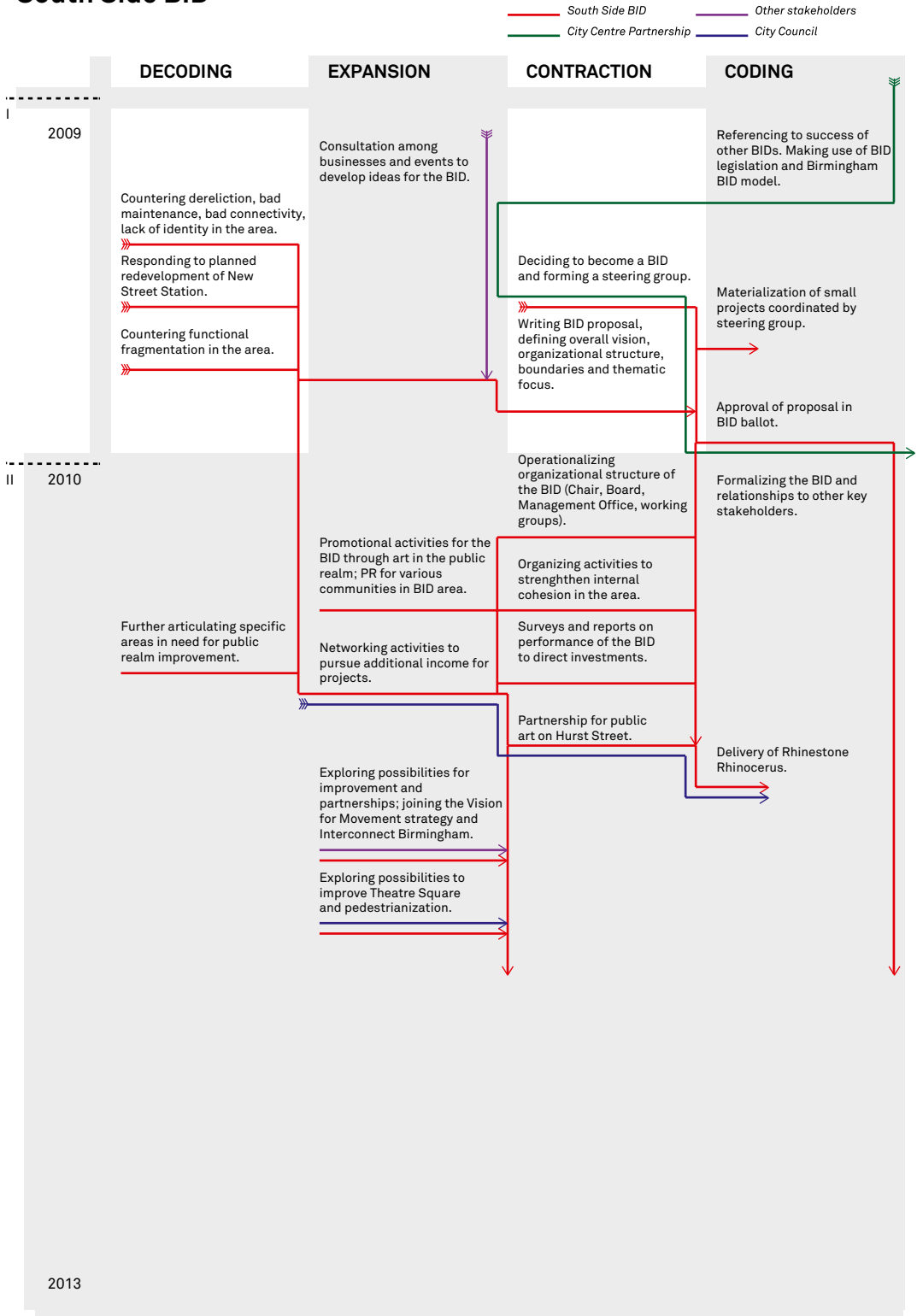


FIGURE 7.14 The becoming of the South Side BID

day-to-day operations and financial management, and a BID manager (SS BID, 2010a). The board consisted of stakeholder directors (the council and West Midlands Police) and business directors representing the diverse communities: cultural organizations (theatre, cinema, and gay pride) and businesses (insurance, property developers, Chinese restaurant, third sector) (SS BID, 2012). The board was chaired by the director of the Hippodrome Theatre (Davis, 2013). There was no neighborhood forum in South Side, and thus no residential representative sat on the board. The SS BID organization was broken down into four working groups: Scene, Streets, Synergy, and Gateway. The last-mentioned was concerned with strategic issues related to physical development and connections (Interview with SS BID, 2013). Contraction within the business community and the SS BID organization happened as public services were base-lined (SS BID, 2011a) and the performance of the SS BID was monitored and reported back to the members (SS BID, 2010a). Outcomes of the survey helped further shape the BID investments (Interview with SS BID, 2013). Work on the internal cohesion of the business community included the launch of a crime radio scheme, monthly Leisure Watch meetings, support for businesses affected by the 2011 riots, and the establishment of a business network (SS BID, 2012).

The **decoding** defined in the first round related to the opening of New Street Station, and the unwelcoming and impermeable character of the area remained. The decoding became more articulated in this round, focused on the physical barriers like the roads, the de-cluttering the streets of redundant street furniture, making a more attractive public realm, and dressing up the unwelcoming subway entrances (Interview with SS BID, 2013). A match was found with the decoding for the area by the council, as formulated in the Big City Plan (better pedestrian links, more and better public realm, and capitalizing changes due to New Street Station) (SS BID, 2010e, Birmingham City Council, 2011) and the decoding by the Hippodrome, which addressed the poor experience visitors had when visiting the theater and the physical barriers in terms of public realm (Interview with SS BID, 2013).

Expansion happened in four ways. Firstly, The BID's promotional activities were aimed at making South Side better known through a marketing campaign together with Marketing Birmingham. Many promotional activities were in the form of public art (Davis, 2013), such as the visual pop culture festival Eye Candy, South Side Stories (a collection of 10 promotional short films illustrating life in the district), and outdoor theatre events (SS BID, 2012). Although progress was made in communicating to people what South Side is, the various communities in the area were also marketed separately: There were a China Town Guide and a Gay Village Guide (Interview with SS BID 2013; SS BID, 2011b; 2011c). South

Side BID was on Facebook and Twitter, ran a website, published newsletters, and carried out a radio campaign (SS BID, 2012). Secondly, the SS BID was involved in various networking activities, pursuing additional income through sponsorship, voluntary contributions, and grants from, for instance, the Heritage Lottery Fund. The SS BID was involved in the establishment of the England–China Business Forum and the LGBT Centre (SS BID, 2013). South Side board members also sat on the City Centre Partnership Board, for wider strategic planning and coordination (SS BID, 2010a; Interview with SS BID, 2013). Thirdly, the Gateway Group explored opportunities for further improvements, mostly related to the potential for pedestrians and traffic management. The Gateway Group participated in Birmingham Interconnect, Vision for Movement, the New Street Station, a lighting project, and traffic management proposals. The SS BID consulted its businesses on these issues, and was itself consultee on traffic management, the enterprise zones, the redevelopment of the Wholesale Market area for the council, and on road closures for Amey. The SS BID mostly considered the practicalities directly affecting businesses in the area (Interview with SS BID, 2013, SS BID, 2011c). Fourthly, and more specifically, negotiations between the Hippodrome and council took place concerning Theater Square. The idea was close off Ladywell Walk in order to create a pedestrianized area in which outdoor theater activity can be organized (Interview with SS BID, 2010), in line with the Big City Plan (Birmingham City Council, 2011). The SS BID was also considering becoming involved, after the board had given its mandate and businesses had been consulted (Interview with SS BID, 2013). The SS BID, the Hippodrome, and the council were exploring funding for this transformational scheme (Interview with CC, 2013).

South Side was using art and cultural activities as a regenerative and profiling tool (Davis, 2013). Concerning public art and regeneration, *contraction* happened as a partnership was formed on public art on Hurst Street. The idea that the council, the LGBT Community Trust, and GB Training Ltd developed (a Rhinestone Rhinoceros) was too short of funding and could not be installed on the roof it was intended to be installed on. The SS BID provided additional funding and arranged things with the owner of the building (Interview with CC, 2013; Birmingham Mail, June 6, 2012). This partnership was an operationalization of both the BID's and the council's ambition to promote the South Side area as a creative and cultural district (Birmingham City Council, 2011). The Rhinestone Rhinoceros was unveiled in May 2012.

Jewellery Quarter Business Improvement District (2012)

The last of the five Birmingham BIDs is the Jewellery Quarter BID. Since 2012, it has served the interests of the businesses located in the Jewellery Quarter, many of which are small, independent, and creative, and some are still related to the jewelry business. The JQ BID developed into its current state in two rounds: The period prior to the BID and its setting up (before 2012) and the actual first term (since 2012).

Preceding the BID (<2012)

The Jewellery Quarter is an unusual historic and intact part of Birmingham city center. It contains many 19th- and 20th-century buildings that were used for the manufacture of jewelry and small metal goods. Large parts of the quarter are listed as a conservation area, promoted by English Heritage, the city council, the JQ CA Character Appraisal and Management Plan (2002), and a JQ CA Design Guide (2005) (Interview with CC, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2002; 2005).

Despite the qualities of the Jewellery Quarter, there was a lot to **decode** from. The area suffered from long-term industrial decline, a chronic lack of investment, vacancies, and buildings in state of disrepair (Birmingham City Council, 2005; Interview with JQ NF, 2013; JQ BID, 2012a). Moreover, the quarter had a strongly fragmented community landscape, with various communities historically at odds with each other: Jewelers standing for the identity of the quarter as the place for jewelry trade, developers pushing the residential agenda, and groups defending the historic interests (Interview with CC, 2013; Interview with JQ NF, 2013). The Jewellery Quarter Regeneration Partnership, led and financed by the council, folded in 2010 due to funding and service cuts (Interview with CCP, 2010; JQ BID, 2012a, JQDT Website, 2013b). Meanwhile, in 2010 the council was preparing to revise the Management Plan and Design Guide, in order to bring new growth and investment to the quarter through the Big City Plan (Interview with CC, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2011).

In recent years, **contraction** toward a more cohesive community took place. After the Jewellery Quarter Regeneration Partnership folded, the Jewellery Quarter Development Trust (JQDT) came into being, merging four community organizations: The Jewellery Quarter Neighborhood Forum, Jewellery Quarter Marketing Initiative, Jewellery Quarter Trade Alliance, and The Jewellery Quarter Association, the last three representing businesses (JQ BID, 2012b; Interview with JQ NF, 2013; Interview with CCP, 2010; JQ BID, 2012a; JQDT Website, 2013b; Interview with CC, 2013). The focus of the JQDT was to promote the quarter, improve the economic wellbeing and provide a more attractive, clean, and safe environment for businesses, residents, and visitors, and promote and



FIGURE 7.15 Jewelry business in the Jewellery Quarter



FIGURE 7.16 Derelict industrial heritage and underinvestment in the Jewellery Quarter

enhance the unique industrial heritage (JQDT Website, 2013b). In May 2011, the Development Trust was formed as an independent business-led community interest company (the CIC model). This is a not-for-profit company, **coded** after a model that has been possible since 2006. It was constituted and operated for the benefit of the communities in Birmingham's historic Jewellery Quarter, and any funds generated by the company have to be devoted to achieving their defined goals (JQDT Website, 2013b; Interview with JQ NF, 2013; JQ BID, 2012b).

During the establishment of the JQDT, the Birmingham City Centre Partnership introduced the idea of starting a BID, instead of or complementary to the JQDT. In **expansion**, these possibilities were explored, and an example was found in Reading where a community development trust and a business improvement district had been combined. Some people visited Reading and decided that this would fit the Jewellery Quarter, too (Interview with CCP, 2010; Interview with JQ NF, 2013). Businesses were consulted about the BID proposal only after the key stakeholders had agreed on the broad direction of the BID proposal (Interview with JQ BID, 2013). A website was launched, newsletters, questionnaires, and the BID proposal were sent around, information cascading meetings were held in January and February 2011, and the proposal – called the Election Manifesto – was sent to all eligible prospective levy payers, together with ballot papers (Interview with JQ NF, 2013; JQ BID, 2012a; JQ BID, 2012b).

Contraction happened as in the summer of 2011, the board of the Jewellery Quarter Development Trust together with the City Centre Partnership and the city council (which makes significant financial and practical contributions), West Midlands Police, and the four founding organizations, decided to support the development of a Jewellery Quarter BID (JQ BID, 2012a; JQ BID, 2012b). The Development Trust would remain the overarching organization and legal body, overseeing the longer term regeneration issues. The JQ BID would pursue the objectives of the JQDT, while generating a funding stream for short-term interventions (Interview with JQ NF, 2013; Interview with CC, 2013). The main pledges of the BID were to: Make the JQ more attractive, tidier, and cleaner; create a safer and welcoming JQ; promote the quarter as “the hidden gem of Birmingham” and a unique place to work, visit, live, and invest in (by raising the JQ profile); support business growth; make a better connected JQ and champion the JQ; create a vibrant local business network and promote meaningful engagement with the wider community; work toward a well-managed streetscape and tackle dereliction; and provide a coordinated voice and budget to ensure more effective planning (JQ BID, 2012a; JQ BID, 2012c). The levy and ratable value were set, and the JQ BID area was defined as the area between Great Charles Street, Great Hampton Street and Spring Hill. It is bounded by the main infrastructure lines and includes most of the conservation areas (JQ BID, 2012a).

Jewellery Quarter BID

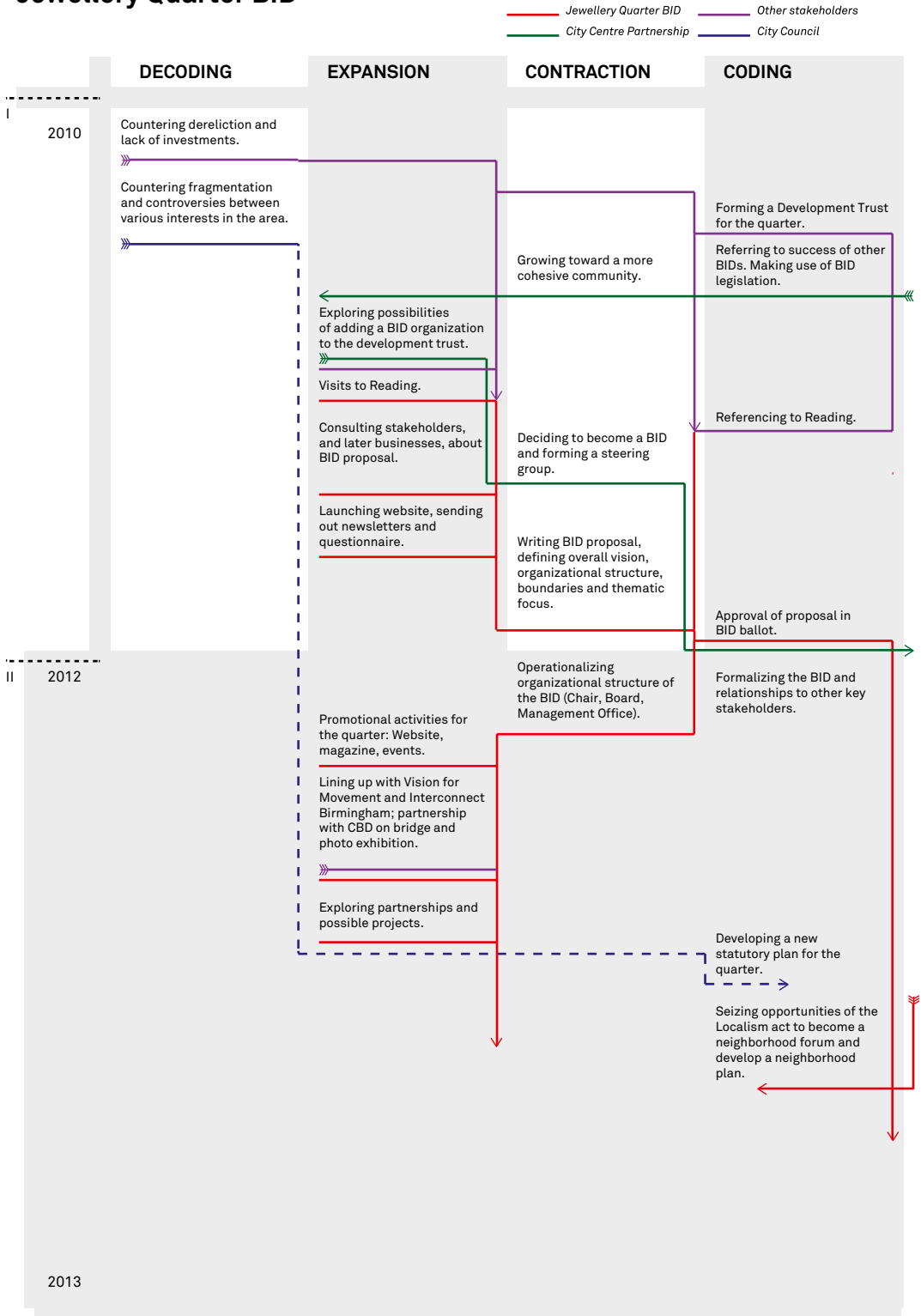


FIGURE 7.17 The becoming of the Jewellery Quarter BID

The Jewellery Quarter BID **coded** to the Birmingham BID model to some extent, but combined this with the BID model found in Reading. Existing community governance entities were maintained, the BID being additional. In the BID proposal, reference is made to the four other city center BIDs and their successes (JQ BID, 2012c; JQ BID, 2012a; Interview with CCP, 2013; Interview with JQ NF, 2013).

Operating the BID (>2012)

The ballot in April 2012 was successful and the JQ BID commenced on September 1, 2012 (JQ BID Newsletter, June 2012). **Decoding** remained the same as in the previous round. **Coding** happened to the BID proposal. **Contraction** happened as the JQ BID became operational as intended. An executive team was formed and renewed in summer 2013, including a BID manager and JQ BID ambassadors (Birmingham Post, June 20, 2013). The management of the JQ BID was delegated to a BID committee of 15 members representing the various kinds of levy payers in the district, one member representing the residents, representatives from the council and education, and the four “member” organizations, each of which nominated two members. The JQ BID manager functioned as the day-to-day face of the district and was responsible and accountable to the JQ BID Management Committee (JQ BID, 2012a). The aim of the JQ BID remained unchanged, namely to support business growth and strengthen the business community by, for instance, organizing network events, and to represent the community and feed into the statutory planning process (JQ BID, 2012d; Interview with CC, 2013; JQ BID Website, 2013a).

In early 2013, most of the efforts of the JQ BID related to **expansion**, as the JQ BID aimed to set up partnerships and discuss possible projects. These were tackling dereliction together with the council, City Heritage Strategy Group, landowners, and developers; safety with West Midlands Police; connectivity with Amey; setting up a center of excellence for exhibition and sale with the council; working on marketing with Marketing Birmingham; on way-finding with Marketing Birmingham and Centro; with Colmore Business District and the council on better connections to the city center; on low-cost travel schemes and cycling routes with Centro and the council; with Digital Birmingham and telecoms providers on the introduction of fast broadband (JQ BID, 2012a); and with the City Heritage Group, Museums Trust, the council, and ERIH (European Route of Industrial Heritage) on a heritage strategy to attract more visitors to the area (JQ BID, 2013c). JQ BID joined the Interconnect Birmingham project and the Vision for Movement strategy and purchased additional totems for the quarter in the winter of 2013/14 (JQ BID Website, 2013a; JQ BID, 2013a). On the Great Charles Street Footbridge, the JQ BID worked together with the council and Colmore

Business District (JQ BID, 2013d). The JQ BID introduced a promotional campaign, including events, a website, and a biannual magazine called Quarter Life, seasonal marketing campaigns, and e-newsletters (JQ BID, 2012a; JQ BID, 2013b). Together with Colmore Business District, an outdoor photographic exhibition called “Findings” was organized (Interview with JQ NF, 2013). By organizing such events and participating in Birmingham Made Me, the Birmingham International Jazz and Blues Festival, and floral displays, the BID did its best to generate more footfall in the area (JQ BID, 2013b). Each issue of Quarter Life promoted a certain sector in the area. The BID was also intending to organize commercial sponsorships, income generation, EU funding, and leverage of support from partners, and in each Quarter Life, notifications were made on opportunities for grants and funding for businesses (JQ BID, 2012a; 2013; 2013d; Interview with JQ NF, 2013). The JQ was promoted as a great place for city and family life (JQ BID, 2013d). The BID represented the quarter in relation to planning decisions and planning applications (Interview with JQ NF, 2013; Interview with CC, 2013).

The JQ Development Trust and JQ BID aimed at **coding** to the new opportunities provided by the Localism Act to become a neighborhood forum and develop a neighborhood plan. Their aim was to play a more proactive role instead of just being a consultee in planning applications. As such, they tried to bring together two different bodies created by legislation, namely BIDs from 2004 and Localism from 2012 (Interview with JQ NF, 2013; Interview with JQ BID, 2013). Meanwhile, the council was also confronted with new planning legislation, which required a statutory development plan document (DPD) for the quarter. As the DPD is a statutory plan, drawing one up is a long process that involves formal consultations. And it has the potential to clash with the neighborhood plan, which can overrule the council’s DPD, especially if the community-led plan and the council-led plan are not in line with each other. According to the council, a neighborhood plan would only be useful if a community pursues something that a council is not pursuing. However, if a local authority is actively working toward a new plan, the council can just take in the same scope. Therefore, the council aimed at developing a DPD in the manner of a neighborhood plan: Continuously engaging with the community, not just through consultation but in a constant dialogue (Interview with CC, 2013).

A provisional end...

The description of the Birmingham BIDs ends rather abruptly here, in the spring of 2013. The only reason for this is a very practical one. In March 2013, the last field trip took place, and this was thus also the moment that the collection of data was stopped. Of course, things in the BIDs have evolved since and are

still evolving, and there are a number of reasons why it would be of interest to continue to follow their development. However, one needs to stop tracing at a certain moment and the time has come to start reflecting on what has been found. A researcher will always be in the middle of things.

4

CONCLUSIONS

After plotting the behaviors and trajectories of these five BIDs in Birmingham city center on the diagram of processes of becoming, it is now time to take in a more overarching perspective, and reflect on the pivotal research questions of this thesis and this chapter. In the following section, an analysis is made of the conditions that gave rise to the BID initiatives, the ways in which these initiatives gained robustness and resilience over time, and the planning strategies that were developed by, and in response to, the BIDs. At the end of the section, a reflection is given on what can be learned from these referential English BID case studies, that can be of use in the Dutch context as well.

Conditions that gave rise to the BIDs

The first research question – ***Under what conditions did the initiatives emerge?*** – is answered by looking at the fields of coding and decoding, especially at the start of the initiative, but also during later rounds. Coding tells about the conditions that enabled the co-housing initiatives to become, whereas decoding tells about the conditions that the initiators wanted to change. These conditions set the initiative in motion. Subsequently, it is also important that this movement is picked up by others, and that associations are formed around decoding with other trajectories.

Related to ***decoding***, three conditions are distinguished.

- The “concern felt for local quality.” These concerns set the BIDs in motion, but also keep them active and relevant over time. For Broad Street, the trigger for the BID was the acute problem of anti-social behavior and the death of a person. The area’s deteriorated reputation created a sense of urgency among businesses and key stakeholders to develop a way to manage the nighttime economy and business economy in a

non-conflicting way. For the other BIDs, no such acute problems existed. In the first attempt to establish Retail Birmingham, the lack of urgency even prevented the BID from happening. But concerns about local spatial and physical conditions were the trigger for all the BIDs to emerge. For Broad Street, the concerns were nighttime congestion and poor pedestrian conditions, and for Gas Street and Five Ways vacancies, derelictions, and underused areas. For Retail Birmingham, bad connectivity and way-finding were concerns. For Colmore Business District, the concerns were the district's lack of accessibility and connectivity, especially for pedestrians, and its lack of a high-quality public realm. In South Side, the concerns were the poor quality of public space, a lack of maintenance, poor visual identity, and poor connections. In the Jewellery Quarter, the BID addressed long-term decline and dereliction.

- The “absence of investments and leadership” in the areas. The fragmentation of interests and thus lack of leadership were triggers for Broad Street, Retail Birmingham, South Side, and the JQ BID. On Broad Street, tensions existed between the business economy, the nighttime economy, and the residents. In the Retail area, various business organizations were active, but mostly voluntary. In South Side, the gay and Chinese communities were prominent. In the Jewellery Quarter, various interest groups have even been at odds with each other. In all cases, the BID was introduced as a way to tackle the fragmentation in the area, out of a desire to create a more homogeneous profile or representation of the area. A lack of investments, actors taking a lead in countering poor spatial and physical conditions, and concrete plans for improvement were triggers for Broad Street, Colmore Business District, South Side, and the Jewellery Quarter. For Broad Street, there were no sufficient regeneration programs and no concrete plans for improving the connectivity. In Colmore, the council lacks financial means to fully fund public realm improvements. South Side and the Jewellery Quarter had suffered from a chronic lack of investment for years, and public retrenchments led to the folding of the Jewellery Quarter Regeneration Partnership led by the city council.
- The “desire to be proactive and to stand out.” The business community and key stakeholders in the respective areas all wished to become more heard, proactive, and strategic. To achieve this, there was a genuine will to experiment. Broad Street, for instance, was part of the national BID pilot scheme. In the Jewellery Quarter, a new legislative hybrid, that includes a BID, a community trust, and a neighborhood forum under the Localism Act, was experimented with. In Colmore Business District, after the successful

delivery of Church Street Square in which the BID was only a minor contributor, experiments were taken forward with the BID managing the entire process of a public realm redevelopment: policy setting, financing, management, and delivery. Businesses in South Side wanted their BID to be different from other, more homogenous BIDs in England and elsewhere in Birmingham, those in the Jewellery Quarter wanted theirs to be different from institutionally homogeneous BIDs, and businesses in Colmore Business District wanted their BID to be different from BIDs that depend on footfall and do not target professional and business services. In Colmore, this was coupled with a desire to distinguish the Birmingham business district from other major business districts in the UK. The desire to become more proactive is also related to the desire to achieve the full potential of past and future investments. In Retail Birmingham, the BID wants to achieve the full potential of the Birmingham city center as the UK's top ranking retail center, exploit the potential of the redevelopment of New Street Station, and build upon significant public and private investments improving the city center. In South Side, the transformation of New Street Station and a new entrance to the south was a major opportunity for the South Side area to redevelop. Businesses also wanted to benefit from the council-led regeneration of Hurst Street.

Related to **coding**, two conditions are distinguished.

- The presence of “facilitating legal frameworks.” This is primarily the national BID legislation. After applying this model for the first time on Broad Street, a specific Birmingham BID model was developed and applied to all subsequent BIDs. This model shaped interactions between the BIDs, the BIDs and the council, and the BIDs and the City Centre Partnership. The model prescribed that every BID chair sits on the City Centre Partnership board, in order to guarantee the connectivity among BIDs and a single purpose for the city center. Interactions between the BIDs and key stakeholders were guaranteed by the makeup of the BID board. The Birmingham BID model suggested taking in representatives of the council (a cabinet member and councilor), a residential representative (not all BIDs manage to do so), and a police representative. In the Jewellery Quarter, community trust legislation and the Localism Act were also used as facilitating legal frameworks.
- The “presence of experience and knowledge.” Firstly, when partnerships are already in place in a certain area, it might be more feasible to define a common agenda, and use can be made of the experience and track record

of these predecessors (Interview with CCP, 2010). Retail Birmingham, for instance, built upon the early days of the City Centre Partnership and several smaller business organizations, Broad Street built upon the City Centre Neighbourhood Forum, Broad Street Association and the City Centre Partnership. The JQ BID built upon the JQ Development Trust that oversees the BID, the JQ Marketing Initiative, the JQ Neighbourhood Forum, the JQ Trade Alliance and the JQ Association. Secondly, this building upon predecessors was also valid for the various projects initiated by the BIDs. Snow Hill Gateway and Colmore Square initiated by CBD built upon the successful partnership for Church Street Square. The Vision for Movement Strategy built upon earlier developed transportation strategies by other stakeholders, such as Centro and the council. Thirdly, experiences could also be found with others and at other locations. Each new BID in Birmingham made reference to the successes of Broad Street and the BIDs that followed afterward. The Birmingham BIDs pay each other frequent visits and advise one another on a range of issues. Members of the City Centre Partnership and CBD make trips to the USA and London to learn from BIDs there. The JQ BID not only referred to the other Birmingham BIDs, but also to the Reading BID in London, where the Community Trust and BID were also combined. And fourthly, in the form of the professional capacities the BID members bring in. For instance in Colmore, many businesses worked in planning and strategy. This made it easier for the BID to become involved in urban development. In Retail Birmingham, the BID chair compared a BID to estate management, aiming at control over and planning for the environment, and marketing the area with one single voice and purpose (Interview with RB BID, 2013). The many design firms in the Jewellery Quarter could potentially shape the activities and framing of that BID. In South Side, the conscious choice was made not to present the BID proposal as a formal document, but to use a newspaper-look, as that would appeal more to their target businesses, trying to tailor their documents to match the local communities (Interview with CCP, 2013). In South Side, a specific strategy was applied by using public art and outdoor theater as a vehicle for regeneration. This is due to the creative and cultural makeup of the area, but also as the BID is chaired by the director of the Hippodrome (Interview with SS BID, 2013).

Following on these conditions that either set the BID initiative in motion, or enabled its emergence, associations were established between actors that try to deploy these conditions: With the council and its Big City Plan, with the other BIDs, and with other public authorities such as the police and Centro. The desire to become proactive and have investment and leadership, and try to improve local

quality, was associated with the national BID legislation, the Birmingham BID Model, existing partnerships in the BID area, and services already delivered by public authorities. It was thus the ability to associate conditions and actors that enabled the BID initiative to move forward.

Gaining robustness and resilience

Once the initiative is set in motion, the second research question – *How did the BID initiatives gain robustness and resilience?* – can be answered. Robustness and resilience are achieved by a combination of internal strength of the initiative and embeddedness in its environment. Internal strength is achieved by coding and contraction, and associations that lead to a merge between trajectories. Embeddedness in the environment is achieved by coding and expansion, and associations with other emerging, and existing, trajectories that run parallel to the trajectory of the initiative. As shown below, the behavior of expansion and that of contraction are usually strongly intertwined, and therefore difficult to describe separately.

Embeddedness in the environment

At the start of a BID initiative, embeddedness in the environment was mostly established through deliberations with key stakeholders and consultations among businesses, to shape the content and form of the BID. They were organized by the City Centre Partnership and local leading stakeholders, and also involved the council, West Midlands Police, and locally relevant stakeholders (Chamber of Commerce for Retail; taxi associations and licensees for Broad Street; the theatres, gay and Chinese community in South Side; the local Neighborhood Forum for Broad Street, Retail Birmingham, and the Jewellery Quarter). Each BID followed its own path through stakeholder deliberations and business consultations. Some first set up the core structure of the BID with key stakeholders, and then consulted the business members, and some organized the deliberations with key stakeholders and the consultation of future members more or less simultaneously. For all BIDs, this consultation was done by means of questionnaires, newsletters, a BID website, and circulating the BID proposal.

Once the BID has become operational, embeddedness in the environment increased through an active exploration of possible partnerships and projects. The least proactive partnerships were those based on regular consultations between the council (or stakeholders working on their behalf) and the BIDs on long-term strategic developments, such as the Big City Plan, Enterprise Zones, or comprehensive regeneration issues, and on short-term interventions such as road closures, planning applications, or the regeneration of a specific street.

More proactive partnerships were set up around specific themes, initiated by the BIDs, but also involving other stakeholders. Such themes could be physical improvements, safety, connectivity, marketing. Broad Street even set up WestSide Birmingham, a strategic partnership between Broad Street, developers, and the council to attract new investment to the area. These partnerships moved from expansion (exploration of various interests and possible connections) to contraction (the decision to actually form a partnership), and subsequently were followed by the exploration and setting up of specific projects (see below). The most proactive partnerships were the actual projects and physical interventions partly initiated by the BIDs. Retail Birmingham carried out various surveys and studies (Economic Study, Design Strategy, Street Trading Study) in order to lobby and generate support for more specific projects (such as Birmingham Interconnect). These studies were delivered in partnerships and were the outcomes of members' and public consultation. Colmore Business District is the front-runner in defining and developing actual projects, with the Church Street Square project, the partial pedestrianization of Colmore Row, improvements for the Great Charles Street Footbridge and Colmore Square, and the area around Snow Hill Station. Broad Street explored the possibility of regenerating Gas Street, but deliberations with the council became stalled and additional grant funding was still being looked for. South Side discussed de-cluttering the streets and the possibility of pedestrianizing parts of Ladywell Walk with the council, backed up by negotiations between the council and Hippodrome for public realm improvements in front of the theater. A specific project delivered in partnership with the council and the Community Trust, was the Rhinestone Rhinoceros.

Embeddedness in the environment of the BID initiative, as well as of the neighborhood the BID represents, also increased through the designation and promotion of the BID's identity. Expansion happened as the BID marketed the area and its businesses, making the area more known and attracting more footfall. This was done by providing information about the area in magazines, newsletters, promotional films, etc. and during, for instance, events. This expansion was backed up by contraction as well, as the promotion of the area's identity also led to an increased community cohesion within the district. Activities related to contraction were the representation of the business community in deliberations with other stakeholders, business networking, and business support by events, training programs, provision of information on funding possibilities, etc. Activities related to designating and promoting a BID's identity often started right after the official establishment of the BID organization, and continued in later rounds.

Embeddedness in the environment, not of the BID itself, but of the neighborhood a BID represented, was also increased through projects that improved the connectivity of the area. By such projects, the BID area becomes more networked in a physical perspective and more footfall can be generated, improving business conditions for the BID members. The ideas that the BIDs generate on this issue, gradually became more and more connected with each other in a process of expansion. Retail Birmingham and Colmore Business District both addressed way-finding in the city center, resulting in the Birmingham Interconnect Project, funded by the council (S106), Retail BID, CBD, Centro and ERDF. Meanwhile, Broad Street BID lobbied for an RTV system, which became aligned with the other BIDs' ambitions to increase connectivity, and more stakeholders joined the process: Centro, the council, CBD, Retail Birmingham. The content of improved connectivity expanded toward pedestrianization, cycling, and way-finding in the city center. The Vision for Movement strategy was written, envisaging a well-connected, efficient, and walkable city. The Jewellery Quarter BID also intends to align with both Interconnect Birmingham and the Vision for Movement strategy. A further specification of the intentions of the Vision for Movement strategy for the Colmore area was made in the Sustainable Travel Partnership Plan, together with Centro and the council.

Internal strength

The decision to become a BID and apply the legislation and Birmingham model was a first act that gave internal strength to the initiative of local businesses. Next, decisions on focus, organization, levy and ratable value, name, and boundaries were made, based on these consultations and deliberations. Such decisions are important in the establishment of internal strength.

- The focus and activities the BIDs chose to take forward were in line with what BIDs generally do, but address the specific needs of the BID area, too. For Broad Street, the focus was on creating a safe, clean, and attractive 24-hour urban area. Activities were first directed toward safety, cleaning, and image building, and later also toward development and connectivity. The focus of Retail Birmingham was on improving shopping conditions. Activities were directed at marketing, street operations, and business support. The focus of CBD was on creating a pleasant and attractive working environment, and a strong business community. Activities were directed at making the area accessible and connected; branded and promoted; cleaner, greener and more attractive; networked and community engaged; safe and welcoming. The focus of South Side was on developing a cohesive and attractive neighborhood. Their activities were directed at the public realm, creating synergy, and branding. The focus of the JQ BID was

on promoting the quarter as the “hidden gem of Birmingham.” Activities were directed at improving the economic wellbeing, and providing a more attractive environment for businesses, residents, and visitors.

- All BIDs had a board to oversee the strategic direction of the BID, an executive team or BID management for the day-to-day operations, and thematic working groups of business members. The makeup of the board followed from the stakeholders initiating the BID, the steering group or shadow board preparing the BID, and the key stakeholders involved in the deliberations. The board represented an accurate cross section of the various interests and perspectives in the area. Local business members always outnumbered other stakeholders on the board, to ensure the business-led quality of the board decisions. The ratable value was the same in all Birmingham city center BIDs, though they did differ in levy: Some had a slightly higher levy due to the number of small businesses.
- The boundaries and the names of the BIDs reflected the functional, historic, and/or infrastructural conditions of the BID areas. Broad Street referred to the main street, and boundaries were determined by the proximity to the street. Retail Birmingham reflected the business majority in the city center, and boundaries were set to include the major retail core. Colmore Business District was named after the historic district of Colmore, even though the geographical boundaries of the CBD were wider than that. They included all major service businesses and offices of the area. The name South Side was invented especially for the BID, and the boundaries of the area were not determined historically or functionally, but by some major infrastructural lines and by the average size of the other Birmingham BIDs. The boundaries of the JQ BID also followed infrastructural lines and the conservation areas.

These deliberations, consultations, and decisions were all made before the first BID ballot. In later rounds, when re-balloting appeared on the horizon, deliberations and consultations were repeated on a smaller scale. Decisions made earlier were confirmed by summing up the successes of the BID. Slight changes were sometimes made to the boundaries, a new theme or working group was added, and individual members of the board and executive team changed. But overall, the BIDs more or less maintained the same structure throughout their sequential terms.

Internal strength and embeddedness in the environment adds up through coding

So far, a continuous alternation between expansion and contraction has been presented as a way in which a BID gains robustness over time. But if successful, the activities of expansion and contraction end up in coding behavior. Thus, coding behavior also contributes to the internal and external robustness of a BID, and happens in the following ways:

- *The production of legal documentation.* These are the BID proposal, the performance monitoring frameworks for the BID itself, and for the baseline public services delivered by the council and the police. The BID proposal is the reference document for all BID activities. It formalizes the workings of the BID and the relationships with other stakeholders. These documents create certitude for the BID members and stakeholders that either sit on BID boards or work in partnership with the BIDs.
- *The production of plans, studies, and project proposals.* Consolidated in documents, references are made to parallel or preceding documents, and they feed into each other. For instance, Retail Birmingham produced the Economic study, which fed into the Design Strategy, which was also produced by Retail Birmingham. The Design strategy established a core set of design principles to influence city center development, and they were adopted by the council. Next, the Design Strategy fed into the Vision for Movement Strategy, which fed into the Big City Plan, on the issues “Connectivity” and “Walkability,” as did the Sustainable Travel Partnership Plan of Colmore Business District. This process is turning the plans, studies, and project proposals initiated or delivered by the BID, into codes themselves.
- *Following regular planning procedure.* Planning law consultation requirements make the BIDs regular consultees for the City Council Planning and Regeneration Office. BID initiatives for spatial interventions are assessed on their alignment with the Big City Plan, and in most cases so far this assessment was successful (for Gas Street it was not). Church Street Square was delivered within a regular framework contract by the council. In the Jewellery Quarter, both the BID and the council experimented with new planning legislation: The need for a Development Plan Document (DPD), which requires community involvement, and the Localism Act, which enables communities to develop a neighborhood plan, which can overrule the council’s DPD. How these two bodies of legislation work out for the district is unknown: There is a potential clash, but also the possibility of

valuable plans. Following regular planning procedures has helped the BIDs to be effective in delivering their promises of an increase in spatial quality within their areas.

- *The actual materialization of projects.* On Broad Street, the activities of the BID materialized in the form of hanging baskets, vacant units covered with promotional banners, a Walk of Stars, a lighting scheme, night wardens, street furniture, etc. In the Retail and Colmore areas, Interconnect Birmingham was delivered in 2012, and way-finding totems can now be found all over this part of the city center. Retail Birmingham has promoted various public realm improvements, led by the council, but heavily influenced by the BID lobby. In Colmore Business District, additional street cleaning, floral trails, Christmas lights, and a photographic exhibition have materialized. But most important is the delivery of Church Street Square, which has won several national awards. In South Side, the Rhinestone Rhinoceros was delivered in May 2012. These materialized projects are the legacies that shows the impact a BID can have on the public realm, an impact that will remain even if the BID is unexpectedly terminated.

These activities all contributed to the external and internal robustness of the BIDs. Deliberations and consultations on the BID itself, defining partnerships and projects, designating and promoting an identity for the BID area and community, and working on improved connectivity of the BID area, made the BIDs more and more connected and indispensable to other stakeholders in the city center, and more important and relevant for the business community too. According to the BID manager of Broad Street, this is the very core of what a BID should be doing: “Walking around and connecting with the businesses” (Interview with BS BID, 2013). This is expansion by exploring possibilities, generating ideas, making oneself heard and known, and contracting by defining aims, finding matches, and agreeing on projects. Deliberations with other BIDs and key stakeholders on possible investments, projects, plans, or funding create positive connections between the various interests. Related to contraction, associations were formed around common interests, in projects and in partnerships. Occasionally also controversies happened, when stakeholders did not agree on a plan, due to conflicting interests or a lack of urgency.

In a BID’s five-year term, and especially during its second and third term, many things change: Times, economy, the city, individual businesses, policy, budgets, etc. But despite these changes, BIDs tend to become more and more robust as they mature over time. This is due to their constant process of expanding, contracting, and coding. While expanding, a BID not only sticks to the content and

issues defined at its beginning, but renews itself and maintains its relevance for the business community and stakeholders. While contracting, the community is held together, strengthened, becomes more embedded by various projects and partnerships, and grows more effective. Contraction also takes place between the individuals involved in the BIDs through the city center, who get to know each other more and more. The coding by the BID into legal documents, planning documents, planning procedures, and materialized projects also contributes to its robustness. Over time, a BID grows and becomes more of a local, special purpose, authority. This is positive, as it creates effectiveness in delivery; however, too many procedures and paperwork might also potentially cause an alienation of the continuous expansion and contraction that are at the hearts of a BID's objective.

Planning strategies

The answer to the overall research question – *What planning strategies were developed by, and in response to the BIDs?* – is answered by filtering the answers on the above two questions about their intentionality, the patterns in behavior, and their relation to planning. What goals were achieved by the various trajectories crossing the map, and what conditions, associations, and controversies were created intentionally in order to achieve these goals?

All five BID initiatives were full of intent. Their decoding from the conditions found in their neighborhoods was deliberate, and from the very beginning there was an outspoken intention to actually become a BID. Only in Broad Street, the local incident and the introduction of the BID legislation coincided accidentally. All BIDs aimed at creating a more cohesive business community, and at influencing the development of their neighborhoods by making the voice of this community stronger, more heard, and more effectively directed toward actual physical improvements. In other words, the BID's major intentionalities were "assembling to maintain." The individual projects for physical improvements initiated by the BIDs, can be framed as "interference for change," but this interference then comes from an association with a broader aim than just one or a few interferences. Also the behavior of other stakeholders, including the council and the City Centre Partnership, was full of intent, as they were all looking for partnerships (strategic and short term) by which they could improve the quality of Birmingham city center. Not all matches between the BID initiatives and other stakeholders were fully intentional, though, and depended on a more or less coincidental coming together of circumstances.

Concerning the patterns in behavior of the BIDs, there were some differences between the five initiatives. Broad Street moved from decoding, through expansion and contraction into coding in its first round. Retail Birmingham also started with decoding and expansion, but at first no contraction or coding happened due to a lack of urgency. Only when coding toward the successes of Broad Street became possible, did contraction lead to the establishment of the BID. For Colmore Business District, South Side, and the Jewellery Quarter, decoding and coding happened at the same time, and through expansion and contraction the BID became possible. In all BIDs, during the second round mainly expansion and contraction took place: Identities were designated and promoted, and partnerships and projects were explored and defined. In 2009, the two BIDs that already existed (Broad Street and Retail Birmingham) and the newly established CBD started addressing strategic issues. New projects moved from decoding to expansion, contraction and coding, as they eventually fed into other BID initiatives on connectivity and the councils' planning documents, and materialized in space.

Concerning their involvement in urban regeneration, the Birmingham BIDs developed over time into influential stakeholders and serious proactive contributors. Most of them did not start, though, with plans for and visions on development or regeneration; they simply wanted to solve the "problems of the day." By working on these local issues, influence was generated on the quality of their business environments, for instance by organizing new street furniture and the decoration of vacant premises. But their influence started to reach further than that. Over time, the Birmingham BIDs became involved in urban regeneration in three ways. Firstly, they articulated their vision on spatial issues toward the local planning department, for instance on public realm improvements. Secondly, they increasingly contributed their own resources in order to get projects off the ground and delivered. Thirdly, they proved to be able to establish partnerships between local government, real estate investors, funds, and such parties as a regional transport organization, and thus instigate new planning processes and generate investments. The Birmingham BIDs also show that spatial conditions can actually trigger the emergence of shared responsibilities and activities on spatial issues. When a planning decision, a new spatial development or an acute problem resulting from spatial development is the trigger to form a BID, and businesses see a clear relation between spatial settings and business revenues, it is far more likely for these businesses to start intervening in their physical environment as well.

The other stakeholders whose patterns of behavior can be specified as planning strategy in response to the BID initiatives are the BIDs' key stakeholders, the

councils' City Centre Partnership, and the councils' Planning and Regeneration Office.

Whereas the business community really merged into the BID, key stakeholders maintained a certain autonomy. They often played a role in the establishment of a BID, sat on the board, and joined specific projects initiated by the BIDs, and brought these projects toward coding (delivered projects, coded into or added to official documents). Whether or not such partnerships were found, also with key stakeholders that do not sit on the BIDs' board, depended on the expansion and contraction from both the stakeholders and the BID itself.

The councils' City Centre Partnership (CCP) is an independent not-for-profit company with a board representing the business community and key stakeholder organizations in the city center, and works on the council's behalf, as it is initiated, organized, and funded by the council. City center management in Birmingham was at first taken forward solely by the council. But soon there came a realization that other stakeholders were needed as well. In 2001, the City Centre Partnership (CCP) was established to maintain and improve the relationship between the council and the Birmingham business community. The partnership consisted of a board of directors composed of various representatives from business interest organizations and several commercial key players in the city center. They collected voluntary funding and worked on small schemes concerning a cleaner, safer city center, and on marketing it. The Birmingham City Centre Partnership was connected to the national Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM), an overarching national organization concerned with the exchange ideas and practices among towns and cities. In the early 2000s, the ATCM actively promoted the development and implementation of BID legislation in England and Wales. Through this connection between the CCP and the ATCM, the BIDs came to Birmingham (Interview with CCP, 2010). The CCP helped the first BID (Broad Street) through its decoding, expansion, contraction, and coding in the setup. In other BIDs, they appear on the map through coding, as they brought in the Birmingham BID model, and they facilitated the process of expansion and contraction. They left again as soon as an individual BID was established, and remained on the background facilitating meetings between BID chairs. They reappeared as soon as a re-ballot was approaching. Then again, they facilitated the process of expansion and contraction. In 2009, the CCP decoded from its previous role of merely making connections and getting stakeholders around the table. Since then, they have had an overarching role between the BIDs. The CCP now focuses not only on promoting BIDs within Birmingham, but also on making sure that all the BIDs in the city center link together and complement each other. The BID chairs meet regularly at meetings organized by the CCP. The CCP also

assists in contract management, and encourages the BIDs to make collective purchases in order to save costs, thus facilitating both expansion and contraction between the various BIDs (Interview with CCP, 2010). From that moment on, the BIDs started to address more strategic issues. The CCP also connects the expertise of BID initiatives around the country with other BIDs throughout Birmingham, and advises other local authorities on how to develop BIDs. They initiated a BID Academy, and declared Birmingham the BID capital of the UK (Interview with CCP, 2010; 2013).

The council has been working on the Big City Plan since 2007, and this non-statutory planning and regeneration framework envisions among other better connectivity and an improved public realm in the city center and BID areas (Birmingham City Council, 2011). The City Council Planning and Regeneration Office appeared when the BIDs started addressing spatial and regeneration issues. At Broad Street, the council appeared on the map when the RTV plans and the Vision for Movement were merged with the Big City Plan, and when the plans for Gas Street were put on hold. In Retail Birmingham, the councils' ambitions for the city center were in line with those of the BID, and the Design Strategy and the Vision for Movement were coded into the Big City Plan. In relation to Colmore Business District, the council came in right at the start, as it intended to decode from the same issues as the BID. CBD and the council worked together on the delivery of Church Street Square and Interconnect Birmingham, and in the coding of the Vision for Movement into the Big City Plan. In later projects, the council was part of the expansion and contraction as future projects are discussed in deliberations. In South Side and the Jewellery Quarter, the council had its own plans and projects, which did not fit with the BIDs' ambitions. The conception of ideas for public realm improvements is therefore hard to unpack, as these ideas have been looked at from both the council and the businesses' sides, and have often also been a pre-BID concern for the shadow board or steering group before the ballot. Moreover, as the council faces budget cuts on public realm spending, working with the BIDs becomes more and more necessary (Interview with CC, 2013). Whether or not such partnerships are found, depends on the expansion and contraction from both the council and the BIDs.

	BS BID	RB BID	CBD	SS BID	JQ BID
BID initiative	<i>Initial decoding and expansion, contraction and coding follow</i>	<i>Coding to BS BID</i>	<i>Coding to other BIDs</i>	<i>Coding to other BIDs</i>	<i>Coding to other BIDs</i>
		<i>Decoding is found through expansion and contraction</i>	<i>Decoding is found through expansion and contraction</i>	<i>Decoding is found through expansion and contraction</i>	<i>Decoding is found through expansion and contraction</i>
	<i>Formulation of a vision</i>	<i>Formulation of a vision</i>	<i>Formulation of a vision</i>	<i>Formulation of a vision</i>	<i>Formulation of a vision</i>
	<i>Exploration and definition of project partnerships</i>	<i>Exploration and definition of project partnerships</i>	<i>Exploration and definition of project partnerships</i>	<i>Exploration and definition of project partnerships</i>	<i>Exploration and definition of project partnerships</i>
Key stakeholders	<i>Exploration and definition of project partnerships</i>				
City Centre Partnership	<i>Supporting in decoding, expansion, contraction and coding around ballots Overarching strategy for the BIDs and ensuring their cooperation</i>				
Planning and regeneration office	<i>Formulation of a vision Exploration and definition of project partnerships</i>				

FIGURE 7.18 *Planning strategies by, and in response to the BID initiatives*

Learning from the English

The first section of this chapter discussed whether or not BIDs can be regarded as civic initiatives in urban development. The counterarguments could be that BIDs are a generic and global concept, their legislation is initiated by national government, and local public authorities have a major impact on the establishment and organization of local BIDs. It is therefore hard to describe them as emerging out of local and internal drivers, with distributed control, and let alone as organized autonomously from governmental-led procedures. Arguments were also given against BIDs as actors in urban development. As the majority of BIDs engage in services such as sanitation, security, marketing, and promotion, BIDs have only a small and indirect impact on urban development. They act as advocates for their communities and merely lobby the council on matters such as beautification and commercial development, and are consulted on practicalities related to ongoing construction works.

The stories of the emergence and development of the Broad Street BID, the Retail Birmingham BID, Colmore Business District, the South Side BID, and the Jewellery Quarter BID, however, show that the opposite can be just as true. What becomes evident is that BID legislation is prescriptive about procedures, but not about local conditions and themes. This means that a BID can be as local, context-specific, home-grown and business-led as the businesses and stakeholders in the BID want it to be. BIDs emerge in networks through a process of individuation and differentiation, an organization and ordering toward actualization and materialization in space. They construct their selves along the way within a network of relationships and interactions with multiple individuating trajectories. And even though BIDs themselves are representatives of their communities, the actual emergence of a BID is non-representational as there are only specific situations in time and place where they occur. BIDs only exist when they happen, and they do not represent anything but themselves. The legislation thus enables businesses to find, and take forward, the issues they regard as important, with their own means and organization. Each BID emerges in a different area, and decides for itself how to set up its board, its focus, its activities. The various BIDs have their own branding, a local profile that reflects the needs of their own local community. So despite their coding to national legislation, all BIDs end up different and local, due to the specific issues the businesses and stakeholders want to decode from, and from the input generated in the deliberations and consultations during the various rounds a BID goes through. This local decoding has to be strong, otherwise the coding to legislation makes no sense either. And coding to others who have done the same and have been successful at it, is also very important. The BID model remains uniform, but each BID is unique due to different situational settings.

The BIDs in England, and especially Birmingham, were studied in this chapter to learn whether the conditions that were presumed to be enabling for civic initiatives, were indeed enabling for these five BIDs. These conditions were: Their maturity, assuming that BIDs mature over time and become more and more strategic; a planning style that is evolutionary and business-led and thus accustomed to establishing project-based partnerships between public and business actors; and the promotion of community-led development through the introduction of Big Society and localism.

BIDs mature over time

The first conditional advantage of the English BIDs was their maturity. Initially, the BIDs in Birmingham mostly focused on day-to-day issues, solving them step by step, and addressed maintenance, cleanliness, and safety. Over time, however, they started to address more and more strategic issues. Project partnerships

and strategic partnerships were formed, long-term issues were addressed (such as connectivity, regeneration, heritage), and visionary documents on their neighborhoods were developed by the BIDs. Even joint investment schemes were developed among the BIDs, with the council and with other key stakeholders. It is evident that BIDs indeed mature and become increasingly strategic and proactive over time. As one BID management office representative said (Interview with CBD, 2013): “At Church Street Square, we still had our training wheels on. On Colmore Square, we take these training wheels off and do it by ourselves.” In terms of the strategic relationships, the BIDs undergo an evolution. They are no longer just about making decisions on delivery, but also about setting policy. This is done not from a public or a private sector perspective, but from a civic perspective, meaning that a BID will always outsource its activities either to the public sector (paying a council to do things) or to private companies. That gives a BID a genuine plurality of procurement, in addition to the other stakeholders involved in urban development (Interview with CBD, 2013).

An evolutionary and business-led planning style

The second conditional advantage of the English BIDs is the limited role of local government in spatial development, compared to private actors. Urban development is more ad hoc and evolutionary (building on decisions already taken, rather than developments framed in advance). This makes it presumable that negotiations between the BIDs and local planning authorities can be productive. And indeed, in its 2011 version, the Big City Plan acknowledged the importance of the BIDs as key players in supporting the improvement of the city center. The Big City Plan states that future planning and regeneration will be undertaken in partnership with existing communities. For the Broad Street area, the Big City Plan envisions better connectivity and a reconfiguration of the public realm. In the Retail area, the Big City Plan wants to stimulate diversity in the retail offer, tackle the confusing navigation through the city center, and deal with the constraints of the inner ring road on the growth potentials of the city center. The Big City Plan promotes Colmore Business District as a vibrant 24-hour city and a prestige office location, and promises to revisit the pedestrian schemes in the area. For the South Side area, the Big City Plan recognizes the potential as well as the challenges for regeneration. The council has started revising the planning documents for the Jewellery Quarter (Birmingham City Council, 2011). The intentions of the BIDs are all in line with these council ambitions. If a BID can demonstrate that its ideas fit into the Big City Plan, or into something else the council is trying to do, the council will try to work together. Successful partnerships grow from there: Church Street Square, the regeneration of Hurst Street and the Rhinestone Rhinoceros, Interconnect Birmingham. Perhaps the most important and significant example of a BID-initiated strategy for urban

improvement is the Vision for Movement Strategy. This strategy grew from Broad Street, Retail Birmingham, and Colmore Business District, and fed into the Big City Plan. Also in Birmingham this is recognized as unusual, that something of this magnitude and importance for the city actually has its roots in the private sector (Interview with CBD, 2013; Interview with CC, 2013). But not all BID initiated projects are assessed positively on their alignment with the Big City Plan, though: The regeneration of Gas Street is not.

The partnerships between the BIDs and the Big City Plan are beneficial for both. They enable the BIDs to push forward their agendas and create legacy projects. But they also enable the council to push its agenda forward. BIDs generate additional funding through their levy, as well as by applying for external funds. Due to their support from the business community within the city center and their political anchoring by having councilors on their boards, the BIDs are sometimes more able to bypass internal partitioning within the councils' organization than civil servants within the organization are. Then the BIDs can be the catalyst by bringing in energy and movement to stalled processes. And from the other side, the council is able to percolate the issues addressed by the BIDs through a wider audience. They help the BIDs to apply for planning permissions, and act as a path-finder through various other council departments that need to agree on certain projects. The awareness is growing that, in order to improve the city center and to make it live up to its potential, planners and businesses need to understand each other and communicate, and the BID is an enabler for this. BIDs are mandated by their business members, and local government is mandated to consult local stakeholders by national planning legislation (Interview with RB BID, 2013).

The strategic role of BIDs require a certain attitude on the part of local planners. Besides formulating a general council vision on the city, various planners constantly engage in making connections between local communities and other stakeholders, funding, planning policy, and various council departments. The planners who fulfill this role in Birmingham have an almost continuous dialogue with the BIDs, working together on a day to day basis. These planners indicated there is no standard method for their work, and no formal way of structuring the deliberations and negotiations between the BIDs and the council. Each situation and each stakeholder are considered on its own specificity. It is an organic process, one in which public authorities have to accept that it is often non-state actors who pull the strings. The council tries to be sensitive and adaptive to what the BIDs want and need, and the culture is set on working together, not dictating to but encouraging the BIDs. In the council's words (Interview with CC, 2013): "We might work for different organizations, but really, our objections are the same.

We all want to see a vibrant city center, have investment, foot fall and everything else. So generally, fortunately, we are pulling in the same direction.” BIDs thus have the potential to achieve a range of regeneration outcomes, but there are also some threats. Some actors might reconsider their own contribution to urban regeneration if the BIDs become more and more strategic, and perhaps also resourceful. For instance, landowners who are part of a BID and expect that their other financial planning obligations will be reduced (Lloyd et al., 2003). Public retrenchments and budget cuts by local authorities might threaten the additivity of the BID, and force the BID to take over more and more originally publicly provided services.

Promotion of community-led development

The third conditional advantage of the English BIDs is the introduction of Big Society and the Localism Act. The cases in Birmingham show that the BIDs are very much in the spirit of these policies. However, their operations were already established before the Localism Act came in, and are not influenced by it at all. No coding happened toward the newly introduced Big Society and Localism Act, as that is the way in which BIDs were already operating (Interview with BS NF, 2013; Interview with BS BID, 2013; Interview with RB BID, 2013; Interview with CCP, 2013). In fact, from the BID perspective, Big Society is problematic in its operation as it solely thrives on volunteers, remains intentional and not connected to any action, and is not well thought through in terms of delivery, in contrast to the BID legislation (Interview with BS NF, 2013; Interview with BS BID, 2013, Interview with CCP, 2013). However, it is acknowledged that the BIDs have stepped into the civic realm and are in line with the localism agenda, and there seems to be a change of emphasis toward more community consultees, of which the BID is one (Interview with SS BID, 2013). Only in the Jewellery Quarter is the Localism Act applied, which is regarded by all actors as potentially powerful, but also institutionally challenging.

Summary

So, yes, BIDs mature over time, developing into proactive and strategic actors in urban regeneration, as they learn from previous experience, build capacities, and expand their networks. However, the BIDs are able to mature over time and become more strategic only because they meet other actors with whom they are able to form successful partnerships along the way. And, yes, the English planning system does create room for an evolutionary process of urban regeneration, in which partnerships and co-investments between private and public actors can be formed. These partnerships are, however, not as ad-hoc as might appear at first sight, as they all follow from carefully defined visions for future development by both the BIDs and the council. Moreover, working with

civic actors who are both community-led and strategic is also a new thing in English planning practice, and does not have many precedents in Birmingham. Also in the planning practice of Birmingham, working with BIDs demands for a new approach, in which continuous communication is crucial. It is, of course, circular reasoning to say that BIDs are enabled by BID legislation, and thus that legislative frameworks can be facilitating to civic initiatives. The introduction of the Localism Act shows, however, that legislation that does not address local issues and needs is obsolete. So yes, conditions matter, but the ability to form partnerships matters just as much.

Policy to Put Citizens in the Lead: The Case of Almere, the Netherlands

When I first started thinking about this research project in 2008, many people pointed me in the direction of the city of Almere. There, experiments were undertaken with alternative ways of urban development. The municipality stimulated private and collective commissioning by selling plots to individual households, and explored strategies for organic area development in which the initiatives of end users, and new coalitions between civic and private stakeholders, would lead the development process. An important stimulant for these experiments came from Adri Duivesteijn, alderman for Urban Development in Almere in 2006–13, and also the person who, as a member of the Dutch House of Representatives, had introduced the Duivesteijn Resolution, part of the national policy for private commissioning in housing (see Chapter 6). In the spring of 2008, I attended a conference in Almere called “The Self-Organizing City: Experiences and experiments,” organized by Stichting sLIM. During this conference, Juval Portugali lectured on “Theories of Self-Organization and the City.” Jacqueline Tellinga (City of Almere) and Floris Alkemade (OMA) reflected on the design and experiences of the Homeruskwartier, a neighborhood in Almere Poort earmarked for development by mostly private commissioning. A year later, in the spring of 2009, I attended a conference in Almere called “How “makeable” is a socially sustainable society?”, organized by Stichting SEV (see also Chapter 6) and the municipality of Almere. During this conference, the question was addressed what new management principles would fit a society in which citizens would have more influence and developers would take more responsibility for sustainable urban development. Besides theoretical reflections, during this conference various housing corporations presented their visions for organic area development in Almere Oosterwold.

Despite these interesting and inspiring conferences, I had some reservations and second thoughts about addressing Almere in my research. In the article Boonstra and Boelens (2011), I expressed these doubts by framing the experiments for organic growth in Almere as “far-reaching governmental window dressing” for self-organization (p. 116), as private or collective commissioning took place only within the confines of a well-designed master plan and in some cases even with governmental funding. In my view, few of these developments were based on the intrinsic collective motivations so important for civic initiatives. For years, I overlooked Almere, focused as I was on exploring the theories of self-organization and processes of becoming, and conducting case study research in England and Denmark.

Things took a different turn, though, when I was invited to give a lecture at the annual Dutch planning conference called Dag van de Ruimte (Day of Space) in November 2011. I spoke about my first theoretical findings and emphasized the difference between participatory planning and self-organized civic initiatives, using examples from the cases in Denmark and England I had just visited. Adri Duivesteijn was in the audience, and after I had finished my talk, he expressed his enthusiasm and asked me to tell the same story in Almere. This was the start of a number of lectures I gave to municipal employees, workshops I participated in, and dinners I attended to brainstorm about the transitions in the urban development of Almere. By the end of 2012, the municipality of Almere and TNO had agreed to continue the research on civic initiatives in urban development in Almere as well.

On the one hand, the municipality of Almere wanted to have its experiences of citizen initiatives scientifically consolidated. On the other hand, the interactions between small-scale and relatively autonomous initiatives and the institutional world of the municipality were not without their challenges. Together, Almere and TNO defined the research question: How do citizens’ initiatives and the municipal organization interact, and what lessons and improvements can be learned from the Almere experiences? The goal was to review current practices in Almere, in order to extract lessons on how the municipality could further develop its capacities in dealing with and stimulating civic initiatives productively. The research was largely conducted in the spring and summer of 2013, and was finalized and presented in early 2014. It contained the analyses of four civic initiatives and two municipally-led invitation strategies for civic initiatives, and a workshop in which initiators and municipal employees reflected on the findings and gave recommendations for improving the interactions between municipality and civic initiatives. The results of the research were published in the TNO report “Leren van zelforganisatie in Almere” (Boonstra, B., Vogel, R.

& Slob, A., 2014) and a paper presented at the Plandag conference 2014 “Van organisch ontwikkelen naar organisch organiseren – lessen over zelforganisatie uit Almere” (idem.).

This chapter is organized as follows. First, an elaboration is given on the history of Almere – its development and planning, and the development of planning thought in Almere. This explains why Almere is indeed an interesting case to study civic initiatives. The description is slightly different from the other cases in the previous chapters, as the cases of Almere focus more on an administrative entity than on a general tradition or legal framework. In the second part of this chapter, four civic initiatives in Almere are described and analyzed. The third part concludes and reflects on the case findings and articulates lessons from Almere for planning strategies in an age of active citizenship.

1

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PLANNING AND PLANNING IDEAS OF ALMERE

Almere is a “new” town in the most literal sense. According to Dirk Frieling, one of the founding urban designers of Almere, new towns meet the following criteria: They have a founder, a predefined land use plan, and are governed as an autonomous city (Frieling, 2007). While comparing the history of Almere to that of other new towns over the world, Michelle Provoost (2011) added to this definition that new towns are conceived, planned, and designed as a new city, in an intentional (and usually governmental-led) planning act over a relatively short period of time. New towns are often characterized by a pioneering spirit, excitement, and experiment as standing traditions are absent. The founders of new towns often believe that their governmental policies can effect social change, and strong ideals are driving them forward (ibid.). This section presents a short history of the planning and planning thought in Almere to illustrate how these governmental founders, the governance of the city, land use plans and neighborhood designs, ideals, and experiments for social change, evolved over time. This short history shows how the trajectory of planning and planning thought in Almere is full of ambiguities, which makes it an interesting set of cases to explore planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship.

New land, new town

Foundations for Almere were laid, quite literally, with the reclamation of the polder called Southern Flevoland, between 1959 and 1967. This polder was the last in a series of land reclamations in the Zuyder Zee – an undertaking started in 1916 following a plan by engineer Lely of 1891. The original aim of this huge land reclamation project was to maximize the country's agricultural food production, create more protection from floods, create jobs (during the 1920s and 1930s), and stimulate economic growth (during the post-World War II reconstruction years of the 1940s and 1950s). The new land came under ownership of the national government, and construction and development came under the authority of the Department of the IJsselmeer Polders (*Rijksdienst IJsselmeerpolders; RIJP*), which was established in 1942 (Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 2003). The policy was that after new development, the RIJP would transfer all buildings and land to tenants, owners, new local authorities, water boards, and other organizations (Licher, 2011). The northern Flevo Polder was to be largely devoted to agricultural use, and only one city was planned (Lelystad). It would have 100,000 inhabitants and be surrounded by several smaller agricultural cores. These polders were seen and developed as rather autonomous areas (Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 2003). This, however, changed when in the post-war years the need for agricultural land was replaced by a need to accommodate new housing and the spread of urbanization (Weyers, 2011).

The actual development of Almere started in the late 1960s, when the RIJP was commissioned to develop a second city in the IJsselmeer polders, close to Amsterdam and with a growth potential of 250,000 inhabitants. The Almere Project Office was established and commenced with a framework for urban development (Van der Velden, 2011). This coincided with and was directly related to the development of the 2nd (1966) and 3rd (1974) National Memorandum for Spatial Development and the National Memorandum for Housing (1972). These memorandums were aimed at spreading urban growth over the Netherlands, to relieve pressure on the major cities. New nuclei and existing cities were to accommodate "concentrated de-concentration." Almere was to be such a nucleus, too. According to the planning insights of the time, and in order to be able to accommodate future growth without knowing the place exactly, a framework was set for a poly-nuclear urban region, consisting of a number of settlements with no specific hierarchy. This poly-nuclear framework, laid out in the 1960s, defined Almere Haven as the start of the urbanization, to be extended toward Almere Stad, Almere Buiten, Almere Oost, etc. This framework for the growth of Almere is still in use today (Brouwer, 1997; Wagenaar, 2011; Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 1999; Van der Velden, 2011).

The development of Almere took off in 1975 at a rate of approximately 3,000 houses and 6,000–7,000 residents a year. A true professional planning machine was gaining steam, all according to the guiding “Almere Development Model.” For every new urban district, first a framework vision was set out, defining the conditions for development. Secondly, the framework was further detailed in plans for individual neighborhoods, consisting of 1,500–3,000 new houses. Plans included a definition of the urban program (houses, green areas, parking areas), the parceling of land, and a traffic and infrastructure plan (Van der Velden, 2011). As could be expected in a new town, the first neighborhoods of Almere Haven incorporated the latest views on planning and design, fulfilling all contemporary demands. As the “neighborhood” was an important focal point in urban planning of the 1970s, again a poly-nuclear structure was laid out, with people living together in small, low-rise neighborhoods, around small-scale, child-friendly and traffic-calmed public domains, surrounded by green areas, with public amenities and shops within walking distance. This led to the famous parcelations of the time, also known as “cauliflower neighborhoods” as their urban plans seen from above resembled this vegetable. The neighborhoods incorporated a large amount of social housing, as well as a differentiated residential environment with housing that was as large, spacious, and cheap as possible (Wagenaar, 2011; Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 1999; 2003; Weyers, 2011). Self-determination and participation were important aspects: People were stimulated to make adjustments to their own homes, and to participate in social and cultural activities in the neighborhood centers (Wagenaar, 2011).

This demarcated the first round of development of Almere. The town grew from around 50 inhabitants in 1975, to approximately 40,000 in 1985. According to the agreement that all developed land was to be handed over to land owners or new public authorities, and as political parties and societal organizations gradually asked for more influence in the growing city of Almere, in 1984 the municipality of Almere was established. The RIJP was abolished, after it had agreed with the national government on the future development of Almere and a take-over of the personnel of the RIJP. With well-equipped personnel and a well-negotiated vision for future development with the national government, the municipality of Almere now stood on its own feet (Licher, 2011).

Continuing growth

Meanwhile, the development of Almere Haven was coming to an end, and the development of Almere continued in Almere Stad West (1980s), Almere Stad Oost (1990s), and Almere Buiten (1990s and early 2000s). During the 1980s, however, an important deviation from the trend of poly-nuclear spread of urbanization took

place as the 4th National Memorandum of Spatial Development (1988) declared its final end. Instead, the “Compact City” policy was introduced: The focus from now on should be on the economic development of existing cities, especially within the Randstad (the urban conurbation in the west of the country), and urbanization was to take place in close proximity to existing urban centers. Almere was no longer an intended nucleus for concentrated de-concentration, but was now able to benefit from its proximity to Amsterdam as part of the Randstad. In 1990, in addition to the 4th Memorandum (VINEX), arrangements were made for a further growth of Almere of again 3,000 houses a year (Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 2003; Wagenaar, 2011).

The now independent municipality of Almere was able to accommodate this growth with its own structure plan and with the use of its own network of developers and housing corporations (Licher, 2011). In contrast to the earlier developments in which social visions and social housing prevailed, this period of urbanization was largely dominated by a market-driven approach. Most new houses became owner-occupied, with more emphasis on individual home-ownership than on community (Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 1999). The urban design of the neighborhoods also differed significantly from the earlier periods. In response to the perceived chaos and disorientation of the “cauliflower” neighborhoods, a much more linear network of streets and zoning plans was laid out, following the straight and functional lines of the underlying polder (idem., 1999; 2003). This functional urban plan did occasionally leave room for architectural experiments, including some outstanding areas of individually designed and privately commissioned houses (such as *De Fantasie* (The Fantasy)) (Van der Velden, 2011). Almere grew from 40,000 inhabitant in 1985, to 143,000 in 2000. The conception of Almere as part of the Randstad, and thus an area for further urban growth, persisted through the following 5th National Memorandum (2001, but never approved), the Memorandum on Space (2004), and the Memorandum Randstad 2040 (2008) (Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 2003; Wagenaar, 2011). This demarcated the second round in the development of Almere.

Introducing private commissioning

From the mid-2000s, a different sound started to come from Almere. Already some critique was given on the city’s ongoing expansion and growth, while the level of facilities, amenities, and connectivity remained low (Van der Cammen & De Klerk, 2003; Weyers, 2011). From 2004 onward, policy documents in Almere started articulating the desire to become, and the concerns of becoming, an actual “big city” with all the accompanying features and challenges (Reijndorp,

2007). The construction of a new city center in 2006 with more urban functions and amenities can be seen as the end of this period of growth and a transition to a new phase as an “actual” big city (Berg et al., 2007).

But there was also increasing criticism about the uniformity of the housing stock built during the years of the market approach, and about the lack of involvement of residents in their living environments. The first experiments with private commissioning took place during the early 2000s in the form of a building exposition (*Het (ge)Wilde Wonen* – The Wanted Wild Living (translation by author)) in the Eilandenbuurt and the Stripheldenbuurt in Almere Buiten. Until then, private commissioning had been a mere exception to the massive urban development of Almere. In 2006, a new council, which included Adri Duivesteijn, was established. This council took private commissioning very seriously: It declared that it had to become the normal way of urban development, and replace urbanization led by professional and commercial developers and the large-scale production of houses. As a result of this political decision, this new approach became increasingly backed up by municipal policy and instruments. Almere was able to do so as the municipality was still the major land owner and could thus exert firm control over future developments (Schilders, 2010).

In 2006, a start was made with an experimentation program for private commissioning and new forms of urban development, called *Ikbouwmijnhuisin-Almere* (I build my home in Almere), to be first tested in the development of Noorderplassen West, and secondly in the must larger development of Almere Poort, especially in the Homeruskwartier. The goal was to create more diversity in the housing stock, a higher quality of life, and increased place attachment (Duivesteijn, 2010). The approach started with a step-by-step site preparation and the sale of plots to individual households. Future inhabitants could then develop their houses according to a framework defining the rules for each individual plot. *De Kavelwinkel* (Plot Shop) was opened in 2007, an official counter in the town hall where information on all available plots could be retrieved in order to better serve potential private commissioners. In the Eilandenbuurt and Almere Poort, additional communal ownership and maintenance of the inner courtyards of the building blocks, and parts of the public spaces, was prescribed (Nio, 2007). In 2008, the Almere Principles were presented, as general guidelines for the future sustainable development and policy for the city. One of the seven principles stated that “citizens are the driving force in making and maintaining the city, and therefore we [the municipality] will full-heartily support them in realizing their potentials” (Gemeente Almere, 2008b). In 2008, the IBBA program (*IkbouwbetaalbaarinAlmere* – I build affordable in Almere) was introduced to support private commissioning (including collective private commissioning) by

less well-off groups within society. The program, in partnership with Rabobank and housing cooperation the Alliantie, provides financial support and back-up for individuals and commissioning groups who cannot get a full mortgage due to their salary. In 2009 (*Woonvisie Almere 2.0* and *Structuurplan Almere 2.0*) and 2010 (Multi-annual program for private commissioning), housing policy documents were approved by the city council to further consolidate private commissioning as the usual way of development in Almere. The population of Almere grew from 143,000 in 2000, to 191,000 in 2010.

Toward “organic growth”

In 2010, a new administration period began, with more or less the same councilors. Policy on private commissioning continued in all developing neighborhoods. As Almere remained the largest urbanization area of the Randstad, in 2010 the municipality of Almere and the national government agreed on another large extension toward 350,000 inhabitants in 2030: 60,000 new houses to be built in the new neighborhoods of Almere Pampus (northwest) and Almere Oosterwold (east). For the municipality, this major extension meant more economic growth, more jobs, more facilities, more amenities, and better connectivity, partly funded by the development (and sale) of still state-owned land (Weyers, 2011). However, the financial crisis had also effected Almere, its growth, and its housing market. These new economic conditions forced both the state and the municipality to slow down and to postpone several new extensions. For the development of Almere Oosterwold, experiments were taken with a planning approach called “organic area development.”

Until then, the separate cores of Almere had been based on a rather detailed blueprint. This was also the case in Almere Poort, where the land-use and street plans were quite precisely designed. Apart from the sale of individual plots, the development of Almere Poort was still organized according to a regular planning process, from development to maintenance, together with housing corporations and building contractors. The experiment of organic development in Almere Oosterwold, and more specifically the Nobelhorst, is aimed at creating a neighborhood within the original poly-nuclear model, that is build up out of diverse initiatives from end users, new coalitions among stakeholders for social, and environmentally sustainable development (RRAAM, 2012). The approach combines a gradual development at a non-predetermined rate and without a predetermined end result, with private commissioning, civic initiatives, and involvement in the design and maintenance of the public domain (Schilders, 2010; Van der Velden, 2011). Residents become part of a cooperative, consisting of approximately 300 households, and together they can choose from a range

of street profiles, and decide on the programming of a communal plot for social activities (RRAAM, 2012). In this way, a city district is built up by the residents themselves. Instead of detailed designs that dictate how the space is to be filled, this planning approach only sets out rules that will guide the future development in a certain direction. In this way, it is hoped that the development will be able to accommodate unexpected trends (Schilders, 2010).

This organic development strategy, however, in 2013, still mostly existed on paper, although the first inhabitants arrived in 2012. The framework set by the initiating housing corporation and municipality enables them to deploy common activities, and gradually take over the leading role in the development and maintenance of the neighborhood. In this way, the organic development strategy of Nobelhorst is enabling civic initiatives, although there are rules, frameworks, and guidelines. Of the plots, 30% are sold to individually commissioning households; the remainder are co-commissioned under the supervision of the housing corporation. Membership of the corporation is compulsory for new inhabitants (though it can be terminated soon after moving in), and a neighborhood has a maximum of 300 households and geographical demarcations. Various levels of participation in the development of public domain are defined beforehand: Enclosed neighborhood spaces have a high level of participation, and more public areas, and connecting roads, have a low level of participation. Budgets for the design and maintenance of public domains are limited (though a corporation can decide to add private money), and are checked each year by the municipality on their quality (RRAAM, 2011). So also the Nobelhorst is inclusive in process, content, and place. Time will tell whether this experimental framework for urban development is successful.

Meanwhile, increasing attention was paid to active citizenship, also in the already existing neighborhoods. 2011 saw the launch of the program *Zelf Bedacht Zelf Gedaan* (Self-invented, Self-done), the municipality's participatory budgeting program aimed at creating social cohesion. In this program, decisions on budgeting are made by an independent civic committee that is coached and advised, but not supervised, by the municipality (Gemeente Almere, 2011). The program invites people to take initiatives and aims at facilitating them, but sets out clear guidelines, too: The overall goal of an initiative must be social cohesion, an initiative may not conflict with municipal policy, an initiative can only take place in certain neighborhoods, and the procedures to follow are defined beforehand. Although the program is enabling in its intentions, it is still inclusive in content, place, and process, and faces the same challenges as participatory budgeting discussed in Chapter 1. Indeed, the municipality indicated it had a hard time finding and activating people to actually take initiatives and

spend the budget. However, whereas the municipality plays a mere advisory role, and does accept that sometimes initiatives do not entirely fit their visions for a certain neighborhood. The representative group of residents that decides which initiatives to honor, can be much more decisive.

Summary

New towns, as they are conceived, planned, and designed by clearly identifiable actors in short periods of time (Provoost, 2011), are the children of their time: New planning ideals and thoughts are directly reflected in the city layouts. Looking back at the development of Almere, which started in the 1970s and is still evolving, all major themes in planning, also discussed in the short history of participatory planning in Chapter 1, are present: Community and neighborhood development in the 1970s, the market-based approach of the 1980s and 1990s, and since the 2000s more and more attention paid to active citizenship, private commissioning, and organic area development. This last theme, however, leads to a strong ambiguity. On one hand, a new town like Almere is shaped by its governmental founders, and its development is extremely governmental-led, following a non-adjustable spatial planning framework that is strongly intertwined with national spatial policies. This has also created a rather inactive population with little enthusiasm for active citizenship and a biding attitude toward government. Moreover, the continuous development of new neighborhoods has created a culture of high internal migration with little place attachment, and neither home-ownership nor private commissioning has created much enthusiasm for collectivity (Berg et al., 2007; Nio, 2007). On the other hand, over time, the governance landscape of spatial planning has changed significantly, with the debate on active citizenship growing stronger and stronger. As Almere is strong in incorporating the latest views on planning and in its willingness to experiment, its innovative planning approaches over the last decade seem to be well synchronized with these latest trends. The Almere Principles and, for instance, the architectural manifestation “Making Almere” (2012/13) and the exhibition “Bewoners aan het roer” (Inhabitants in Control) (2012) paid special attention to residents who initiated social and cultural activities, and to the self-maintenance of public green areas.

However, the shift from being a municipality oriented toward control, regulation, and large-scale development, to being a municipality oriented toward facilitation and acceptance, is a difficult transition to make. It requires new working methods that are not very easy to accommodate (Schilders, 2010; Licher 2011). Almere’s “addiction to plans” that couples experiment with a belief in utopias and an engineered society, creates a tendency to capture experiment in newly defined

models of urbanization, leaving little room for the spontaneity that is so characteristic of active citizenship (Berg et al., 2007). In response to the presentation of plans for Almere Oosterwold, Jaap Jan Berg (2007), for instance, commented that:

All of the designs submitted illustrate that effective urban planning remains based and dependent on direction, structure, and regulations. The designs clearly show that the greatest danger to the mission of Ikbouwmijshuisin-Almere lies perhaps not in a lack of public interest, but in the early erosion of the original concept. The insistent and symptomatic recourse to top-down management undermines the concept of bottom-up urban planning before it has even been implemented.

And indeed, what looks organic might just as well be initiated by only a few stakeholders. In the development of Almere Poort for instance, only a few houses have been commissioned by individual households. Most of the development has been co-commissioning: Regular developers or housing corporations who gave future owners mere influence over their interiors.

The tension between the focus on control and experiment with spontaneity is also visible in the new Almere Model for Development, which states that even though initiatives for urban development may come from either professional private and public actors, individual or groups of inhabitants, no development process may start without a spatial, planning, legal, and financial argumentation (Gemeente Almere, 2010). The municipal publication *Guidance and Letting Go* speaks about setting out frameworks that differentiate areas where change is or is not allowed, and what core values should be protected. But it also speaks about deviating from the rules when a certain development or initiative clearly contributes to the quality of a certain area, or when there is sufficient support among residents for the initiative (Borkent & Pierik, 2013). The *Invitation Planning Manifesto* (Gemeente Almere, 2012a) states that municipal organizations often still aim at controlling development, but that for “invitation planning” (which is a slightly different but overlapping approach like organic area development), only a general vision is necessary. Detailing, planning, and designing can wait until initiatives are actually taken. The Manifesto acknowledges that, in order to become a true facilitating government, the municipality needs to become part of the evolving networks within society, even though this is very far away from the usual municipal ways of working.

The tension and ambiguous relationship between the willingness to experiment and facilitate active citizenship and civic initiatives on one hand, and the tendency to control, regulate, and fix in procedures on the other hand, makes

Almere an interesting case study area to question what planning strategies fit an age of active citizenship. Over the years, the governmental-led development of Almere has, time and again, provided a safe playground for those who would like to develop experimental planning concepts. However, the abovementioned examples of organic area development and invitation strategies for civic initiatives remain largely within the confines of existing governmental procedures, just like participatory planning did. This makes Almere an outstanding example, or even amplification, of the tension discussed in Chapter 1: A well-organized governmental-led planning practice, with the intention to open up toward active citizenship and civic initiatives, that do not necessarily fit governmental procedures because they are self-organized. The question for the set of cases in Almere is therefore: Do the conditions created by local government to stimulate active citizenship indeed help the civic initiatives forward? Apart from the usual research questions (What conditions gave rise to the civic initiatives studied in Almere, how did they gain robustness and resilience, and what planning strategies were developed in, and in response to the civic initiatives studied in Almere?), attention is paid to the dilemmas local government faces when dealing with civic initiatives, and the lessons that can be learned from Almere.

2

FOUR CIVIC INITIATIVES

Four civic initiatives were traced. They were chosen in deliberation with the municipality of Almere, because they embody a broad spectrum of themes and thus increased the chance that a wide range of conditions, trajectories, and planning strategies would be found. The initiatives took place in existing and newly developed neighborhoods, and were either focused on collective housing, entrepreneurs, or public space. The initiatives were: *Villa Corsini*, *Corsini Due*, and *Corsini3* (together *The Corsinies*), the *City Sjopping Mol*, *Experiment Zelfbeheer Hoekwierde* (Hoekwierde Self-Management Experiment), and *Vereniging Vrienden van het Cascadepark* (Association of Friends of Cascade Park). For each initiative, interviews were held with the initiators and with a key person from the municipality. In addition to the interviews, documentation such as publications, brochures, websites, etc. was used in accordance with multiple case study analysis (see Chapter 5). The trajectories of the initiatives were then plotted on the diagram of processes of becoming (see Chapters 4 and 5). From there, reflections on the research questions could be given (see section 3 of this chapter).

The Corsinies

The Corsinies were three consecutive initiatives for collective private commissioning by young first-time buyers. The first project, Villa Corsini, was initiated in 2004, and materialized in Almere Waterwijk in 2007 as a building accommodating 16 two-room apartments. The future residents were leading in the planning and design process. When finished, they decided to commercialize their experiences and start a consultancy firm for collective commissioning, 3CPO. As part of their policy to stimulate collective private commissioning, the municipality invited 3CPO to be partner in the development of Almere Poort. Between 2010 and 2012, Corsini Due materialized as 43 apartments, spread over two buildings in the Homeruskwartier. The materialization of Corsini3 (40 starters' apartments spread over two buildings in the European quarter) was started in 2013. The process of the Corsinies thus consisted of two rounds: The round of Villa Corsini (2004-2007) and that of 3CPO, Corsini Due, and Corsini3 (2007-2013).

Villa Corsini (2004-2007)

The first round for the Corsinies began in 2004 when Van Diepen Adviseurs, a consultancy firm specialized in collective private commissioning, wrote a proposal for a collective commissioning project targeting young first-time buyers. Van Diepen Adviseurs was established in 2001, in response to the "People Desire Housing" Memorandum (see Chapter 6) and the municipal policy in Almere to stimulate private commissioning (Website Van Diepen Adviseurs, 2014). With the Corsini initiative, Van Diepen also responded to the municipal policy to build houses for higher educated youngsters (since 2003), and the funding program set out by the municipality and the province of Flevoland to stimulate collective private commissioning (since 2002) (Interview with 3CPO, 2013; Interview with Gemeente Almere A, 2013). During this round, the distinction between **decoding** and **coding** was not that sharp: The initiative of Van Diepen coded to new municipal, provincial, and national policy, policy that aimed at decoding from traditional development schemes. Moreover, it soon became evident that collective private commissioning required the municipality to work in entirely new ways: Instead of assessing one plan for a number of houses, the municipal licensing department now had to assess a number of plans for only one house (Interview with Gemeente Almere A, 2013). New codes themselves thus required decoding.

Also **expansion** and **contraction** were strongly intertwined. Villa Corsini started with a call for participants, to which a handful of people responded (expansion). Next, an legal association was established with the goal to build Villa Corsini (contraction) (website IkbouwmijnhuisinAlmere, 2007). Four architects were asked to submit tenders (expansion). BDG Architects were chosen because they

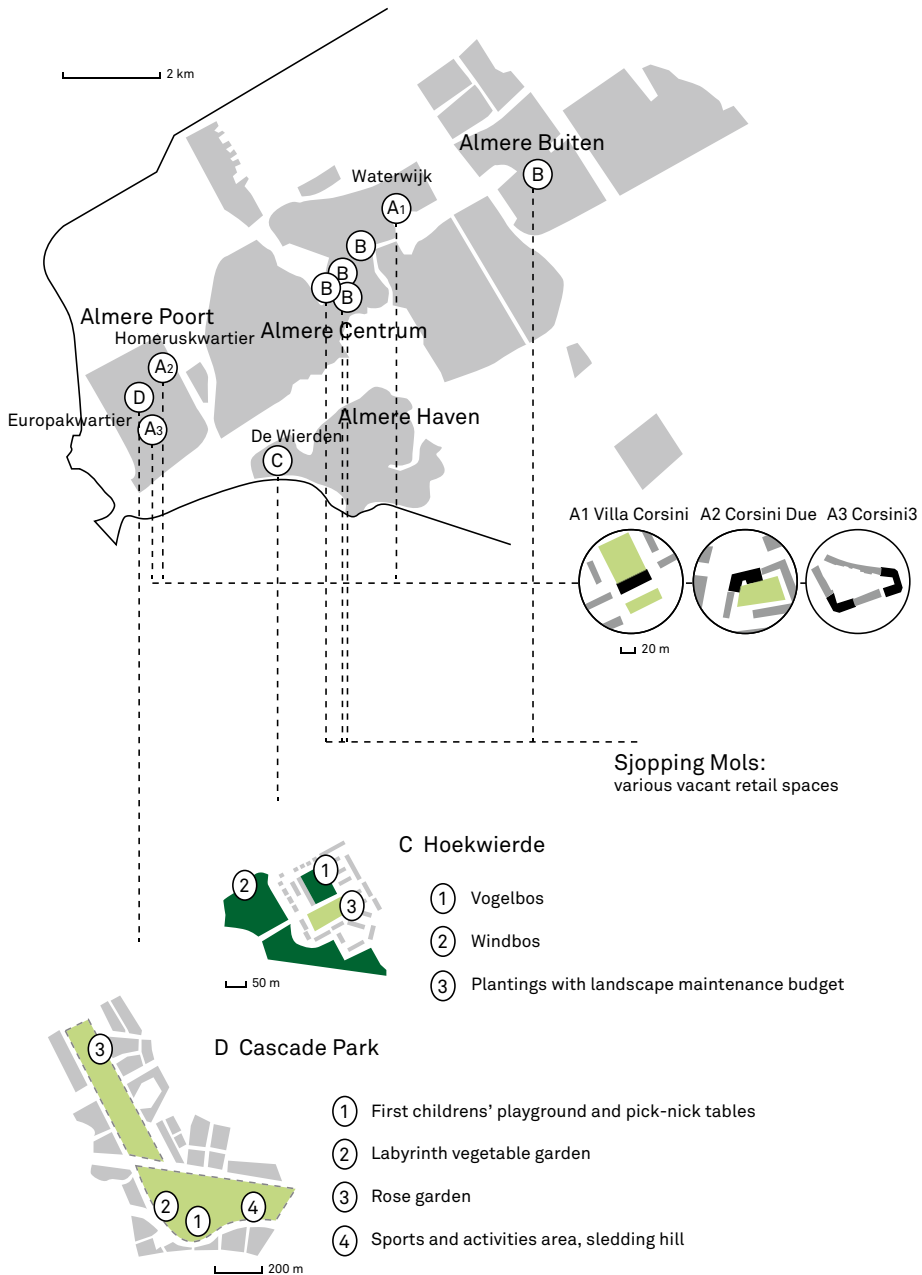


FIGURE 8.1 Overview of the civic initiatives in Almere, the Netherlands

already had some experience with collective private commissioning. Moreover, their concept of the Italian villa appealed to the participants (contraction). According to the funding program, the municipality asked groups to submit their plans, and consequently assessed what the feasibility of the project and a potential site could be (Interview with Gemeente Almere A, 2013). For Villa Corsini, three sites were suggested by the municipality (expansion). Just less than two years later, the final site was chosen in Waterwijk, as here the local legal plan seemed to provide the best conditions (contraction) (Almere Vandaag, July 27, 2007, interview 3CPO, 2013). As soon as the site was chosen, the involvement of the municipality's housing department ceased (Interview with Gemeente Almere A, 2013).

From that moment on, **coding** took place to regular building procedures and the local legal plan (Interview with Gemeente Almere A, 2013). This is when things turned problematic. When the building application was submitted, it appeared that the design of the building did not fit the codes of the local legal plan after all. This evoked new **contraction**. The overall building had to become smaller and lower, building costs rose, and Van Diepen Advisors was forced to withdraw. The participants, however, had already committed themselves financially to the project and decided to continue without professional process management. During this phase, also new **expansion** took place, as participants looked for financial expertise in their personal networks and for additional participants to increase the feasibility of the project (Interview with 3CPO, 2013).

Throughout the first round, the initiative of Villa Corsini **coded** to the funding program led by the municipality and province, as well as to regular building procedures and the local legal plan. In July 2007, the project had materialized and the residents were finally able to move in. Despite all their coding, the feeling of being a pioneer, and thus of **decoding** from usual ways of buying a house, was still an important driver for the participants (Website IkbouwmijnhuisinAlmere, 2007; Interview with 3CPO, 2013).

3CPO, Corsini Due and Corsini3 (2007-2013)

Building upon their experience, the two residents who had led the process of Villa Corsini, decided they might as well deploy their experiences and skills professionally, and establish their own consultancy firm for collective private commissioning (Interview with 3CPO, 2013). Meanwhile, a whole range of new working methods and instruments to stimulate and support private commissioning had become available in the municipality of Almere. Moreover, the municipality had learned from its earlier experiences that a commissioning group is self-organizing, and thus could not be modeled according to an ideal size or



FIGURE 8.2 *Villa Corsini*



FIGURE 8.3 *Corsini Due*

composition. Therefore, the awareness had grown that policies should focus not on defining the ideal project, but on facilitating existing initiatives (Interview with Gemeente Almere A, 2013). Now, the municipality asked collective private commissioning groups to submit their plans while still in the form of sketches, so that negotiations between the municipality and the initiative could take place before the official building and planning permit procedures would start, in order to prevent any legal problems (Interview with 3CPO, 2013).

Making use of the new awareness, working methods, and instruments, 3CPO intended to start a new collective private commissioning project right after the completion of Villa Corsini. The municipality, however, was just setting up the IbbA support schemes, and asked 3CPO to wait until it could make use of that program as well. This program provided additional funding for process consultancy (like 3CPO provides) and membership recruitment (Interview with Gemeente Almere A, 2013). After a few years, the municipality asked 3CPO to start a project for a difficult corner plot destined for collective private commissioning in Almere Poort (Interview with 3CPO, 2013). The recently created new codes enabled 3CPO to follow through with their projects Corsini Due (2010) and Corsini3 (2013).

When the project for Corsini Due was started, first **expansion** happened as 3CPO presented itself pro-actively at events around private commissioning organized by the municipality, in order to recruit new members and new projects (Interview with Gemeente Almere A, 2013). 3CPO took forward the negotiations on behalf of the commissioning group with the various municipal departments (mainly IbbA and Land Management), based on information provided by the *Kavelwinkel* (Plot Shop) and explored the possibilities for the project (Interview with 3CPO, 2013). But now the focus of the process was mostly on **contraction**, following the approach developed by 3CPO from their Villa Corsini experience. First, the project was started with a small group, addressing key questions about time planning, site, costs, and architecture. When these key questions had been answered, more members were recruited to start a legal building association as the official commissioner. Together with IbbA, a feasibility study was carried out and an action plan was written. The earlier cooperation with BDG Architects in Villa Corsini was continued to Corsini Due and Corsini3. The housing association De Key, TRIP Notaries, Van der Linden Real Estate, and Rabobank Almere also became partners. De Key agreed to purchase 30% of the apartments in Corsini Due as social housing, so that with only 70% of the apartments sold, building activities could already begin, as mortgages had to be arranged before the land could be purchased. As soon as a new member joined the building association Corsini Due, an apartment reservation was made, and a financial contribution

The Corsinies

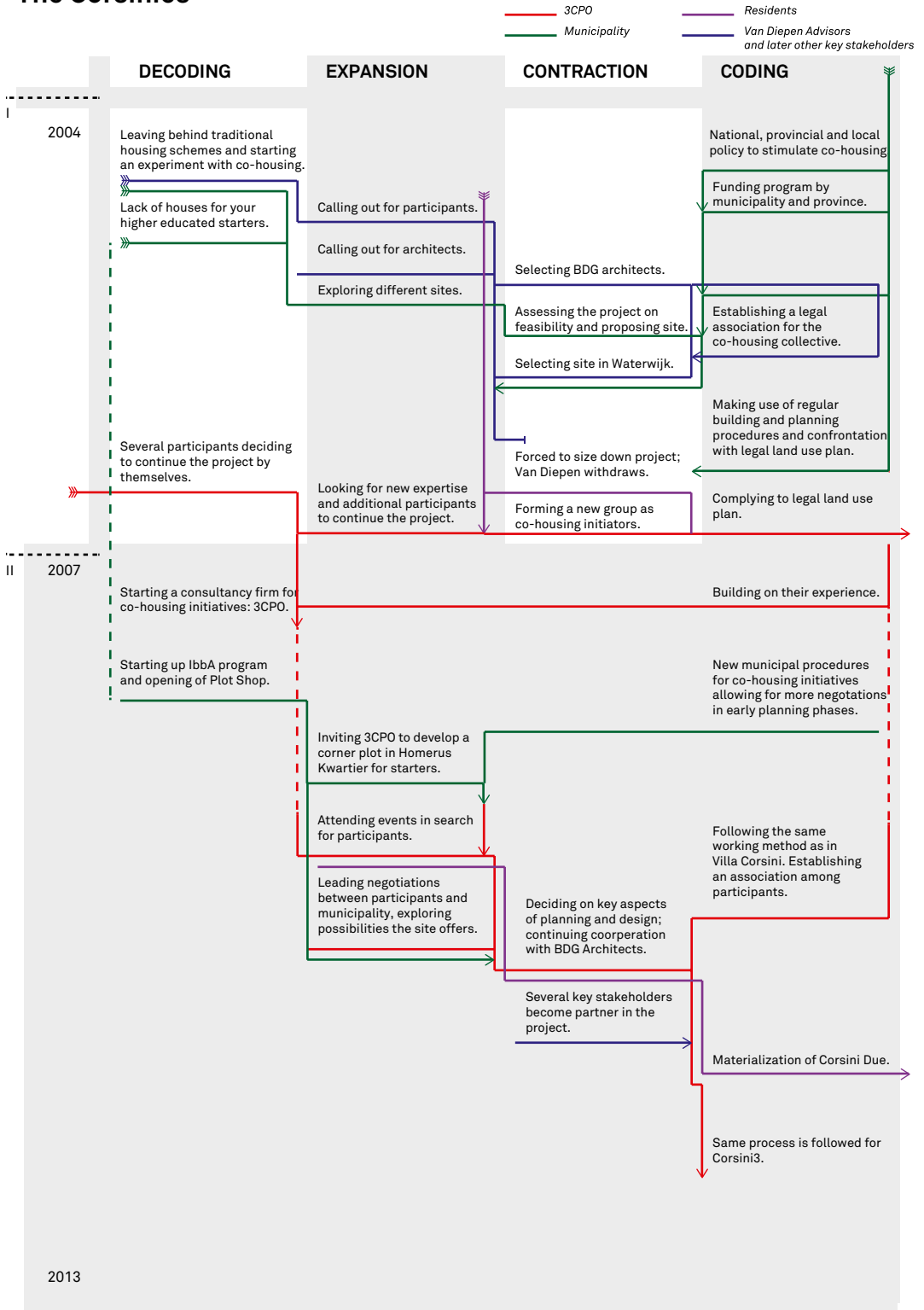


FIGURE 8.4 The becoming of the Corsinies

had to be given in order to pre-finance construction costs. Concerning the apartments, each participant could choose from six types, each of a different size, and could decide on the location of inner walls, and the position and size of balconies. Exterior walls and the location of wet cells were determined (3CPO, 2009). For Corsini Due, a group was fairly quickly established and in the end some people had to be rejected. Apart from negotiating with the municipality and others on behalf of the commissioning group, 3CPO also assisted the association's board in communicating with its members, preparing membership meetings, and decision making (Interview with 3CPO, 2013).

The 43 apartments of Corsini Due materialized in July 2012. The working method of 3CPO, which mostly consisted of contraction and coding, had now also become a code for 3CPO in setting up a collective private commissioning project. The same approach was used for the 40 apartments of Corsini3 in the Europakwartier, for which building activities started in 2013 (Interview with 3CPO, 2013).

Trajectories

The main trajectory in the case of the Corsinies is that of 3CPO. This trajectory was set in motion by the simultaneous decoding and coding by the municipality and Van Diepen Adviseurs. Their trajectories came together and through expansion and contraction, associated with a group of future inhabitants of Villa Corsini and BDG Architects. The municipal Private Commissioning department played an important role in this movement, as it helped to find a site and provided funding for process management. A controversy occurred at coding, when the local legal plan appeared to be inconsistent with the original design for Villa Corsini, leading to Van Diepen Adviseurs leaving the association. This was not, however, because it was a collectively privately commissioned project, but due to insufficient reading of the planning regulations beforehand. Nevertheless, the project materialized, mostly because the initiating residents felt inclined to see the project through to the end. From there, a new trajectory emerged, that of 3CPO, formulating its experiences with the Villa Corsini trajectory into a standard approach for collective private commissioning. From this coding, new partnerships for Corsini Due and Corsini3 were formed. The newly established municipal instruments for private commissioning played an important role, as new sites were sought together with the IbbA program and the Kavelwinkel. When initiating new projects, 3CPO first associated with the municipality for a plot (expansion, contraction, coding), and then set up a preliminary architectural scheme and checked all the legal building issues (contraction, coding). Only when this was all set, did 3CPO expand toward participants and their wishes. When a group of participants was found, 3CPO established an association of future residents. 3CPO took the initiative, but transferred leadership and responsibility to the

legal association of future residents as soon as this legal association had been established. When the project was finished, 3CPO was no longer involved.

The Sjopping Mol

The Sjopping Mol was an initiative of Stichting Art Culture (Art Culture Foundation) aimed at providing a platform for creative entrepreneurs in Almere. It started with a festival (Start Culture Festival) in 2010 (the first round), and continued with the organization of two temporary Sjopping Mols in vacant buildings in 2010 and 2011 (second round), the organization of two temporary City Sjopping Mols in vacant shops in the city center of Almere in 2011 and 2012 (third round), and again a Sjopping Mol in 2014 in the local shopping center of Almere Buiten (fourth round). The foundation also developed a range of other cultural projects, sometimes in partnership with the municipality and sometimes on its own.

Start Culture Festival (January-June 2010)

The initiator of Stichting Art Culture lived in an apartment building that also housed mentally challenged people. He was invited to visit a workshop where these people worked, and being a creative entrepreneur himself, he became inspired and came up with the idea for a local market, to connect these workshops to other young entrepreneurs living in the apartment building. The **decoding** during this round thus concerned the lack of connectivity between these groups. In **expansion**, The Schoor Welfare Authority, which organized activities in the common room of the apartment building, became interested as well. The idea of a market grew into a festival (Start Culture Festival). Volunteers for the festival were found, and Triade (welfare work), Baljet Group (event management), GoedeStede (residential building owner), and youth welfare work Vitree became involved as well. Moving from expansion to **contraction**, they brought in funding, advised on permits, obtained additional funding from a municipal participatory neighborhood budget, and supported the festival by lending it material. **Coding** happened as the funding was granted, the festival was a success, and the organizers were asked to repeat it at a different location (Interview with SM, 2013).

Twice a Sjopping Mol (June 2010-May 2011)

Coding happened as the Art Culture Foundation was set up by the initiator and two co-workers in November 2010 (Interview with SM, 2013). The lack of cultural amenities and a network among creative entrepreneurs in Almere, and high rental prices that kept creative entrepreneurs from finding a place to meet, cooperate, and sell, were now also mentioned as reasons for **decoding** (Interview with SM, 2013; Almere Deze Week, November 24, 2010). **Contraction** happened because in December 2010, the first Sjopping Mol was held for one month in a vacant

building owned by GoedeStede and used by Baljet Group. In this pop-up store, creative entrepreneurs from Almere could exhibit and sell their work, and playful and cultural activities were organized. The Sjopping Mol became a meeting place, a network grew among entrepreneurs, and a local newspaper started to publish the activities organized by the Sjopping Mol, all of which are acts of **expansion**. Again, this formula proved to be successful, and in January 2011 another one was held in another building owned by GoedeStede, the DO Gallery. **Contraction** happened as the interests of the foundation fitted well with those of GoedeStede (Interview with SM, 2013). In May 2011, another creative market was organized (Almere Deze Week, May 25, 2011).

Meanwhile, in 2010, the municipality started writing a new vision on culture. The involved civil servant wanted to **decode** from the usual approach and wrote a vision in close deliberation with the main cultural amenities in Almere, and started to build a network among small and creative entrepreneurs. She also got in touch with the initiator of the Sjopping Mol, and became a strong supporter (Interview with SM, 2013; Interview with Gemeente Almere B, 2013).

Twice a City Sjopping Mol (May 2011–December 2012)

Expansion happened as this civil servant made two important connections for the Sjopping Mol. First, the municipality received a call from the SEV to submit initiatives for their funding program on self-organization in new towns. The municipality spread this call among its network of creative entrepreneurs and in various ways it also reached the Sjopping Mol. The municipality lobbied on behalf of the Sjopping Mol and Almere to get the initiative included, and thus funded (Interview with SM, 2013; Interview with Gemeente Almere B, 2013). Once included in the funding program, a process of knowledge and experience exchange among self-organized initiatives was set up by the SEV (Interview with SEV, 2013). Secondly, the civil servant informed colleagues who worked on countering vacancies in the city center, and a connection was made between Sjopping Mol and a real estate owner in the city center who had empty shopping space available (Interview with Gemeente Almere B, 2013; Interview with SM, 2013).

Contraction happened when the Sjopping Mol indeed became part of the SEV program for self-organization. With the funding they offered, two Sjopping Mols could be organized. An agreement with Unibail-Rodamco (the real estate owner) was made: During October–December 2011 and October–December 2012, Unibail-Rodamco would provide one of its vacant shops for a City Sjopping Mol, in exchange for a percentage of the turnover (Interview with SM, 2013). In addition to their funding, the SEV asked many critical questions that further improved



FIGURE 8.5 *The Sjopping Mol shop window*

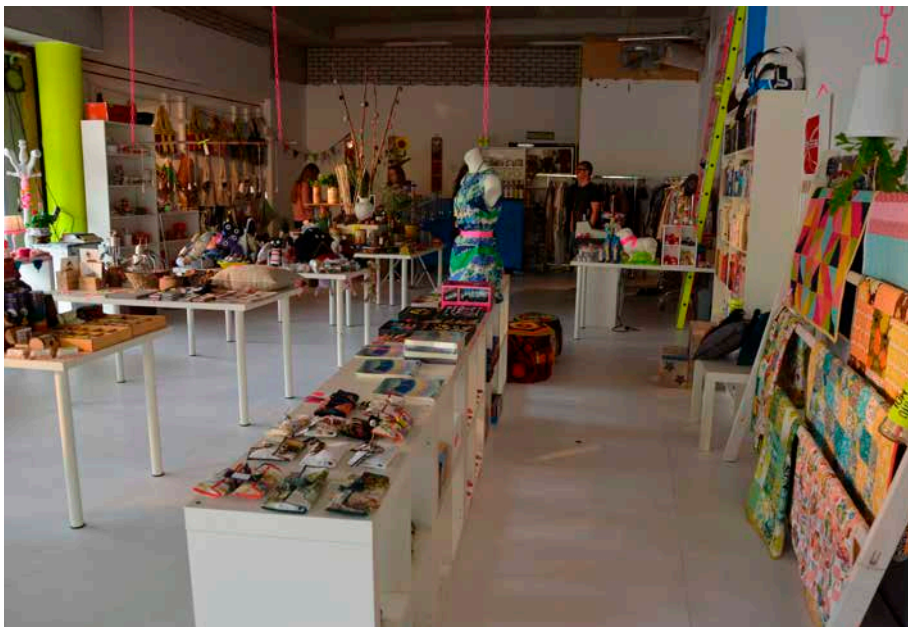


FIGURE 8.6 *The Sjopping Mol as a platform for creative entrepreneurs*

the quality of their proposals and plans (Interview with SM 2013; Interview with SEV, 2013). After these two connections were made, the role of the municipality became smaller again (though they did fund the third Sjopping Mol with a budget from Zelf Bedacht Zelf Gedaan). After a change of political color in 2010, however, the political focus switched away from small-scale creative entrepreneurs and the creative industry (Interview with SM, 2013; Interview with Gemeente Almere B, 2013).

During this round, further **expansion** took place as the network among creative entrepreneurs grew further. In July 2011, a call went out for participants in the new version of the Sjopping Mol (Almere Deze Week, July 20, 2011). The Sjopping Mol gradually transformed from a neighborhood meeting place, into an initiative focused on shopping and commerce (Interview with SM, 2013). The Art Culture Foundation started to deploy more and more activities besides the Sjopping Mol. A connection was made with Stichting Stad en Natuur (City & Nature Foundation), which wanted to address a new target group. Together with the Art Culture Foundation, the first *Groentesoep Festival* (Vegetable Soup Festival) was held in September 2011, making green and creative initiatives in Almere visible. The festival was repeated in May 2012 and September 2012, creating even more visibility for the foundation (Interview with 2013, SM; Almere Deze Week, May 9, 2012; August 15, 2012). By the end of 2011, the Art Culture Foundation had organized a petition to underline the value of free zones as meeting places for creative entrepreneurs and artists in Almere. The petition aimed at influencing the cultural policy that the municipality was preparing (Almere Vandaag, January 18, 2012; Almere Deze Week, January 25, 2012; Interview with SM, 2013). In the spring of 2012, the municipality invited tenders for artistic decorations in empty shop windows in Almere Buiten. The Foundation won the tender and combined the decorations with cultural activities (Almere Deze Week, April 18, 2012, Interview with Gemeente Almere B, 2013). The municipality also asked the Foundation to organize a creative market during the annual Poort Festival (Interview with SM, 2013). For each activity a different collaboration between the parties was found, utilizing the growing network among creative entrepreneurs. No two projects were the same, and collaboration with the municipality was established only when necessary for a specific situation.

Coding happened in the official agreements with the SEV and Unirail Rodamco, and also in the municipal Vision on Culture 2.0, in which more attention is given to free zones and creative entrepreneurs. The municipality hoped that the creative entrepreneurs would organize themselves better and establish some representation, so that the municipality could more easily get in touch with them (Interview with Gemeente Almere B, 2013). This could be seen as the municipality's

The Sjopping Mol

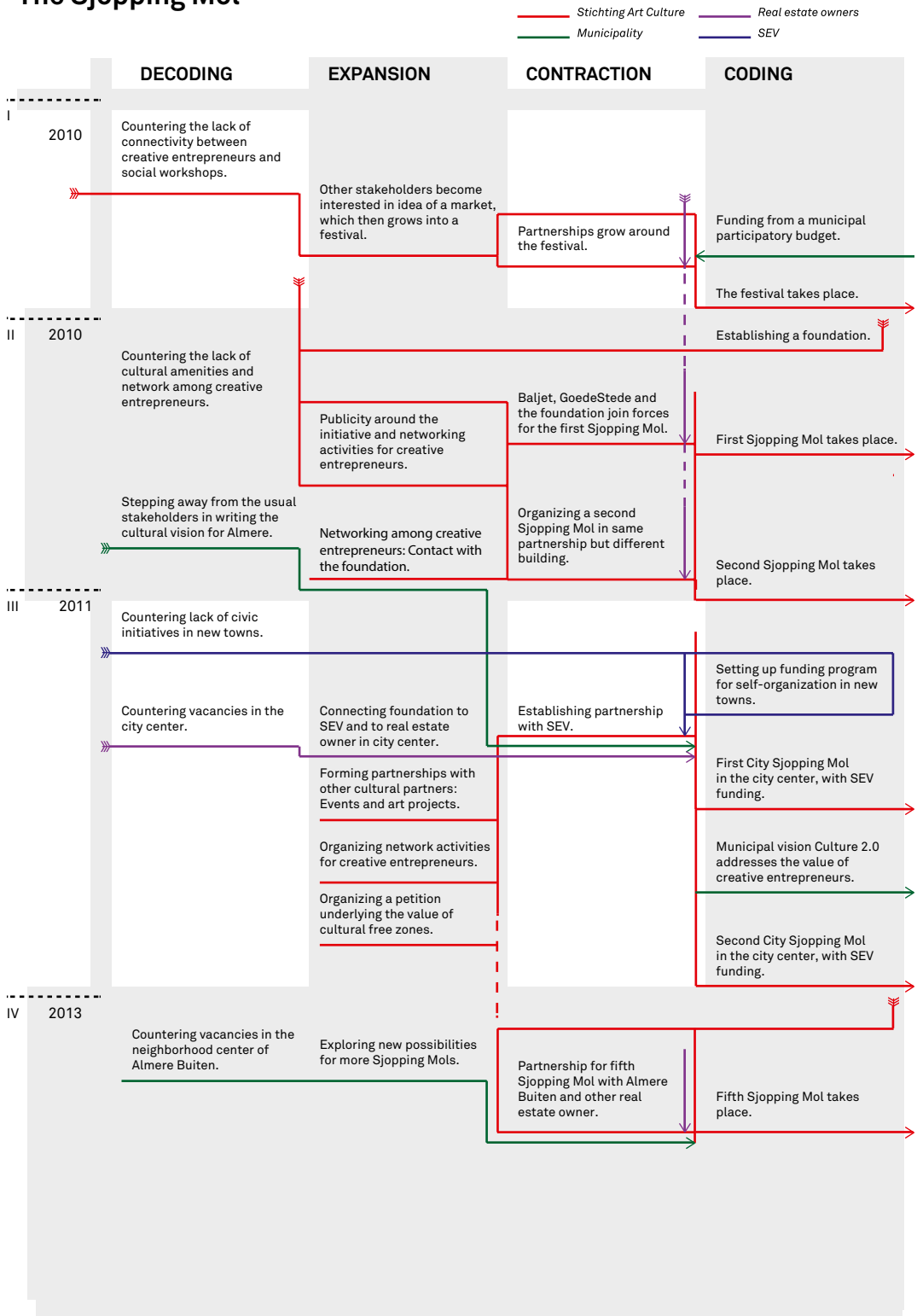


FIGURE 8.7 The becoming of the Sjopping Mols

desire for the creative entrepreneurs to, over time, become more coded to the municipal practices. Meanwhile, the Foundation became increasingly professional and commercial, more effective in applying for grants and funding, and more or less developed a repeatable approach for the respective Sjopping Mols.

The Fifth Sjopping Mol in “Buiten” (>January 2013)

The fourth round of the Sjopping Mol falls largely outside the timeframe of the study, as the interviews were conducted during the summer of 2013, when there was only an intention to organize another Sjopping Mol sometime in the future. Meanwhile, the Stichting Art Culture continued to organize festivals and creative markets in various partnerships (expansion and contraction). During the spring and summer of 2014, another Sjopping Mol was organized in Almere Buiten. This was done in a new partnership with a different real estate owner, in close collaboration with the municipal departments for Almere Buiten and the Retailers Association of Almere Buiten. The aims and approach of the Sjopping Mol were the same as in previous rounds (decoding and coding) (Interview with SM, 2014).

Trajectories

The most important trajectory of this case is, of course, that of the Art Culture Foundation, which was the driving force behind the sequential Sjopping Mols and a range of other cultural activities in Almere. This trajectory sprang from the idea to link social workshops and creative entrepreneurs, a lack of cultural amenities and meeting facilities for creative entrepreneurs. This decoding kept the trajectory moving forward through its various rounds, and was picked up by other trajectories quite quickly: A welfare work organization, an event management firm, and a residential building owner, and later on the municipality, and the SEV. These trajectories associated, but mostly temporarily around projects and events. The municipality, decoding itself from the usual cultural policy, was able to make all sorts of connections between the initiative and other interested actors. The SEV temporarily functioned as the initiative’s coach and mentor. Both thus played an important role in the development of the Sjopping Mols, although their influence decreased again over time.

Hoekwierde Self-management Experiment

The Experiment Zelfbeheer Hoekwierde (EZH; Hoekwierde Self-management Experiment) is an initiative in which residents of the Hoekwierde neighborhood (which is part of Almere Haven) manage and maintain the green areas in their neighborhood. They already did so informally and on a small scale, but when the municipality started an urban regeneration program and major landscape



FIGURE 8.8 *Informal maintenance in the Windbos, Hoekwierde*



FIGURE 8.9 *New plantings by EZH from municipal landscaping budget*

maintenance, several residents expressed the desire to expand this self-management to the whole neighborhood. Together with the municipality a way was sought by which this self-management could be formalized. The first round concerned the informal self-management (before July 2011), the second round concerned the negotiations with the municipality on formalization (July 2011–July 2012), and the third round concerns the actual self-management.

Informal Self-Management (<2011)

The Hoekwierde is a characteristic “cauliflower” neighborhood built in the 1970s, with many green areas and small parks between the houses. The informal self-management of those green areas had been taking place for years. In the course of 2010, several trajectories came together in the neighborhood and set the scene for a more formalized way of self-management. Firstly, the municipality was conducting major landscape maintenance in the neighborhood, and was developing thoughts on how to increase civic involvement. Secondly, the municipality had started an urban regeneration program for the neighborhood, including a zoning revision allowing for a residential apartment building in one of the green zones. Several residents wanted to **decode** from these building plans, and from major landscape maintenance in which they had no role (Interview with EZH, 2013; Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013).

During the second half of 2010, protest grew against zoning revisions that would allow building activities in the green area called Windbos. In a process of **contraction**, a neighborhood forum was set up to coordinate protest actions and to inform residents through a website and newsletters (BGHW, 2010a; 2011a). These zoning revisions had long been part of the municipal plans for the neighborhood, as a way to revitalize the neighborhood and to improve its connections with other neighborhoods. However, the residents saw the Windbos as a natural border between the neighborhoods and strongly opposed the idea. They therefore appealed against the zoning revision (Almere Deze Week, May 9, 2012; July 3, 2012; October 31, 2012; Almere Vandaag, May 2, 2012; June 27, 2012). At the same time, a major landscape maintenance project was coming to an end, and during the last phase, residents were invited to participate. In the green area called Vogelbos, self-management had already taken place, coordinated by Landschapsbeheer Flevoland – an organization that stimulates residential self-management in Flevoland – and funded by the municipality of Almere (until 2013) (Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013; BGHW, 2011a). Residents had informally sown herbs, mown the grass, and generally maintained the area in close coordination with a municipal supervisor, in the spring of 2011 (BGHW, 2010b; 2011a). Then, two residents took the initiative to connect the activities in the Windbos and the Vogelbos, and in the negotiations between the

Experiment Self-management Hoekwierde

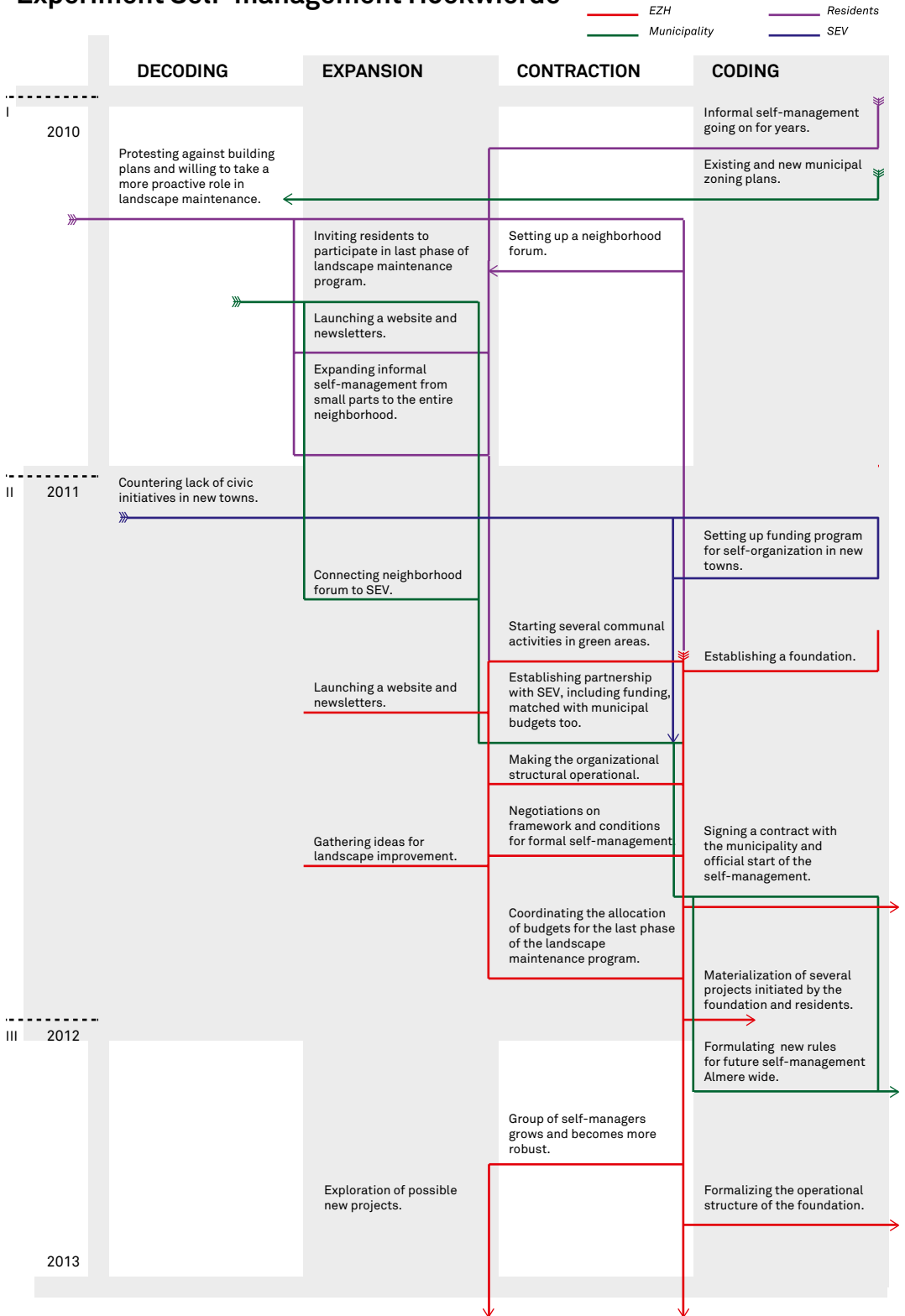


FIGURE 8.10 The becoming of the Hoekwierde Self-management Experiment

municipality, housing corporation, and residents on the urban regeneration program, these residents proposed to further **expand** the informal self-maintenance to the entire neighborhood, and to continue the self-management in a more formal way (Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013; BGHW, 2010b). The initiators see their initiative as a way to take a stand against the municipal building plans, as well as a way to generate new social dynamics and to motivate people to use their capacities more actively (Interview with EZH, 2013).

The two initiating residents built upon their own experience (**coding**). One resident had personal experience of major landscape maintenance and the inconveniences that it could bring, and professional experience with the civic self-management of public space. The other resident had been the driving force behind the informal self-management in the neighborhood, and professionally he was familiar with the maintenance of public spaces (Interview with EZH, 2013). Meanwhile, and despite the experimentation with more residential involvement in green maintenance and self-management, the municipal zoning revisions remained coded to regular planning procedures and existing development plans.

Starting the experiment (July 2011–July 2012)

The municipal neighborhood manager who led the negotiations with residents on the urban regeneration program, then became aware of the SEV funding program for self-organization in new towns. In an act of **expansion**, she connected the program to the initiating residents, who then wrote a proposal and became part of the program in a process of **contraction**, all around July 2011 (Interview with EZH, 2013; Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013). When the initiative became part of the experiment program, the SEV started to play a role in the negotiations between the initiative and the municipality, advised on focus and choosing the juridical form of a foundation, and stimulated the initiators to write a year plan. In the course of 2011, negotiations took place on conditions and frameworks for self-management. It was agreed that after completion of the major landscape maintenance by the municipality (and after a quality check of that maintenance by the residents), the Hoekwiede Self-Management Experiment would start (BGHW, 2011b). In July 2012, an official contract was signed by the newly established foundation and the municipality (Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013). Another movement of contraction was found in the reduction in the number of contact persons within the municipality. Before, there had been many different points of contact, but this was reduced to two contact persons: A neighborhood green supervisor, who is concerned with everyday maintenance issues, and a district program manager for more strategic issues (Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013). Meanwhile, the initiator maintained contact with the council as well (Interview with EZH, 2013). A third movement of contraction is the match

between the financial support from the SEV and various municipal budgets. The budget offered by the SEV was used to buy a professional mowing machine, and the municipal budget is used to materialize ideas from residents on small greening and landscaping projects (Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013).

Meanwhile, a process of expansion and contraction took place among the initiators and residents of the neighborhood. The Hoekwierde neighborhood committee and the self-management team led by Landschapsbeheer Flevoland, merged into the Hoekwierde self-management team and the EZH (Interview with EZH, 2013). The EZH foundation had a board meetings four times a year (Website Hoekwierde, 2014), all signs of **contraction**. Contraction also happened once a month when residents came together for maintenance activities and soup (Almere Deze Week, October 26, 2011). In October 2011, residents were called to join in the first EZH activities, and in November 2011, a “Winter Clean” activity was organized. Many more residents participated in both activities than expected (Interview with EZH, 2013). This caused tension with the municipality, which had not yet officially approved the self-management (Interview with EZH, 2013). **Expansion** happened through the communication activities led by the EZH. In February 2011, a website was launched to communicate about what happens in the green areas, the activities of the EZH, and the activities and plans of the municipality. From May 2012 onward, a weekly newsletter was distributed on the website with specific items and announcements from the EZH (Hoekwierde website, 2014). Connections were made with other self-management initiatives and organizations protesting against zoning revisions in Almere, and knowledge was exchanged through the program led by the SEV (Interview with EZH, 2013). At the beginning of 2012, the major landscape maintenance came to an end, and instead of the municipal project manager, the EZH coordinated the process of gathering ideas from residents and prioritizing these ideas (**expansion**) (Interview with Gemeente Almere, 2013; BGHW, 2012).

The **decoding** during this round remained largely the same as in the previous round. Protests were held against the municipality’s building plans, on which the city council still had to make its final decision. Concerning the self-management, every intervention was seen as a way to improve the living quality of the whole neighborhood (Interview with EZH, 2013). Meanwhile, the municipality decoded and recoded to a more neighborhood-focused way of working in a reorganization in September 2012. This caused some disturbance within the municipality itself, but hardly effected the EZH, as the main municipal contact persons remained the same (Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013).

Much more significant during this round is the **coding**. In order to receive funding from the SEV, a juridical form had to be chosen for the initiative and a plan had to be drawn up. This was done somewhat reluctantly, but the funding enabled the initiators to purchase the necessary equipment and materials. The choice for a foundation as a legal form was made deliberately, in order to keep the organizational and administrative work as far away from the actual greening and maintenance activities as possible (Interview with EZH, 2013). In July 2012, the Hoekwierde Self-Management Experiment Foundation was officially established. A development and implementation agreement was concluded between the foundation and the community. It stipulated that the money the municipality would have spent on maintenance will be paid to the foundation, together with the grant from the SEV. The foundation itself could decide how to spend the funds. Only the sewage and major maintenance remain a municipal responsibility (Interview Gemeente with Almere C, 2013; Interview with EZH, 2013). In addition, an annual report was drawn up to ensure that the municipality can make the self-management accountable. The first results of the self-management initiative were the planting of bulbs and colored plants, the construction of a bocce court, and the planting of an orchard (Interview with EZH, 2013).

Coding is also derived from the initiative itself. Before, no rules existed for formal self-management. The municipal Green department intended to stimulate for active citizenship and citizen involvement, but the agreement with Hoekwierde Self-Managing Experiment was only the first actualization of these intentions. After a year of deliberation with the residents, an approach now existed for other self-management initiatives as well. In the new Management Vision from December 2012, active citizenship was reframed as “excellent partnership,” based on the idea of managing a city together. But meanwhile, the municipality found itself in a double role: Zoning revisions for the Windbos continued as well, issues on legal accountability in public space had to be solved, and the municipality was struggling with EU regulations on procurement and tax levy. For these issues, the municipality had to find new ways and a structural solution in new procedures (Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013).

Experiment Zelfbeheer Hoekwierde (EZH) (>2012)

The activities of the EZH continued to expand – and gave rise to controversies. The construction of a “kingfisher wall” (a vertical earthen wall covered by wooden paneling with holes in it, in which kingfishers can build their nests) and the felling of a number of trees upset neighbors who were not part of the decision to do so. The municipality was asked to mediate in this conflict, but soon solutions were found between the foundation and the opposing residents themselves (Interview with EZH, 2013). During the third round, **contraction** continued as a

robust and increasingly stable group of residents committed themselves to the self-maintenance. In 2014, the EZH was accepted as an Icon Project by the Green Closer (Groen Dichterbij) foundation (Hoekwierde website, 2014), a national lottery fund for greening initiatives in Dutch neighborhoods (Groendichterbij website, 2014). This funding was used to continue the foundation and to **expand** its activities even further. In February 2014, a meeting was held with all participants to evaluate the previous 2.5 years, to think about any changes or improvements, and to suggest possible new projects (BGHW, 2014). The outcome of this meeting was one of pride about what had been achieved, the quality of the improvements made, the excellent communication, and respect for the time and energy spent by the initiators. Suggestions for more democracy in the decision making were also made, and many new project ideas were collected (Website Hoekwierde, 2014). **Coding** continued as well, as the initiators of the foundation realized that an even more formal way of decision making on projects and activities could prevent future controversies, especially when more people are heard and board meetings are held more regularly with outward communication (Interview with EZH, 2013).

The municipality also continued coding. During the summer of 2013, an executive plan was written for the Management Vision by the Green department, in which detailed information was given about the options and points of attention for self-management initiatives. Following the EZH, in which the contract, financing, and conditions were negotiated in deliberation with the initiators, the Management Vision was able to prescribe what the municipality needs to do in order to promote and deal with self-management initiatives. An overview was made on different kinds of self-management, distinguishing small initiatives that only need verbal consent, initiatives that need a letter of support, and initiatives that need an official contract as they also will keep the budgets. In addition, an overview was made of various questions that either a district director (e.g., support for the initiative among other residents in the neighborhood), a technical specialist (e.g., on the viability and placement of trees, standards for the municipal lawnmower, and other practicalities), and a policy officer (conditions on financing and advice on contract formation) should be able to answer. Specific information sheets were prepared for residents who want to install hanging-baskets, and the idea is to provide more sheets like that for other topics as well (Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013). The municipality also started to map initiatives for self-management, and provided a catalogue and a website on these initiatives (Interview with EZH, 2013; Website Mensenmakendestad.almere.nl, 2014). At the same time, in January 2014 the municipal council decided in favor of the zoning revisions in the Windbos. The foundation decided to continue to oppose the revision and appealed to the Council of State (BGHW, 2014).

Trajectories

The most prominent trajectory in this case is, of course, that of EZH itself. This trajectory, though it had an informal prehistory, was set in motion by three municipal trajectories. The first municipal trajectory concerned zoning revisions that the residents actively opposed. The second municipal trajectory concerned the major landscape maintenance, that was supposed to end with civic involvement. This trajectory's main actor is the municipal Green department, which wants to incorporate civic initiatives and self-management in its official policies. The first and the second trajectories give reasons to the initiators to code. The third municipal trajectory concerned the urban regeneration program, which also aimed for civic involvement. The civil servant managing the program was also the one who connects the initiative for self-management to the experiment program by the SEV. The SEV became another important trajectory, albeit only temporarily as the SEV mediated between the initiative and the municipality, and advised the initiators on how to further formalize the self-management.

Association of Friends of the Cascade Park

The Association of Friends of the Cascade Park (AoF) (*Vereniging Vrienden van het Cascadepark*; VVvhCP) was an initiative addressing the landscape design of the Cascade Park in the newly built neighborhood Almere Poort. The initiators envisioned a design that differed from that of the municipality, and they established a legal association with its own program of wishes for the park. Although the municipality strategically and politically supported the AoF, the actual construction of parts of the park according to their wishes proved to be challenging. The first round concerned the building of Almere Poort and the Cascade Park (2005-2011), the second round concerned the start-up of the AoF, triggered by a municipality-led participatory planning process on the design of the Cascade Park (October 2011-February 2012), the third round concerned the actual activities of the AoF and the establishment of a program of wishes (March 2012-May 2013), and during a fourth round tensions emerged between the municipality and the AoF, and within the association itself (June–November 2013). The fifth round concerned the start of a new initiative – Our Cascade Park (*Ons Cascadepark*) – in November 2013.

Building the neighborhood and the park (2005-2011)

The building of Almere Poort started around 2005. With the construction of the district, the municipality aimed at **decoding** from the usual large-scale developer-led housing schemes, toward private commissioning by individual residents and the joint ownership of inner courtyards, though most of the actual development process remained **coded** along the usual municipality-led procedures of



FIGURE 8.11 *The first playground and pick-nick tables in the Cascade Park*



FIGURE 8.12 *Decorations on the fence of a small communal garden in de Cascade Park*

development: The one by one construction of building blocks and a gradual implementation of facilities and amenities following the growth of population (Interview with Gemeente Almere D, 2013). While the neighborhood was being built, in 2008, a municipal area manager started to work in the neighborhood, to develop and maintain the relationship between the first settlers and the municipal departments, and to compensate for the lack of facilities in the neighborhood. The work of the area manager mostly involved **expansion** and **contraction**, as she welcomed new settlers, addressed their concerns at the respective municipal departments, and organized workshops on how to deal with joint ownership (Interview Gemeente with Almere D, 2013).

Until then, the Cascade Park was a large open strip of grassland crossing the entire district. In 2006, a landscape design for the park was made by the municipality, but the park would not actually be developed until Almere Poort had 15,000 inhabitants. However, gradually, residents wanted to **decode** from the emptiness of the park, and informally installed benches and a children's playground, and organized activities. Under the influence of the residents and the area manager, the municipality decided to **decode** from the usual development procedure and moved the landscaping of the park forward in time, to 2011, when Almere Poort had only around 4,000 inhabitants (Interview with VVvhCP, 2013; Interview with Gemeente Almere D, 2013; Gemeente Almere, 2012b). The area manager initiated a participatory process of two evening meetings, aimed at collecting ideas from stakeholders, a landscape architect, and residents, at the end of 2011 (Website Onscascadepark, 2014; Almere Vandaag, December 14, 2011; Interview with Gemeente Almere D, 2013). Whereas the first meeting focused on expansion, the second meeting aimed for contraction. During this evening, actions and activities in which residents could participate were defined, and an attempt was made to get the municipality and the residents more in line concerning the design of the park (Website Onscascadepark, 2014; Interview with Gemeente Almere D, 2013; Interview with VVvhCP, 2013).

Start-up of the Association of Friends (October 2011-February 2012)

This is where the Association of Friends of the Cascade Park started **decoding**. There was a feeling among residents that the design of the park was already more or less fixed, but they wanted a different layout. Together with the area manager an idea was brought up to start an Association of Friends of the Cascade Park, which was presented at the second evening meeting. The initiative started to expand, as 60 people registered to become a Friends (Interview with Gemeente Almere D, 2013; Almere Vandaag, December 14, 2011), while a working group explored the possibilities of such an association by looking at other comparable initiatives: The Association of Friends of the Vondel Park in Amsterdam, the

Association of Friends of the Cascade Park

— Association of Friends — Municipal planning department
— Municipal area manager — Our Cascade Park

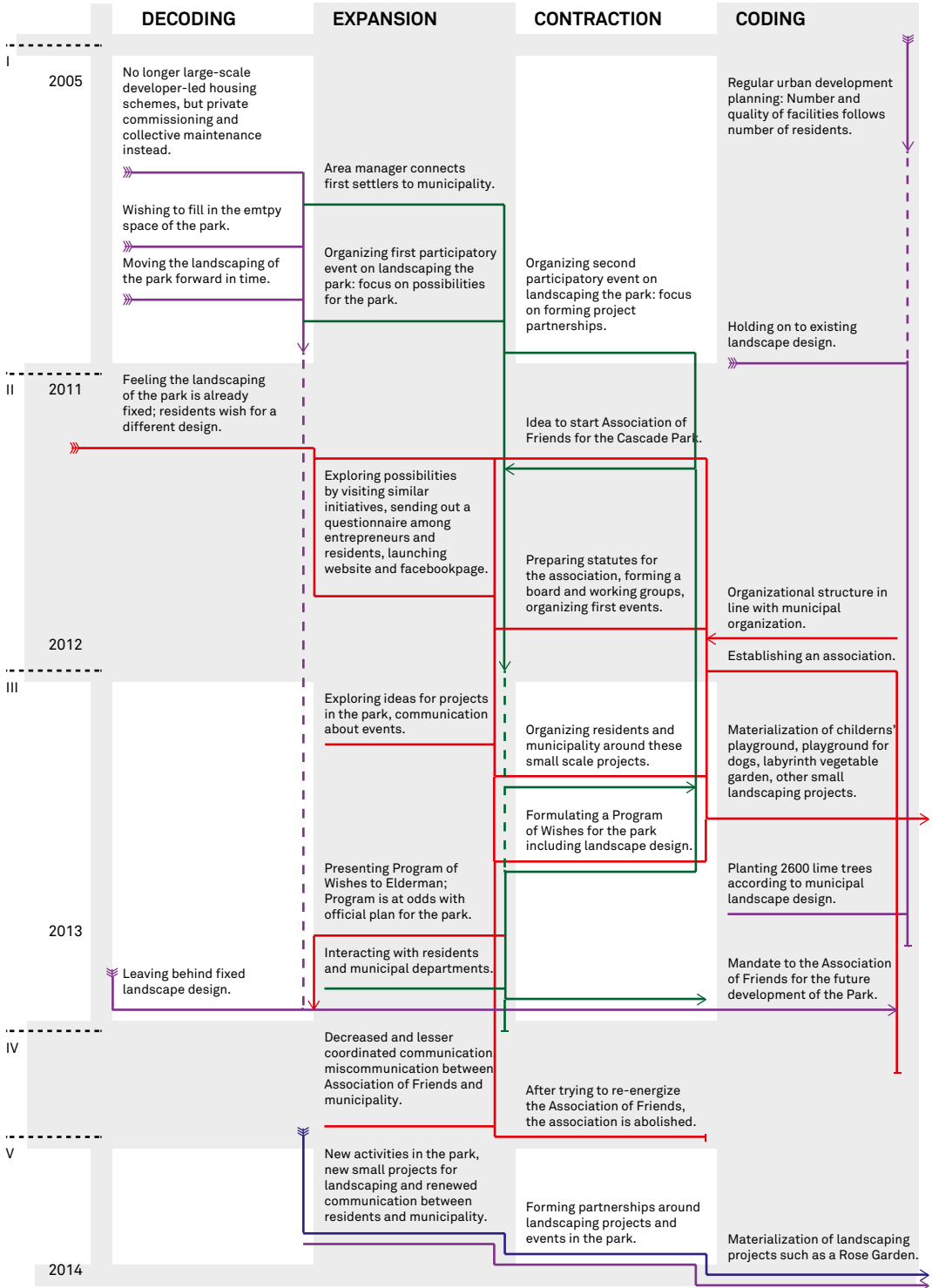


FIGURE 8.13 The becoming of the Association of Friends of the Cascade Park

Association of Friends of the Maxima Park in Utrecht, and the initiators of the Hoekwiede Self-management Experiment. Conversations were held with various schools in Almere Poort on their possible role in such an association. A questionnaire was distributed among shop owners and businesses in Almere Poort to gather ideas and support for the AoF (Interview with VVvhCP, 2013). At the start of 2012, a Facebook page and a website were put online. These became the places where announcements about activities, calls to participate and become a member, pictures and news items about the park were posted (Interview with VVvhCP, 2013; Website Vrienden-vanhetcascadepark, 2014; Facebook Vrienden-vanhetcascadepark, 2014).

Meanwhile, **contraction** happened as well. A working group wrote statutes for the association, prepared a first general meeting and set up a structure for the working groups based on the thematic outcomes of the questionnaire and the participation process. The aim was to **code** this structure to the municipal organization as well, and relate the groups to municipal departments: Green, Sports, Dogs and Animals, Culture, Playgrounds, etc. However, attempts to include civil servants in these working groups as linking pins were unsuccessful (Interview with VVvhCP, 2013). The decision to code as an association (rather than a foundation or cooperative) was made for its democratic character, and on March 6, 2012, the first general meeting was held and the association was officially established (Website Vriendenvanhetcascadepark, 2014). In all these activities, the main initiator benefited from his background in city marketing, as he sees the initiative as a way to more explicitly market Almere Poort as a pleasant place to live (Interview with VVvhCP, 2013).

Activities led by the Association of Friends (March 2012-May 2013)

Each of the activities of the AoF went through **expansion** and **contraction** toward **coding** as materialization. The first activity was the construction of a children's playground, an idea that sprang from the participatory meetings, and on which residents worked together with the municipality and Landschapsbeheer Flevoland (see Hoekwiede Self-management Experiment). The playground was opened by the mayor in July 2012 (Almere Vandaag July 25, 2012; Website Vrienden-vanhetcascadepark, 2014; Interview with VVvhCP, 2013). In August 2012, **expansion** continued when an invitation was posted on the website and the Facebook page to think about sport facilities in the park. In October 2012, an invitation was posted to think about and sponsor a playground for dogs. Working weekends were announced and organized in June 2013, and the playground for dogs was officially opened in October 2013. In April 2013, a Labyrinth Vegetable Garden was constructed, and in June 2013, a Green Container project was launched, in which residents could adopt their own raised vegetable bed. For

this project, a funding grant was provided by Green Closer (Groen Dichterbij, see also Hoekwierde Self-management Experiment). Smaller activities included the planting of trees and the hanging of flower balls in some parts of the park. In order to explore ways in which trajectories and networks can be connected in favor of the park, further expansion took place by announcing activities on the web (Website Vriendenvanhetcascadepark, 2014; Facebook VriendenvanhetCascadepark, 2014). Various schools in Almere Poort were asked to provide the knowledge and manpower of their students to work on projects initiated by the AoF. Landschapsbeheer Flevoland, and City and Nature (see Sjopping Mol) participated in projects organized by the AoF, and local entrepreneurs were asked to sponsor events (Interview with VVvhCP, 2013). **Contraction** happened as the projects were defined in detail in collaboration with the municipality and people actually joined the design process, sponsored, and collaborated in the construction and execution of the ideas. Most projects turned out to be successful; a few remained unmaterialized and some caused friction with the municipality. The locations for the children's and dogs' playgrounds were frequently discussed and changed during the negotiations, as were issues of accountability and liability. Miscommunication happened about the availability of construction material (Website Vrienden-vanhetcascadepark, 2014; Interview with Gemeente Almere D, 2013; Interview with VVvhCP, 2013).

By the end of 2012, the AoF **contracted** further toward a program of wishes for the park. A professional landscape architect designed a plan free of charge. The AoF hoped that the plan would guide them in their negotiations with the municipality, and that its professional appearance would encourage stakeholders to collaborate with them and provide sponsorship (Interview with Gemeente Almere D, 2013). The plan was named "Program of Wishes" in order to keep open possibilities for further ideas and **expansion**, and not to contract too much beforehand (Interview with VVvhCP, 2013). The Program of Wishes was presented in December 2012 on the AoF website, and people were asked to react to it. In January 2013, the plan was presented to the alderman for Urban Development (Interview with VVvhCP, 2013; Website Vriendenvanhetcascadepark, 2014). The alderman was now explicitly confronted with the differences between the municipal plans and the wishes of the residents (Interview with Gemeente Almere D, 2013). A few months earlier, in November 2012, the AoF and the municipality had informally agreed that the planting of 2,600 lime trees would be suspended, as the residents wanted a more bio-diverse plantation. However, in March 2013, the lime trees were suddenly, and without announcement, planted in the park, due to the legal contract between the grower and the municipality. Again, **contraction** between the municipality and the AoF proved to be difficult. The area manager (who was still the main liaison between the municipality and the AoF) and the AoF thus

experienced a mismatch between the strategic and political ambitions of the municipality, and the everyday reality of the executive departments (Interview with Gemeente Almere D, 2013).

After this conflict, however, new **coding** emerged as the alderman stated that from then, residents and their wishes would be leading in the further landscaping of the park. On March 26, 2013, he granted a mandate to the AoF to guide this process. The AoF should do so, however, in close collaboration with the municipality, and the municipal plan for the park remained leading. The Program of Wishes had however more or less turned into a code itself, and the differences between those two codes remained (Interview with VVvhCP, 2013).

Troubles and changes (March–November 2013)

In the course of 2013, the AoF started to disintegrate around former points of contraction. A new area manager was appointed for Almere Poort, which caused discontinuity in the communication between the municipality and the association (Interview with VVvhCP, 2013). At the same time, several board members left the association as they no longer felt aligned with it, and fewer people participated in the working groups as communication around activities was not so strong anymore (Interview VVvhCP, 2013; VVvhCP, 2013). Communication between the association and the municipality became dispersed over several board members, causing confusion on both sides. Attempts were undertaken for **contraction** again. From March 2013 onward, no further agreements were to be made on behalf of the association without the president of the association knowing about them. In the summer and autumn of 2013, a new version of the rules and regulations of the association was written, and new board members were sought who had the ability to communicate on a strategic level with the municipality and with the residents of Almere Poort (VVvhCP, 2013). However, after these attempts, the Association of Friends of the Cascade Park dissolved.

Our Cascade Park (>October 2013)

Then, in October 2013, a new trajectory emerged, that of Our Cascade Park (Ons Cascadepark). On its Facebook page, Our Cascade Park posted announcements about activities, calls for ideas, and photos and videos of past events. The same kind of activities as in the time of the Association of Friends were held (flower balls planted in the winter, a brainstorming session on the problem of dog feces, a decorated Christmas tree, the planting of trees in March, a mid-summer night's fest), but now other people were organizing these activities. The cooperation with the municipality was restored and in December, a sledding hill was built, and in the spring of 2014 a rose garden was planted (with leftovers from a bankrupt rose grower). These activities were all small loops of **expansion**, **contraction**, and

coding through materialization (Facebook OnsCascadepark, 2014; Ons Cascadepark, 2014).

Trajectories

The main trajectory in this case is that of the Association of Friends of Cascade Park. This trajectory sprang from three related municipal trajectories: The participatory planning meetings about Cascade Park (expansion), the municipal landscape design for the park (coding, leading to decoding), and the area manager in Almere Poort (expansion and contraction). At the start of the initiative, both coding and decoding were the main behaviors, both for the municipality (decoding toward participation, coding to the original plans) and for the initiative (decoding from the original plan, coding to the legal form of association and to other similar initiatives in other Dutch cities). Associations related to expansion and contraction were formed around small projects, on which the Association of Friends and the municipality agreed, for which funding was found, and in which stakeholders and other residents participated. Controversies occurred as well on several small projects and on the landscape design of the entire park and its plantation. In order to stand stronger, the initiative moved to contraction and coding by writing a program of wishes for the park, as an alternative to the municipal plan but with the intention of integrating the two. The two plans, however, were not merged and existed in parallel with each other as two codes that strove for dominance. This, combined with a change in area management through which the initiators lost their main contact person at the municipality, and a lack of communication toward other residents in the neighborhood, led to the disintegration of the initiative. At the end of the case description, the Association of Friends ceased to exist.

3

CONCLUSIONS

After plotting the behaviors and trajectories in these four civic initiatives in Almere on the diagram of processes of becoming, it is now time to look for conclusions. In the following paragraphs, an analyses is made on the conditions that gave rise to the civic initiatives, the ways in which the civic initiatives gained robustness and resilience, and the planning strategies that were developed in, and in response to, the civic initiatives. At the end of the section, a reflection is given on what can be learned for the Almere cases.

Conditions that gave rise to the initiatives

The first research question – ***Under what conditions did the initiatives emerge?*** – is answered by looking at the fields of coding and decoding, especially at the start of the initiatives, but also during later rounds. Coding tells about the conditions that enabled the civic initiatives to become, whereas decoding tells about the conditions that the initiators wanted to change. These conditions set the initiatives in motion. Subsequently, it is also important that this movement is picked up by others and that associations are formed around decoding with other trajectories.

In the case of the Corsinies, the lack of housing for young people was a condition all involved actors wanted to decode from. Around this decoding, associations were formed between the municipal policy on private commissioning and consultancy firms supporting collective private commissioning projects (Van Diepen, 3CPO). Important to the Corsinies were the invitations from the municipality for collective private commissioning, through a funding program, a designation of building plots in Almere Poort, and a direct invitation from the municipality to realize a project on a specific site. The association between the municipality and 3CPO in turn formed an association with the future inhabitants of the project: Young people who again decoded from a lack of affordable housing in Almere.

For the Sjopping Mol, the condition the initiator aimed to decode from – at the beginning, as well as during later rounds – was a lack of cultural amenities, a platform, and a network for creative entrepreneurs. This was a decoding condition for the municipality, too, willing to step away from its usual way of writing top-down cultural policy with established stakeholders. Moreover, various real estate owners, together with the municipality, wanted to decode from vacancies in shopping areas. All these conditions created a willingness to try something new. The individual controversies between those actors and their environment transformed into an association that was able to move forward. In due course, several associations emerged around smaller, temporary projects, of which several were initiated by the Sjopping Mol, and several times the Sjopping Mol was asked to deploy its activities on behalf of others (with the municipality on art projects, Stichting Natuur and Milieu on a festival, real estate owners on the use of vacant buildings, etc.).

Conditions the trajectory of EZH wanted to decode from were reasons of opposition: Against zoning revision in the green area, and against nuisance and non-involvement in major landscape maintenance in the neighborhood. The municipality was also willing to decode to the latter, and invited residents to

participate in the final phase of the major landscape maintenance. An association of two residents, other supporters in the neighborhood, and the municipality emerged and worked toward a formalization of their self-management. The willingness of the municipality (especially the Green department) to collaboratively look for new working methods, procedures, and practices in an experiment together with residents, was another important condition that set the trajectory of EZH in motion. The zoning revision remained existing as a code, which the residents continued to oppose. Another condition to which the trajectory could code to was the professional capacities of the initiators.

The same kind of coding can be seen in the Association of Friends of the Cascade Park, where the main initiator was coding to his personal professional experience, and to similar initiatives elsewhere. Other conditions that set the trajectory of the association in motion were a lack of amenities and the emptiness of the park, to which the municipality was also willing to decode. Further on, conditions became ambiguous: The municipal invitation to join a participatory process about the park, and the indignation that residents felt because most of the design of the park had already been decided upon. The initiative for the association thus originated in a controversy between the municipal design for the park and the wishes of the residents, and was strengthened by an association between the residents and the area manager. Also here, an important condition was the municipality's willingness to experiment with residents in small projects. However, the municipality was less willing to decode from the original landscape plan for the park, which remained a code the residents continued to oppose.

To summarize, four main conditions became visible.

- *A lack of something*: The initiators were motivated to do things differently and provide alternatives, mostly because of a lack of certain amenities (Cs, SM, AoF), and in two cases a direct opposition to municipal plans (EZH, AoF).
- *Capacity*: Initiators were inspired by different places and initiatives, and made use of their own professional knowledge and experience (EZH, AoF), although in two cases these capacities were built along the way (Cs, SM).
- *The invitations the initiators received*: In some cases, the municipal invitation to participate was the main trigger for an initiative to emerge (EZH, AoF); in other cases, there was a virtual initiative, an idea, that was picked up by others who then invited the initiator to actualize his idea (Cs, SM).
- *The willingness to experiment* of the municipality, residents, and other stakeholders in finding new ways of cooperation, and the associations that were formed around decoding (all cases).

How the initiatives gained robustness and resilience

Once the initiatives were set and kept in motion, the second research question – ***How did the initiatives gain robustness and resilience?*** – can be answered. Robustness and resilience were achieved by a combination of the internal strength of the initiative and its embeddedness in its environment. Internal strength is achieved by coding and contraction, and associations that lead to a merge between trajectories. Embeddedness in the environment is achieved by coding and expansion, and associations with other emerging and existing trajectories that run parallel to the trajectory of the initiative. As shown below, the behavior of expansion and contraction are usually strongly intertwined and therefore difficult to describe separately.

The trajectory of the Corsinies gained robustness as their first move through expansion and contraction was supported by an experienced process manager and the municipality, and the strongly committed future residents who wanted to finish the project. The controversies experienced during coding were consolidated into a new code (3CPO's standard approach). In later projects (Corsini Due and Corsini3), 3CPO worked with this code, and then moved to contraction with the municipality. Only later did 3CPO expand toward future residents, who were then quickly united in an association – contraction again. Conditions created by the municipality in the form of new codes (instruments for private commissioning), and the association with the urban plan of Almere Poort, smoothed the contraction. Every materialized project added to the robustness of the trajectory as well. The trajectory of the Corsinies thus gained robustness through the presence of connecting actors, strongly committed initiators and participants, the development of new codes, and a chain of materialized projects.

The trajectory of the Sjopping Mol gained robustness and resilience as, especially at the beginning, other actors brought in experience, knowledge, sites, and budget, helping the trajectory of the Sjopping Mol toward contraction and coding in the form of a foundation. Later on the municipality joined as well, in the person of a civil servant working on cultural policy. She, decoding herself, was able, through expansion, to establish connections between the initiative and other decoding actors: To real estate owners with sites on offer, decoding from vacancies, and to the SEV, decoding from a lack of self-organization in new towns. The SEV provided financial support, and temporarily functioned as the initiative's coach and mentor, making the trajectory contract and code further. The decoding of the Sjopping Mol remained a motivational factor throughout the entire trajectory, each time expanding toward new opportunities. Contraction mostly happened around specific, temporary partnerships on creative projects and cultural activities. Meanwhile, the experience of the Sjopping Mol built up

as well, and a slow professionalization and coding evolved: Formulas were found and earlier experiences used again. The trajectory of the *Sjopping Mol* thus mostly gained robustness and resilience through other actors bringing in resources and connections, through a chain of temporary partnerships, and through the commitment of the main initiator.

Also in the case of the *Hoekwierde Self-Management Experiment*, the trajectory of the initiative was able to move forward from decoding through the presence of connecting actors. However, there was already a history of self-management, the initiators had professional experience, and there was a history of protest against zoning revisions and a sense of community in the neighborhood. In that sense, the initiators' first and dominant behaviors were decoding and contraction. Expansion and coding followed later, and were mainly introduced by the municipality and the SEV. The neighborhood manager (municipality) connected to the decoding and expanding SEV and established an association between the SEV and the initiative. Both the municipality and the SEV then made the trajectory of the initiative move forward through contraction (between various budgets, and between the municipality and the initiative) toward coding, and thus formalization. During this process toward coding, also controversies took place in the contraction between the initiative (which just wanted to start activities) and the municipality (which needs formal codes before it can allow activities). Controversies also relate to coding, as the municipality and the initiative faced existing rules on procurement, tax levies, etc., existing routines on accountability, and procedures within the municipality. The municipality was bound to codes it could not change. Lessons were learned from the experiment and new procedures and guidelines were set up within the municipality on how to deal with self-management in the future. The experiment eventually associated with the legal code of a foundation. From the availability of budgets in various forms and rounds, and this legal framework, the initiative was able to retain robustness. Eventually, an official agreement with the municipality was established and the self-management was formalized. At the same time, the number of residents involved in the EZH activities grew. Due to some controversies with other residents in the neighborhood, awareness grew in the EZH that a more clear division of roles, communication toward the residents, and more democratic decision making could make the initiative more effective in the future. The trajectory of EZH thus gained robustness and resilience through other actors bringing in resources, through connecting actors, through making use of existing codes and developing new ones, and through the personal drive of the initiating residents. Expansion and contraction were ongoing in the trajectory, even after the initiative obtained an official status.

The trajectory of the Association of Friends of the Cascade Park gained robustness through expansion and contraction, led by the area manager who was in support of the initiative, who supplied the initiative with knowledge and materials, and who was the main liaison between the initiative and various municipal departments. Also important was the time and energy spent by the leading residents (and their personal capacities) in making connections with sponsors and residents to participate in activities. The association tried to code its organizational structure to the various municipal departments, but was unable to make civil servants part of the organization. The code of the program of wishes was also an attempt to give the trajectory of the association more robustness. However, over time, more and more controversies emerged within the board of the association, and between the association and the municipality. Politically, there was municipal support for the initiative, but associations with the more executive departments and the Urban Development department were more difficult to find. The trajectory of the association thus gained robustness and resilience through connecting actors and developing codes. Over time, however, the trajectory of the association lost both its internal coherence and its external relevance, and a fourth trajectory emerged – Our Cascade Park.

In order to learn how the initiatives were able to gain robustness over time, the trajectory of each initiative and its route through the diagram of processes of becoming has been described, with special attention paid to the conditions, other trajectories, and the behavior of those who associated with the initiative and made it move forward. This shows that the original decoding remained an important binding factor in all initiatives, and was also reactivated over time. Initiators realized that if they acted together, they had a better chance of obtaining the alternative they were pursuing. But most of the robustness and resilience in the trajectories was built during expansion, contraction, and coding. In relation to expansion and contraction, a first major driving force was the energy and effort of the initiators themselves. They often worked from a personal network, sought new partners, and continuously explored and connected. A second driving force was the presence of exploring and connecting actors outside the initiative. These were a regular civil servant, an area or neighborhood manager, and in some cases even the SEV or one of the initiators. Most initiators expressed the desire to have a regular contact person within the municipal organization in order to smoothen their trajectories. A third driving force, and a direct result of the efforts of the initiators and connecting actors, is the various temporary and small ad-hoc partnerships around projects that actually materialize. A chain of such projects gives the trajectory more and more robustness over time.

Coding also grants robustness to a trajectory. The first type of coding relates to legal frameworks for associations (Cs, AoF) and foundations (SM, EZH). These give an initiative a formal body, a spokesperson, and enables them to receive grants and subsidies. The second type of coding relates to the municipal codes (Cs, AoF). A third form of coding is the setting and growth of internal codes: A plan (AoF), a standard approach (Cs), and growing routines (SM). And a fourth and final form of coding could be seen as re-coding, which largely relates to municipal codes (procedures, arrangements, etc.) that are changed during or after a case, mostly due to experiences built up during the case (EZH, Cs). In all cases, the energy to set things in motion and to head in a certain, and often new direction, came from the initiating residents. They were the ones who turn intentions into action and materialization. Although in most cases in Almere these initiators were assisted either by the municipality or by a professional organization (such as the SEV), the initiators themselves worked from the unique possibilities offered by a certain time and place, from personal dreams, passion, inspiration. The initiator brought in a network, skills, previous experiences, and a personality. The initiator moved forward as a result of an intrinsic motivation to grasp the opportunities of the moment. It is the role of the ongoing experiment. Frameworks, agreements, protocols, etc. are only enabling, not motivating in themselves.

Planning strategies

The answer to the overall research question – ***What planning strategies were developed in, and in response to, civic initiatives?*** – is answered by filtering the answers on the above two questions on their intentionality, the patterns in behavior, and their relation to planning. What goals were achieved by the various trajectories crossing the map, and what conditions, associations, and controversies were created intentionally in order to achieve these goals? Some of the planning strategies were intentionally chosen, some grew quasi-intentional over time, and in some cases strategies were mixed and changed according to circumstances.

The route taken by the trajectory of the Corsinies, leaned heavily on contraction and coding, following their standard approach for collective private commissioning. This route was intentionally chosen, to get a project off the ground as soon as possible, and to work toward materialization with as few hiccoughs with planning institutions and in the residential group formation as possible. From this coding, small loops were made toward contraction and expansion for each individual project, returning to coding as the materialization of the project. The intentionality behind this movement was mostly networking for a fit, as it was the intention of 3CPO to get a single project materialized, and its strategy was not

aimed at changing anything, but just to fill in some existing gaps (in the housing market, and in the urban plan of Almere Poort), and to make use of the opportunities offered. 3CPO's main activity was to organize all the necessary resources for such a project, and the resources 3CPO itself offered were knowledge about procedures, time and energy to get a group together and act as a spokesperson on their behalf toward the municipality, financiers, and architects. This was part of their commercial business model. Meanwhile, as part of the larger ambition within Almere to stimulate collective private commissioning, new codes were developed by the municipality in order to better serve initiatives for collective private commissioning, and to better align such initiatives with formal procedures and municipal working schemes. The municipality invited 3CPO to start new projects by providing plots and funding for collective private commissioning. The intentionality behind these municipal actions is to assemble to maintain, as the municipality's intention is not to make a direct change to the environment, or to get an individual project going. Instead, its goal is to change the practice of urban development in Almere and build up a new working culture that supports collective private commissioning.

The trajectory of the Sjopping Mol started at decoding and expansion, and over time stayed rather attached to this type of behavior. Other partners brought the trajectory of the Sjopping Mol to contraction and coding in various temporal activities and events. The intentionality of the Sjopping Mol was merely focused on interference for change, through small, temporary associations and the use of ad-hoc opportunities, and each time a different form was chosen – all in order to improve the cultural climate of Almere. Its strategy was to remain open to new opportunities and partnerships all the time, although some practices did turn into routines over the years. Also the municipality stayed rather close to the behavior of expansion. Its intentionality was interference, too: Trying to change the environment, in this case the cultural climate of Almere, and each time choosing a different form or policy to do this, picking up opportunities whenever these occurred. No new policy was developed as a result of the Sjopping Mol, except for a short paragraph in the memorandum on culture about the value of cultural free zones. However, the various actors in the case emphasized that the cultural climate in Almere did improve over time, thanks to the efforts of the municipality and the Sjopping Mol. The main goal of the initiative and the municipality was not that spatial, and although the spatial effects through the temporary use of vacant buildings may be significant, these effects were only a side effect brought in by the real estate owners and the municipality.

The trajectory of the Hoekwiede Self-Management Experiment started with decoding and sought expansion, but contraction was dominant. Contraction within the community of residents that took part in the self-management, contraction with the municipality on forming a partnership for self-management, and contraction against the building plans. At the same time, the initiators emphasized that they did not want to have everything entirely structured, in order to leave room for new possibilities, let the activities flow, and keep the governance away from the actual work. The intentionalities behind this trajectory were thus rather ambiguous. On the one hand, the intentionality was assembling to maintain, as the initiators aimed at shaping the municipal environment so that they could continue their self-management activities in more formal settings, and keep the green zones from being built on. And over time, the initiative became a sort of representative of the neighborhood toward the municipality. On the other hand, the intentionality was interference for change, as time and again short ad-hoc activities were organized in order to make small changes to the environment. The trajectory of the municipality is also dual: The trajectory of the zoning revisions remained attached to coding throughout the initiative, whereas the trajectory of the area manager and the Green department started at expansion, and from there on guided the trajectory of the initiative through contraction to coding. From there, new codes were developed for other self-management initiatives. The intentionality behind the latter is assemble to maintain, as the municipality wants to stimulate self-management throughout Almere, to change the practice of urban development in Almere, and to build up a new working culture that supports civic initiatives.

The trajectory of the Association of Friends of the Cascade Park, set in motion by the municipality, started with decoding, turned into expansion when ideas for the park were gathered, and then moved toward contraction and coding, as the association was established and the program of wishes was written. From there, but also following directly from the earlier expansion, ad-hoc activities and projects were organized in the park. The intentionality behind this was dual: The main intentionality was interference for change through small ad-hoc activities in response to the opportunities of the moment, but the association also established an association aiming at assembling to maintain. The intentionality of the municipality was dual too. On the one hand, the area manager worked in a policy context of private commissioning, collective ownership, active citizenship, and participation. She moved along with the initiative and contributed to its expansion and contraction, until this trajectory was interrupted. The intentionality behind the trajectory of the area manager was perhaps the organization of a network, mostly a network of residents who are willing to actively contribute to a transformation of the park (which is interference for change), but from a strong

organizational base (assembling to maintain). As both trajectories thus aimed for assembling to maintain around divergent interests, the two trajectories were unable to form a successful association, and strategic integration between the municipal plans for the park and the program of wishes proved to be difficult. At the same time, the intentionality of interference for change facilitated ad-hoc partnerships between the association and the municipality.

To summarize, on the side of the initiatives, four planning strategies can be identified.

- To intentionally move to coding as soon as possible – “quick coding.” This was, for instance, done in the Corsinies: After their first personal experiences with decoding, expansion, and contraction into coding, they set up their own coding. The Association of Friends of Cascade Park was also rather quick to set its own codes in its program of wishes.
- To move to coding in a gradual way over time – “gradual coding.” In some cases this happened intentionally, as in the Hoekwierde Self-Management Experiment, which looked for new ways of coding together with the municipality. In other cases, such as the Sjopping Mol, this gradual coding was rather unintentional, as practices slowly grew into routines as experience built up.
- To stay in expansion and as “close to decoding” as possible, interfere through small projects from there, and only move to contraction in small, temporary, ad-hoc partnerships when other trajectories aim for the same decoding. This was done by, for instance, the Sjopping Mol.
- “Continuous expansion and contraction,” with only the necessary coding and decoding in the background, and no major other trajectories crossing. This was done by, for instance, the Hoekwierde Self-Management Experiment, and the Association of Friends of the Cascade Park.

On the side of the municipality, also various planning strategies in response to the civic initiatives were developed.

- To “move along” with the initiative, stay close to expansion, and only sometimes move to contraction in temporary partnerships. As part of this planning strategy, the decoding from the side of the municipality was often the same as the initiative. In this strategy, the municipality, like the initiators, worked from the local context and moved along with

the initiatives step by step. The municipality connected actors and departments, explored different possibilities, searched for focus and directions to head for. They also invited initiators and asked for their critical reflection. This strategy was used mainly by area and neighborhood managers, people who already worked close to the residents, but could also be used by, for instance, someone working at the Licensing department. The key aspect was that the people who deployed this strategy, knew the interests of both the initiative and the municipality, and therein sought to find a way. And even though this strategy was crucial in all the cases, it was very far removed from a traditional planning strategy, as individual discretion was high. Therefore the people who deployed this strategy, often felt explicit tensions between the world of the initiative and that of the municipality.

- To support initiatives in their move from decoding toward coding, and to “derive new codes” from that experience. Moving along with civic initiatives often created tensions with regular plans and methods. Therefore, this planning strategy was focused on learning from experiences in order to discover new methods and to propose new procedures, that smoothed the trajectory of civic initiatives and removed constraints. The results of this strategy were, for instance, counters like the Plot Shop, the area and neighborhood managers who connected residents with the municipal organization, and the guidelines set up for self-management as a result of the experience with Hoekwierde Self-Management Experiment. This strategy was well represented in Almere, as experiences with new cases were repeatedly used as input for new planning methods and procedures.
- To stay close to “original coding.” This gave structure, support, and financial resources to the initiative. As opposed to the first strategy, individual discretion was very low, and elements from the official spatial planning system were leading, like an urban plan, financing schemes, running policy, legal plans, plan procedures, criteria, and guidelines. The goal of this strategy was to counter uncertainties and maintaining a uniform way of working. This strategy could come in various forms: By offering existing and new codes that smoothed the trajectories of initiatives, by holding on to codes that existed before the initiative and that possibly obstructed new emergences, by setting policy that enabled civil servants to work on behalf of an initiative, or by not setting any policy for a certain issue at all, as this meant that civil servants would not have the budget and time to work along with an initiative that addressed that specific issue.

	Corsinies	Sjopping Mol	EZH	Association of Friends
Civic initiative	<i>Quick coding</i>	<i>Gradual coding Close to decoding</i>	<i>Gradual coding Continuous expansion and contraction</i>	<i>Quick coding Continuous expansion and contraction</i>
Municipality	<i>Derive new codes Original coding</i>	<i>Move along</i>	<i>Move along Derive new codes Original coding</i>	<i>Move along Original coding</i>

FIGURE 8.14 Planning strategies in, and in response to, the civic initiatives in Almere.

Learning from Almere

In the introduction to this chapter, Almere was presented as a new town, combining a pioneering spirit with a strong governmental-led planning scheme. Almere, like any new town, can thus be seen as a child of its time: New planning ideals and thoughts are directly reflected in its development. The latest trend in planning – that of active citizenship, private commissioning, and organic area development – therefore leads to a strong ambiguity in Almere. The development of Almere is strongly governmental-led, but as Almere is also strong in incorporating the latest views on planning and in its willingness to experiment, its innovative planning approaches over the last decade seem to be well synchronized with these latest trends. However, the transition from being a municipality originally oriented toward on control, regulation, and large-scale development, to being a municipality oriented on facilitation and acceptance, is a difficult one. Almere’s “addiction to plans” (Berg et al., 2007) creates a tendency to quickly capture experiments in new models and procedures. The tension and ambiguous relationship between the willingness to experiment and facilitate active citizenship and civic initiatives on the one hand, and the tendency to control, regulate, and fix in procedures on the other hand, made Almere an interesting case study area to question what planning strategies fit an age of active citizenship. It opened up questions on whether the conditions deliberately created by a municipality experimenting with governance for active citizenship, are indeed the conditions that helped civic initiatives forward in their materialization. What dilemmas did local government face when dealing with civic initiatives, and what could be learned from them?

What becomes evident from the cases, is that in every initiative decoding and coding, expansion, and contraction heavily overlapped. Each initiative sprang from a specific local context and was strongly colored by the individuals leading the initiative, and their activities were not easily captured in procedures or standard approaches. Yet the initiatives also more or less searched for a grip and a structure to which they could attach, and they expected government to provide this. Moreover, almost all initiatives were well in line with municipal policies. The Corsinies were well in line with policy on collective private commissioning. The Sjopping Mol was well in line with policy on more “Big City” amenities including cultural facilities. The Hoekwierde Self-management Experiment was well in line with policy on more resident involvement in landscape maintenance. The Association of Friends of Cascade Park was well in line with policy on more civic involvement in the development of Almere Poort. Moreover, most initiatives were somehow triggered, invited, or picked up by the municipality, which then brought the initiative further in its development. The municipality indeed wanted to develop new working methods that better address the fluid, uncertain, and dynamic world of civic initiatives, but when it comes down to the world of policy, the distinction between coding and decoding is not that sharp. In the cases, something new and different was pursued, something that deviates from what is commonly done, but this new method or goal was then immediately captured in new policy, at least when it was not first tried out in a pilot project or experiment – which is the planning strategy of “deriving new codes.”

So to come back to the question whether the conditions deliberately created through policy for active citizenship, are indeed the conditions that help civic initiatives forward in their materialization, it can now be concluded that they indeed are. However, sometimes new and existing codes also have to be learned, what they mean and how they can be used. This gives some advantage to those initiators who have a professional background or some experience in working with the municipality. In some cases, the planning strategy of staying close to “original coding” still works as an obstruction to initiatives, and is sometimes even the condition from which the initiative intends to decode, especially when it comes to developed schemes that have long been planned and have been going through the formal decision-making process. The second and the third planning strategies (deriving new codes and staying close to original coding) are thus fairly well established in the municipal organization, focused as they are on long-term development and stability, and not so much on the materialization of single projects.

However, as the cases in Almere show, the most crucial planning strategy in making an initiative move to materialization is not the creation or the effectuation of certain codes. Codes provide the initiative with resources such as official support, budgets, legal matters, etc., but they do not play a role in the actual collection of these resources. Thus, the most crucial planning strategy is the first one – that is, the strategy of moving along with the initiatives through expansion and contraction – as this strategy actually helped the initiative moving forward, and exploring and collecting the resources it needed and could possibly use. When this strategy is applied, the initiators are no longer confronted with tensions between the municipality and the emerging initiative. Instead, this tension is internalized in the municipal organization. This leaves the municipality with three dilemmas that will have to be addressed if the municipality of Almere aims to continue its policy for active citizenship.

- The first dilemma relates to building and sharing expertise and knowledge. As every civic initiative is unique, specific to local circumstances and to the individual behind the initiative, this also means that knowledge and experience built up in an initiative is specific and unique, and thus difficult to share and to consolidate. Moreover, the civil servants applying the first planning strategy (moving along the initiative), often work on a personal discretion that is not uniform, not included in job descriptions or protocols, and knowledge is spread across these individuals who are themselves mobile. Continuity and the building of knowledge is therefore not obvious. This makes it extremely important to share experiences and expertise among civil servants working with this planning strategy, and to make these civil servants and their work more visible to a wider public.
- The second dilemma relates to accountability and responsibility. The planning strategy of moving along with the initiative continuously moves between an experimental world and a world based on community resources, public interest, accountability in hours and budget, etc. Therefore, questions arise about the guarantee of quality, how to deal with risk and responsibilities, and how to support an initiative without creating resistance in some other place. Some examples of these dilemmas concern the liability of street furniture bought and placed by residents, or the whether one active individual represents a whole neighborhood or just himself. Civil servants applying this planning strategy therefore can feel trapped between the initiative they are facilitating and their own organization: They sometimes have to stand up to colleagues and at other moments they have to defend the municipality toward residents. If the municipality aims at continuing its policy for active citizenship, it needs to

share and distribute responsibilities and communicate clearly about this, question existing rules and axioms, and explore what room there is for discretion, and give back up to civil servants who work with discretion.

- The third dilemma relates to the instruments and methods used by civil servants who apply the planning strategy of moving along. Within this strategy, one must gradually find the paths to tread. The question is, how to decide which routes to take, how to avoid or bypass obstacles, and how to locate one's position? One has to be continuously informed in order to make the right choices. A recurring dilemma for those who apply the planning strategy of moving along is the degree of association they have with the municipality or the initiative. The further they move away from the municipality in facilitating the initiative, the greater the risk that they "sign off." The more people are able to stay close to an initiative and yet still keep the connection with the municipality, the better the interaction. An important skill is therefore communication sensitivity (with the organization, with the initiative), and the capacity to deal with uncertainty and improvisation.

The set of cases in Almere show that planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship do relate to, and frameworks and procedures from which the initiatives can gain robustness. The cases also show, however, that the real work begins only after these conditions are created, as the real work lies in picking up the movement of an initiative and helping it find its way through expansion and contraction, through temporary partnerships and projects, providing only the most necessary coding. All three dilemmas that relate to this planning strategy can be solved by offering more room for personal discretion, and increasing the connectivity of and communication between individual civil servants. It should be said, though, that one should be careful about solidifying these experiences too quickly in new procedures. Even though the tendency is to propose new guidelines for a new kind of planning strategy, the strength of the first planning strategy of moving along, is that it is able to repeatedly face new challenges and move through uncertainties and dynamics.

Conclusions: Planning Strategies that Fit an Age of Active Citizenship

This thesis has been an endeavor to create an understanding of planning strategies that fit the emergence of civic initiatives in contemporary society. The problem definition of this thesis was the inability to develop planning strategies that move beyond the government-led, disciplinary, and inclusionary constraints of participatory planning. Such planning strategies, Chapter 1 argued, are unable to deal with and benefit from initiatives that emerge spontaneously from civil society, as these initiatives are often too complex, unpredictable, dynamic, and multiplicit to fit within the constraints of participatory planning. Therefore, this thesis proposed a perspective in which the actual becoming of civic initiatives in spatial development would be leading (cf. Boelens, 2009; Specht, 2012). In order to operationalize this civic initiative's perspective on planning strategy, Chapter 2 introduced the notion of self-organization. Derived from complexity theory, self-organization stands for the spontaneous emergence of order out of unordered beginnings. When translated to urban development, self-organization can be understood as the emergence of initiatives for spatial interventions from intrinsically driven, community-based networks of citizens and entrepreneurs. Understanding civic initiatives as a form of self-organization puts the emphasis on internal and local drivers, and the lack of centralized control. Internal drivers, as the incentives for the initiative, come from within the network itself: The initiators are the intended end-users and eventual profitters from the initiative, and are thus driven by self-interest and self-motivation. Local drivers, as civic initiatives are often a reaction to local events or interactions, or events or conditions, that generate local meaning and thus become localized. And lack of centralized control, as decision-making, knowledge, information, and other resources are not located at one central actor summoning others to take action. Instead, they are dispersed among the many initiators and other actors that in one way become connected to an initiative. In other words, civic initiatives are complex constitutions: Internally driven but with boundaries open wide, toward their environment, and to other actors and their resources. In order to do justice to these characteristics, Chapter 2 also argued that from the various interpretations of complexity, self-organization should be understood as the emergence of actor-networks, and civic initiatives as examples of baroque complexity. This means that civic initiatives are seen as individual, performative, interventionary, and seeking to make a difference in the world operating upon them, creatively transforming their environments (see Chapter 2).

Instead of trying to seize the grand narrative and promises of "active citizenship," the notion of self-organization enabled a focus on the diversity of strategies that are developed within the actual practice of civic initiatives. On the basis of the theory on complexity and self-organization, combined with the ontologically affiliated actor-network theory (including the notion of translation) and

assemblage theory (including the notion of individuation), Chapter 4 distinguished four forms of behavior in the becoming of a civic initiative. The first behavior is decoding (also problematization or bifurcation), which refers to a disassociation from the usual, the desire to try something new, the will to change certain conditions, and the articulation of a new direction to be taken. The second behavior is expansion (also dissipation, *interessement* or deterritorialization), which refers to a widening orientation, open boundaries, exposure, exploration of new content, possible resources, and new actors in new constellations. The third behavior is contraction (also autopoiesis, enrolment, and territorialization) which refers to a closing off or narrowing down through selection, explication, and a consolidation of content and resources, and a stabilization of actor constellations. The fourth behavior is coding (also mobilization or equilibrium), which refers to the elements that turn the initiative into a black box, as well as into something familiar, something obvious, something common that fits existing schemes in the outside world.

These four forms of behavior are not sequential, but take place simultaneously or in varying sequences during the development rounds of the initiative in its process of becoming. All activities within the emergence of the initiative can be mapped along these four forms of behavior accordingly, also for other actors encountering the initiative (but not merging into it). Then, the behaviors and trajectories of civic initiatives become visible, and from the encounters with other assemblages, insight can be gained into the three research sub-questions asked in this thesis: *Under what conditions do civic initiatives emerge? How do civic initiatives gain internal and external robustness and resilience? What planning strategies are developed in, and in response to civic initiatives?* Whereas the first two questions can be answered by looking solely at the four forms of behavior, the related conditions, and the trajectories followed over time, the third question addresses strategy, and thus a certain degree of intentionality. For that purpose, three different intentionalities behind the process of translation are added to the diagram of processes of becoming: Interference for change, networking for a fit, and assembling to maintain. Together, the four forms of behavior and three intentionalities form a diagram for processes of becoming that allows for an understanding of planning from the perspective of civic initiatives and their processes of becoming (see Chapter 4). This perspective sheds new light on planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship.

Empirical insights were gained by looking at actual civic initiatives in three different contexts, acknowledging that, despite their internal drivers, these initiatives still take place in an institutional environment. These contexts were selected on various presupposed enabling conditions for civic initiatives. The

first set of cases, co-housing initiatives in Denmark, was selected due to the presence of a tradition of collective housing, self-build homeownership, and a planning system based on local negotiations, as a reference to the Dutch context in which co-housing is promoted, but hardly gets off the ground. Three co-housing projects in Sjælland, Denmark, were traced. The second set of cases, business improvement districts (BIDs) in England, was selected due to the early introduction of a legal framework to stimulate collective action among entrepreneurs, combined with a more evolutionary planning system, as a reference to the Dutch context in which BIDs were introduced only recently. Five BIDs in the city center of Birmingham were traced. The third set of cases, civic initiatives in Almere, the Netherlands, was selected as example of a local government that introduced specific policy to put citizens more in the lead of spatial development and maintenance. Four civic initiatives in Almere were traced.

The approach taken is in line with the three objectives set at the start of this thesis. The first objective was to develop a vocabulary for addressing and describing the emergence of civic initiatives. The developed understanding of self-organization as emergent actor-networks, and the accompanying diagram of processes of becoming, offers such a vocabulary. The second objective was to generate insight into what a “facilitating” government could be. The civic initiatives’ perspective emphasizes the actual motives and actions of the initiatives, and their internal and local drivers. However, initiatives do not take place in an institutional void, and therefore three institutional contexts were chosen for empirical research. The cases indeed show that governments frequently come into play, but almost always at a second instance, when they are approached or encountered by an initiative. The third objective, the generation of a new planning practice that meets the dynamics and complexity of an urban development based on active citizenship, is achieved in this final chapter. The planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship are brought down to four major conclusions, each of them addressing one of the research questions or sub-questions. These conclusions are, of course, rhizomatically interlinked (cf. Hillier 2011: 520).

The first conclusion concerns the conditions under which civic initiatives emerge: The need for conditions that “open up.” The second conclusion concerns the way in which civic initiatives gain robustness: The need for navigators. The third conclusion concerns the planning strategies that are identified within the civic initiatives, and emphasizes the flat ontology of planning, in which civic planners and their strategies are regarded as symmetrical to professional public planners. And finally, not in contradiction but in addition to the third conclusion, the fourth conclusion reflects on what can be expected of planning agencies and

professionally trained planners within the context of emerging active citizenship, namely that they will master the art of creating consistency. These conclusions are based on the empirical findings in the cases, and complemented by insights from contemporary post-structuralist planning theories and recently conducted research on civic initiatives and complexity in planning. These post-structuralist planning approaches, discussed in Chapter 3, offer valuable insights for planning in a complex and dynamic environment (Boelens & De Roo, 2014). These approaches, however, also encounter difficulties in their application in planning practice. This final chapter, argues that such planning theories are often already applied in the practice of civic initiatives. These practices then only need to be recognized as a planning practice as well, finally overcoming the distinction between professional public planners and the planners of civic initiatives. Only then can a new view on new planning strategies emerge – planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship. As such, this chapter offers theoretical reflections and recommendations for planning practice.

1

CONCLUSION 1: CONDITIONS THAT “OPEN UP”

Attempts to create the “right” conditions

The first research question of this thesis concerned the conditions that give rise to civic initiatives. The search for new approaches to deal with and facilitate civic initiatives, often entails establishing the “right” conditions for allowing initiatives to emerge (WRR, 2012; Min BZK, 2013). Conditions are then seen as a requirement or requisite, as external influences that do not predefine initiatives, but that will increase the likelihood that specific processes will happen spontaneously (Rauws, 2015). In order to accomplish ambitions for a “participatory society” and “active citizenship,” governments feel responsible for creating such “right” conditions. This is reflected in the Netherlands in the general plea for active citizenship (see Chapter 1), the policy incentives for collective private commissioning (Chapter 6), the introduction of BID legislation (and BID legislation, localism, and Big Society in England) (see Chapter 7), and in the introduction of policy that puts citizens in the lead, as seen in Almere (Chapter 8). But whether these conditions are indeed the “right” ones, remains to be seen. Hajer (2011), Urhahn (2012), and Uitermark (2012) claim that conditions for civic initiatives consist of governments that set out frameworks in which freedom is found and

ideas can be developed. Also Rauws et al. (2014) state that regulatory structures, such as development plans, are a precondition for self-organization, as they set limits and define spaces that allow freedom of action. Chapter 1 argued, though, that such frameworks remain within the same disciplinary and inclusionary constraints as participatory planning. Following Loepfe (2014), it could be said that participatory planning aimed at opening up planning and decision-making procedures to actors outside the governmental domain. However, through its inclusionary and disciplinary practice, participatory planning rather became a process of closing down spaces, as participants were guided along predefined formal organizational procedures toward all-inclusive plans. When the creation of conditions for civic initiatives indeed falls into this trap, initiatives that do not fit into the self-referential perspectives of governmental organizations will remain overlooked (Van der Stoep, 2014: 34), and conditions for civic initiatives will only streamline the initiatives toward this governmental self-referentiality (cf. Swyngedouw, 2005).

Conditions that open up possibilities

Therefore, the case studies in this thesis were firstly analyzed on the conditions that made the various initiatives emerge, conditions that are related to the initial coding and decoding of the initiatives. In the conditions found in the cases, a distinction could be made between conditions that set the initiatives in motion, and those that allowed the initiatives to become and materialize. Conditions that set the initiatives in motion often related to decoding, and explain the intrinsic drivers of the initiators to take matters into their own hands. In the Danish cases, this had to do with the preference of the initiators for a communal rather than an individual everyday life, of developing one's own house rather than living in pre-designed houses, of a sustainable rather than a regular lifestyle, and the lack of such places in the current Danish housing stock. In the Birmingham BIDs, conditions that set the initiatives in motion were reputations for degeneration (more pressing in some neighborhoods than in others) or a more general concern about local quality, an absence of investment and leadership, and a fragmentation of interests, and more specifically in the BID projects, a lack of connectivity, visual identity, way-finding, maintenance, and quality of the public realm. The civic initiatives in Almere were set in motion by concerns about a lack of amenities (housing for young people, a network or platform for creative entrepreneurs, the emptiness of a park) and urban plans that did not meet the demands of residents, and thus caused resistance.

Conditions that allowed the initiatives to become and materialize had more to do with the environment of the initiatives, and whether this environment was

receptive to the initiatives. In the Danish cases, the various legal frameworks for collective action, and the Danish tradition of communal and self-build living, offered many examples of previous experiences and had made the professional stakeholders, including the municipalities, accustomed to the idea of co-housing. These cases thus show how a tradition can provide a fertile ground from which new initiatives can spring. Moreover, Danish planning required negotiations between future land owners and public authorities before defining a legal plan, and this enabled the initiatives to find a fit between their demands and local planning conditions. The initiators met with municipalities that had land that needed to be developed, and that were sometimes facing declining rural villages, making the municipalities willing to cooperate closely with the initiators to develop plans that conformed to regular planning codes. Concerning the BIDs in Birmingham, the BID legislation and the Birmingham BID model allowed businesses to take a proactive role in the enhancement of their business environments, an opportunity they eagerly accepted. In addition, the English evolutionary land-use development planning system allowed for an active search for partnerships and projects (the Birmingham Big City Plan), and a receptive attitude of planning officials toward BID-initiated projects opened up possibilities to work in partnerships on projects improving spatial qualities in the various neighborhoods. For the BIDs, experience of partnerships and examples from other places (especially the USA) were also important conditions. In Almere, specific municipal policy to put citizens in the lead invited citizens to become active. These invitations indeed stimulated the residents to take a more proactive role in the urban development of their city. The outcomes of the initiatives did not always match the domain-specific policies set out by the municipalities, but through the willingness of the municipality to learn from their encounters with the civic initiatives, these challenges were largely overcome over time.

	Set in motion	Allowed the materialization
Danish co-housing initiatives	Housing desires	Tradition of do-it-yourself, together Local negotiations in planning Local planning conditions
Birmingham BID initiatives	Concerns for the neighborhood	Legal frameworks for collective action Evolutionary planning Local planning frameworks
Almere civic initiatives	Lack of amenities Urban plans causing resistance	Legal frameworks for collective action Policy to put citizens in the lead

FIGURE 9.1 Overview of conditions found in the cases (part 1)

In all the cases, the existence of experiences and good examples, and of initiators who were well prepared, experienced, and educated, were conditions that set the initiatives in motion and allowed them to materialize. These conditions offered inspiration and made initiators and other stakeholders believe they could be successful.

What all of the abovementioned conditions have in common, is that they turned inactive and non-directional assemblages into *agencement*, and thus provoked a creative "opening up" of possibilities (cf. Van Wezemaal, 2008). This is very much in line with Jean Hillier's multiplanar planning theory as a plea for a new planning ethos that is oriented toward experimentation, the emergence of the new, and an "opening up" of potentialities and connections. Like assemblages, civic initiatives consist of actualities (exercised properties and materializations) and virtualities (potential properties and intents). In between lies a generative field: The civic initiative moves from the virtual into the actual through its process of individuation and materialization (cf. Van Wezemaal, 2012: 103). Conditions such as frameworks for physical structures or reservations for specific land uses (Rauws et al., 2014; Urhahn, 2012) focus mostly on the actual, the physical environment, the layout of the initiative, the available resources, and all the other practical things an initiative needs in order to materialize. Such conditions aim to let the initiative in its individuation process "land" within the frames of the actual. Such conditions, however, provoke a closing down rather than an opening up of possibilities. Such planning frameworks can easily become constraints as well, when their actuality does not fit the virtual intentions and possibilities of an initiative. Such conditions are only able to provoke agency to a limited extent, often in the form of opposition. The challenge for planning practice in an age of active citizenship is therefore to create conditions that "open up," that provoke agency, that go beyond an instrumental thinking, and reach beyond the logic of control (Loepfe, 2014: 211). For this purpose, conditions should be created with a focus on the virtual, instead of on the actual. In the virtual, conditions exist, but in a formless way (Van Wezemaal, 2008: 173). Conditions that merely create a potential are not obligatory to be exercised (idem, 2012); they do not become actual unless they are actualized in the generative process of an initiative. Such conditions are, for instance, legal organizational frameworks that initiators can (but are not obliged to) use, invitations or encouragements to become active, information about possibilities, and inspiring examples, education, and capacity building, etc. Conditions in the virtual will also allow for a closing down, a move toward the actual, but only on behalf of and when desired by the initiative itself. Such conditions both open up possibilities and guide them toward a certain form. This does not have to be a problem, as long as it happens in a reflective manner (Loepfe 2014: 206). Planners should create such enabling conditions

for the sake of the vitality of cities as well, stimulate their ability to adapt to changing circumstances (Rauws et al., 2014, following Hillier, 2007). Creating such conditions can never be a static activity, but is one of constant flux and movement, in order to let one movement be the requisites for new movements, namely the deployment of conditions by potential civic initiatives.

Creating conditions as a planning strategy

Creating conditions that "open up" can also be seen as a planning strategy, as an intentional action to stimulate civic initiatives. However, the cases in this thesis show that many of the conditions that gave rise to the initiatives were far from intentionally created, let alone for the single purpose of stimulating civic initiatives. More often than not, the civic initiatives were triggered by local, situational conditions that motivated them to change a situation and gain influence to do so, sometimes in response to an invitation or event – the conditions that set the initiatives in motion. Conditions in the housing stock, undeveloped land, lack of amenities, deprived neighborhoods, etc. were all conditions in the actual, but certainly not intentionally created, let alone with the purpose of stimulating civic initiatives. In addition, existing planning legislations and legal frameworks were crucial, as these offered the support and stability sought by the initiators. Using these legislations and frameworks gave internal stability to the initiatives, and also created a better understanding between initiatives and public authorities. Also planning regulations, instruments, or authorities played an important role. The traditional municipal role of countering uncertainty through coding, sometimes created tensions with the emerging initiatives, but in most cases this role was rather welcomed by the initiators. The local negotiations of the Danish planning system enabled the initiatives to find a fit between their ideas and local planning codes. The English evolutionary land-use development planning allowed for an active search for partnerships and projects, and a receptive attitude of planning officials toward BID-initiated projects. In both the Danish and the English cases, all projects followed regular planning procedures, occasionally even taking planning work out of the hands of municipal planning officials, enabling the initiatives to move to materialization. In Almere, the planning system also played an enabling role, but this role was either intentionally created to stimulate civic initiatives or created opposition from which the initiatives emerged (see below). These unintentionally created conditions – regardless of whether they are non-situational in the form of legal frameworks or planning legislation, or situational in the form of local conditions that led to decoding – cannot be regarded as a planning strategy to create conditions for active citizenship.

Intentionally created conditions to stimulate civic initiatives, however, can be regarded as a planning strategy. In the Danish cases, no such stimuli on either a national or a local level could be found. There is a history in Denmark of stimulating private commissioning and collective ownership, but during the materialization of the initiatives studied in this thesis, these stimuli were being reduced under the influence of a liberal government. Nor had the local municipalities in the cases intentionally created conditions in order to attract initiatives for collective private commissioning. In the context of the BIDs, however, both the national Labour government and the local government of Birmingham deliberately engaged in creating conditions for civic initiatives among local entrepreneurs in the form of the BID legislation and the Birmingham BID model. Several years later, the Coalition government came up with additional frameworks under the banner of localism and Big Society, but these frameworks were used experimentally in only one BID, as the other BIDs were able to achieve their goals under the original BID frameworks. In Almere, intentionally created conditions for civic initiatives were part of the policy to stimulate residents to take a more proactive role in the urban development of their city. Sooner or later, all cases received an invitation from the municipality, as a trigger to start the initiative. In Almere, attention was also paid to learning experiences, in order to create conditions that could smoothen the paths of future initiatives. All of these intentionally created conditions were not the conditions that set the initiatives in motion, though; they were only conditions that "opened up spaces" and allowed the initiatives to materialize. These were conditions within the virtual and, more importantly, they were non-situational, as they more or less expressed general intents that did not address any specific initiatives or location.

Last, but certainly not least, in each case conditions were found that offered the ability or opportunity to form associations around the decoding of the initiators. In the Danish co-housing initiatives, the initiators were able to form associations with municipalities that had undeveloped land available. The associations formed were intentional, however not for the sake of civic initiatives, but for the pure sake of land development and involved the initiators and the municipality. In Birmingham, associations were formed around the decoding from the abovementioned conditions. In these associations, the business community (which can be seen as civic actors), key stakeholders in the area (private), and the City Centre Partnership (public) participated. They shared a desire to change the abovementioned conditions, to unite, and to become proactive, and were willing to start a new way of working in the form of a BID. Later on, when the BID started taking projects forward, associations were again formed among actors willing to make actual physical improvements within the neighborhoods, in which they were joined by the BID (civic), private actors (such as developers), and other public

actors (mainly the city’s planning department). These actors were looking not for long-term stable partnerships, but for short-term projects through which shared interests could be realized. The Birmingham Big City Plan opened up an active search for partnerships and projects, which created openings to which the BIDs could respond. These associations were conditions formed intentionally, not necessarily for the sake of civic initiatives, but rather for the sake of actual improvements in the neighborhoods. Also in Almere, associations were formed among actors who were also willing to change certain conditions; the participants included the initiators (civic) and the municipality (public), and in some cases also private actors (real estate owners or developers). In Almere, all cases sooner or later received encouragement from the municipality to continue their initiative in new settings, and in some cases, people received an invitation from the municipality, that was the trigger to start an initiative in the first place. These invitations and the formation of associations were conditions intentionally created to stimulate civic initiatives, and also helped in making the initiative emerge and further materialize.

What these last conditions illustrate is that, in addition to conditions that set initiatives in motion (unintentionally created) or allowed the initiatives to materialize (unintentionally or intentionally created for the sake of civic initiatives, and both situational and non-situational), there is another condition: The actors must be aware of the potentials of opening up (cf. Loepfe, 2014). This last form of conditions is always situational and intentional. All cases show how important it is to find like-minded people and planning authorities that are willing to form associations around the changes envisioned by the initiative, to find others who are willing to abandon the usual ways of doing. Finding those associations proves to be even more important and effective than spending time convincing those who regard the initiative as threatening. With regard to existing planning legislations and legal frameworks, the challenge is, time and again, to use, deploy, and refold them according to the interest of those involved. The ability to do so, however, depends largely on the resourcefulness of the initiators, their know-how and capacities, and on the ability of the municipal officials. Municipal officials should know the extensibility of their own frameworks, the room for maneuver to interpret them creatively, and the possibility of changing or deviating from these frameworks, when considered opportune.

The planning strategy of creating conditions that “open up” and recognizing the possibilities to open up, answers to two aspects of assemblage thinking in planning: Provoking spaces of possibility and experiment in existing assemblages, and changing assemblages from an inactive, non-directional state to a space of agencement (Hillier & Van Wezemaal, 2012: 316-318). Talking of “conditions,”

	Unintentional	Intentional
<i>Non-situational</i>	Frameworks for collective action Features of planning legislation	Policy for active citizenship
<i>Situational</i>	Decoding of the initiators	The ability to recognize potentials of opening up, and to move along with the initiatives and its possibilities (co-evolution).

FIGURE 9.2 Overview of conditions found in the cases (part 2)

however, seems to create a distance between the condition maker and the condition user, between public authorities and self-organized initiatives. One very important condition that has been only touched on in this paragraph, is one that overcomes this distance. This specific condition answers to the third aspect of assemblage thinking in planning: The active creation of assemblages. This can be done through an intercession, a “going in between,” the production of creative interference, as a way of generating agencement (ibid., 2012: 327). This is explained by the following, second conclusion on planning strategies in an age of active citizenship.

2

CONCLUSION 2: THE NEED FOR NAVIGATORS

Establishing a new assemblage

The second research question concerned the way in which civic initiatives gained robustness and resilience. Whereas conditions that made the initiative emerge were often found at the start of the initiative, robustness and resilience was gained during the trajectory of the initiative over time. From the cases, it becomes evident that most of the robustness and resilience grew out of a continuous alteration between expansion and contraction, toward an eventual fixation of the initiative and its plans and projects in new and existing codes.

The trajectory of an initiative over time can be seen as the establishment of a new assemblage, and as a transition from the virtual to the actual. That this establishment of new assemblages is a core activity for planners, is affirmed

in post-structuralist planning. Assemblages are maintained by planners (Hillier & Van Wezemaël, 2012: 313), but planners also play a proactive role in creating them (Van Wezemaël, 2012: 93). As van Wezemaël puts it, “[...] the complexity-turn calls for a conception of planning as an active, creative and experimental exploration of trajectories in heterogeneous assemblages and thus asks what they can do, which introduces an orientation toward the future and the notion of becoming” (ibid.: 108). Boelens’s (2009) actor-relational approach can be seen as an operationalization of this proactive creation of assemblages. Boelens uses the notion of translation for this proactive engagement of planners in forming actor networks around spatial interventions (Boelens, 2009: 192; Webb, 2011: 274). Especially human actors have a role in forming these actornetworks, as within planning, according to Boelens, objects cannot be seen as self-acting, but are rather “mediated factors of importance,” which only act through human representatives who place a value on these objects due to their own self-interest (Boelens, 2009: 193; Balducci et al., 2011: 492). The forming of actor-networks then takes place through several steps, that imply the gathering around a certain matter of concern, the collection of resources, and the institutional anchoring of a certain solution (Boelens, 2009). Thus, this actor-relational approach is evolutionary, as the plan and planning itself is always under construction, entangled in heterogeneous spatial processes of “becoming” between actant networks and spatial-institutional arrangements (idem., 2011: 556-557). As resource interdependence and interrelatedness increases in society (Booher & Innes, 2002; Van Wezemaël, 2012; Zuidema, 2012, see Chapter 2), the main tasks for planners becomes more and more the collection these resources, such as land, property, knowledge, procedural and legal competences, funding, investment capital, authority, and key positions within networks. These resources are spread among various actors, and in order to collect them, institutional barriers often need to be taken down. Both Boelens and Van Wezemaël thus see planning as an activity in which means are successfully matched to ends, an act of bringing together all available means in order to affect (contraction and coding). At the same time, this can be a problem-solving skill when a crisis situation or a new planning problem needs to be solved, and new means must be found toward a new end, or wrong ends have to be detached from some ends (decoding and expansion). However, as both Boelens and Van Wezemaël emphasize, this act of creating assemblages requires a certain amount of effort. This second conclusion thus focuses on the specific role various actors take on in this gaining of robustness and resilience, and claims that “navigators” have a central position in this process. By looking at how this process took place within the various cases in this thesis, and who took up this navigating role, insight is created into the role of professional planners and governments in this process – the second and third objectives of this thesis.

Connectors in the cases

In every case, more than one actor was involved in collecting the resources necessary to establish the initiative and to actualize it toward a materialization in space, and more than one actor was engaged in setting up new projects and partnerships as part of the initiative. And although the actors who played a role in the move from expansion and contraction toward coding were different in each and every case, in general it can be said that there were three main actor groups: The case initiators (civic background), the governmental officials involved (public background), and third parties (commercial or not-for-profit background).

1 *The case initiators*

In the Danish co-housing projects, the main actors in expansion, contraction, and eventual coding were the initiators, often just one or a few individuals. These initiators established a group, defined core values, drew up a project plan, looked for locations, applied for loans, hired consultants on specific issues, invested in the relationship with already present local communities, and negotiated with the municipal planning officials about their plans.

In Birmingham, the City Centre Partnership was the main initiator of the various BIDs. But each new BID initiative was then quickly taken over by the lead stakeholders and businesses within their neighborhood, forming the civic group behind the BID. Most of these lead actors (major companies, real estate owners, police, transport authority, political representatives from the city council) had already displayed a certain proactive behavior toward or concern for the area. Their aim was to find consensus and a community among individual businesses in the area. When the BID was established, these lead actors often found a place on the BID board. They elected a BID chair as their representative and appointed a BID manager to oversee day-to-day operations. The role of connector within the BIDs was thus divided over three levels. The board guaranteed the connectivity of the BID with its main stakeholders; the chair maintained connections at a political and strategic level, and with the other Birmingham BIDs; and the manager maintained connections with the individual businesses at an operational level. Together, the board, chair, and manager (and management office), sometimes assisted by business members, determined the direction and the strategic issues of the BID, and explored possibilities for new partnerships and projects.

In the civic initiatives in Almere, the initiators took a lead in expansion and contraction, but in very distinct ways. The initiator of the creative platform

initially only pitched an idea, whereas other stakeholders brought in experience, knowledge, locations, funding, and new connections to even more resources. The initiator maintained a central position, though, and while experience increased over time, the leading role of the other actors decreased. In the case of the self-management, the initiating residents were the main link with the municipality (both officials and politicians) and their fellow residents. They kept the group active and defined new interventions over time. In the case of the park, the leading resident linked together other residents, local businesses, and the municipal area manager. In the co-housing projects, the residents were represented by the consultancy firm that negotiated on their behalf.

2 *Governmental agencies and/or officials*

In the Danish cases, an important contracting role was taken by municipal planning officials. After the initiators had found a location, these officials helped the initiative define a local plan, pass through the necessary legal procedures (including building permits), and find creative ways around any potential obstructions, such as challenging architectural demands from the initiators, in order to get the land developed.

In Birmingham, as said, the City Centre Partnership played a major role, especially around the start-ups and renewal ballots of the various BIDs. Once established and operational, the BIDs sought projects and partnerships. Simultaneously, other actors, such as the police, the transport agency, and sometimes private actors in the form of real estate developers or owners, sought such support and additional funding for their plans. The city's Planning and Regeneration Office and its planning officials also took up this search, and explicitly focused on finding opportunities to actualize the project aims defined in their Big City Plan, and to do so in in day-to-day deliberation and partnership with the BIDs.

In the Almere cases, municipal officials also played an important role. In the case of the park, the municipal area manager, whose official task was to establish links with residents and stimulate activities and involvement, brought in resources, such as budgets or materials, and deliberated specific projects with the involved municipal departments. In the case of self-management, three municipal officials took on this connecting role: The local park keeper during the informal self-management, the manager of the urban renewal program, and the manager of the major landscape maintenance process. These last two brought in budgets and legal procedures in order to formalize the self-management, and

also the connection to the SEV. With regard to the creative platform, a municipal official from the Culture department played an important role in expansion, contraction, and coding, as she time and again brought the initiator into contact with budget programs and real estate owners with vacant properties, and also with the SEV. In the co-housing cases in Almere, a special role was up taken by the municipal department for Private Commissioning, which later became the *Kavelwinkel* and IBBA. These departments were important in connecting groups to locations and supportive financial funds.

3 *Connecting Agencies*

A third, and in some cases crucial, actor in the expansion, contraction, and coding of an initiative, can be found in non-governmental and non-initiating agencies, either not-for-profit organizations or commercial consultants. In the Danish co-housing projects, a network organization for eco-communities, called LØS, provided knowledge about how to start an initiative, form a group, and negotiate with spatial planners in the form of education, and exchanges of lessons learned, to initiators who subscribed to the network.

In Birmingham, the City Centre Partnership stimulated the exchange of knowledge and experience between the BIDs, and was assisted by the larger network called ATCM (Association of Town Centre Management). This organization had introduced BID legislation in England, and organized connectivity and exchanges between BIDs and town center management offices (of which the Birmingham City Centre Partnership was one) throughout England. Neither ATCM nor LØS held any negotiations on behalf of the initiatives, though.

In the Almere cases, the network organization called SEV was an important actor. Focused on stimulating experiments in self-organization, it brought in additional budget and critical reflections on the process of formalization. It also organized negotiations with the municipality on behalf of, but always together with, the initiators. Occasionally, in some co-housing initiatives (one Danish and those in Almere), a developer or consultancy firm took on this connecting role, in the negotiations between the initiators or future residents and the municipality on location, architecture, and financial schemes, helping the initiators to form a group, formalize loans, and decide on floor plans.

Theoretical framing of this connecting role: Navigation

The cases show that the actors who contribute greatly to the collection of resources, the institutional embedding of the initiative, and its increased robustness and resilience, are usually people who are able to establish all kinds of connections. They know their self-interest and perspective very well (as initiator, municipal official, or third party), but are also very capable of relating that self-interest to other actors and organizations. This is in line with assemblage planning, as it refers to “our ability to combine various independent attributes (objects, events, meaning, interactions, stories) into something meaningful, which is a creative process shared with and understood by others” (De Roo et al., 2012: 11). Over the years, a vast amount of literature within management studies, policy sciences, public administration, etc. has paid attention to this connecting role of individual agents in change processes (Van der Stoep, 2013). These persons have been given many names (Van der Stoep, 2013; Specht, 2012; Van Meerkerk, 2014), including knowledge and innovation brokers (Winch & Courtney, 2007; Klerkx & Leeuwis 2009), *bricoleurs* (Levi-Strauss, 1966; Cleaver, 2002; Padt, 2007), boundary spanners (Noble & Jones, 2006; Williams, 2002), policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon, 2003; Zahariadis, 2007), street level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 2010), reflexive practitioner (Schön, 1983), deliberative practitioners (Forester, 1999), everyday makers (Bang & Sorensen, 1999), everyday fixers (Hendriks & Tops, 2005), civic entrepreneurs (Durose, 2009), or frontline workers (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Hartman & Tops, 2005).

In the context of civic initiatives, Van Meerkerk (2014) pays attention to boundary spanners, individuals who are able to make connections between the spheres of public, private, and civic actors (e.g. Alter & Hage, 1993; Williams, 2002; Van Meerkerk, 2014). According to Van Meerkerk (2014), boundary spanners are able to think beyond the boundaries of the organization they work for and represent, empathize with actors on the other side of organizational boundaries, build and maintain sustainable relationships, organize a mutual exchange of information, and search for shared meanings. This enables them to understand the coding schemes and needs of existing institutional structures in relation to the emerging structure of a civic initiative, and to negotiate a fit between an initiative and its environment (*ibid.*). Their role as an active listener to and translator of the needs of various actors enables them to establish durable relationships (Specht, 2012). As such, these boundary spanners bring in connections and legitimacy for the initiative. Specht (*ibid.*) also emphasizes the knowledge, capacities, and acquaintances these boundary spanners introduce, in addition to their ability to bring in specific knowledge that civic initiatives often lack, and the capacity for institutional actors to be flexible and move along with the dynamics of a civic initiative. Specht argues that these boundary spanners usually have a professional

background (*ibid.*). And whereas Van Meerkerk argues that this boundary spanning role can be taken by actors from all spheres and organizations, including civic initiatives with no specific professional background in planning, he also admits that many of the boundary spanners he found in his cases, had previously worked within governmental institutions and could in this sense also be called professionals (Van Meerkerk, 2014: 194).

So far, however, these boundary spanners are described rather non-directionally by Specht and Van Meerkerk, as these authors mainly stress the boundary spanners' ability to empathize with and translate various worlds and needs, without necessarily taking or choosing a certain direction. But according to Van der Stoep (2014), civic initiatives do need certain attractors as well, so-called sticky stories that mobilize action and are able to overcome institutional resistance to change. Such stories present clear and stable ambitions, and are relevant to what other actors consider meaningful. The people who build such stories have the same characteristics as the boundary spanners described by Van Meerkerk and Specht, and are known for their connecting qualities, ability to empathize and listen, and are attentive to events, circumstances, and context that provides the opportunity to connect and align stories and people. But what is more, according to Van der Stoep, these people are able to "sell" ideas, getting attention, and navigate targeted supporters' self-referentiality (tweak their conceptions in favor of the initiative). With this, Van der Stoep adds a certain notion of "direction" to the work of boundary spanners (*ibid.*). This notion of direction is very much in line with what Hillier (2010, 2011) calls "strategic navigation." Navigation implies an embarkation point, a journey, and a goal "to reach land," but without knowing the specific destination: "Trajectories are followed rather than specific end points" (*idem.*, 2010: 90). In the context of civic initiatives (a practice that Hillier hardly addresses), strategic navigation can be seen as an ongoing experimentation toward possible futures, led by the "people on the raft," namely those who are part of a civic initiative. They wonder whether anyone on board can tweak conditions so that the outcome (reaching land) becomes more favorable, they establish conditions for a safe journey while underway, sometimes just looking for the path of the least resistance, constructing stories in fluid forms that retain the ability to change (*ibid.*: 87). At the same time, the people on the raft look for other rafts or ships heading in the same direction to become connected or coded to, and they ask people to join them on the raft, all in order to create the necessary stability for a safe journey and to reach land in the end. Just like boundary spanning, Hillier emphasizes that this practice is not possible without a constant transgression of boundaries. Moreover, strategic navigation is a performance of risk-taking, of not being in total control, of transcending the technicalities of planning practice, and of allowing possibilities for something new to emerge (Hillier, 2011: 14).

As said, the notion of “navigation” adds a direction to “boundary spanning,” but still with a flexibility to change and without a fixed and known endpoint. Whereas “boundary spanning” itself seems to relate mostly to the behavior of expansion and contraction, and sometimes coding, “navigation” relates back to the decoding of the initiators and other actors as their embarkation points and possible futures. Navigators are certainly not intermediaries who do not transform anything in transporting the course of action, but they are also not mere mediators (cf. Latour, 2005) like boundary spanners are, as there is also a clear self-interest and thus direction involved in their actions. Therefore, this activity of connecting, seen in all the cases discussed in this thesis, is further discussed as “navigation.” The main performers of this activity are “navigators,” and the second planning strategy that fits an age of active citizenship is “be a navigator.” The last part of this conclusion focuses on the challenges these navigators face, and what they need in order to perform their activities.

Challenges navigators face, and how to overcome them

Time and again, the role of navigators proves to be as challenging as it is crucial. Navigators are like the outposts of organizations, and they neither belong to the environment nor to the official organization they represent. They will always be “in the middle.” This means that their performance often implies a critical reflection on the functioning and the ideas of their own organizations, that they more often than not show inappropriate rather than appropriate behavior, that they can encounter forces of resistance or of institutional rigidity, that they easily become isolated, and most of all, that they feel a tension between what their home organization expects from them and what emerges within the group of the civic initiative (cf. Peeters et al., 2010 in Van Meerkerk, 2014). Governmental navigators, for instance, are often confronted by the institutional logic of their organizations, the accountability mechanisms of representative democracy, the pressure to follow internal guidelines and routines, a culture of project management in which projects have tight boundaries, and a sector structure of the governmental organization. These internal structures and mechanisms often do not match with the complexity and dynamics of contemporary governance issues, or with the dynamics of dealing with civic initiatives and can thus prevent the navigators from performing their activities (Van Meerkerk, 2014). In other words, in addition to accompanying an initiative toward contraction and coding, they should also be constantly aware and capable of decoding and expansion.

The empirical findings in the cases of this thesis show, however, that the activity of navigation does not have to cause any problems. The role of the “governmental” navigator could be embedded within the organizational structure and thus

internally legitimized, as was the case with the City Centre Partnership and the handful of city council planners in Birmingham whose specific task was to find partnerships with the BIDs, or the Plotshop in Almere. The role of the navigator could be embedded in regular planning legislation, as was the case, at least to some extent, in England and Denmark. The role of the navigator can also be free of severe challenges when these navigators only aim for targeted and temporary partnerships around specific projects, in which they can unambiguously serve the aim of their own organization, as was the case in the creative platform in Almere, the public realm projects the BIDs took forward, and the co-housing projects in Almere and Denmark. The role of the navigator is problematic and challenging, though, when no match can be found around specific projects or partnerships, as was the case for one of the BIDs, or when the individual navigator empathizes with the initiative but is unable to find any anchor points within the organization. Then, navigators can become stuck between the interests of initiative and those of the municipality. This brings the challenge of accounting for time spent on a certain initiative (creative platform in Almere), of finding new ways of organizing, of formalizing new codes (self-management in Almere), and of discontinuity when a navigator is forced to change jobs (park in Almere).

For “civic” navigators, the challenges are comparable, as they too function as outposts of the initiatives they represent. The co-housing projects, for instance, faced the major challenge of getting and keeping a group together during a very dynamic process of finding locations, setting up a legal plan, choosing financial schemes, etc. In some cases, an entire group was replaced due to choices made by the navigators, forcing them to gather a new group around an existing agreement with local planning officials. The civic navigators of the BIDs faced the challenge of justifying the civic activities as being of commercial relevance and interest to the individual business members. The benefit for the civic navigators of the BIDs is that their role is evaluated and again legitimized in the ballot, every five years. In the cases of Almere, the groups around the civic initiatives are more volatile, so less effort is made to keep a group together and to legitimize actions. However, the municipality or fellow residents sometimes ask who these leading initiators actually represent. For the “commercial” or “not-for-profit” navigators, not many challenges are found, as the activity of navigation belongs to the core of their professional work, and they are involved in the cases only temporarily. The only risk they face is when the facilitation of an initiative group demands much more time and effort than foreseen, and that risk is merely a financial one.

Both the cases and the literature stress the importance of navigators in strengthening the robustness and resilience of civic initiatives. The cases and the literature also show that this navigating role has its challenges: Navigators

need to be internally and externally connected, and need legitimacy within their own organizations to do their job. The cases show that when making connections is their main professional and institutionally embedded task, the challenges navigators face are mainly limited to practical matters related to specific projects or issues. However, there is a question mark over whether any specific organizational structure will be the “right” one to lead navigators to do their work. Perhaps of more importance is whether an organization offers room for maneuver and discretion, for improvisation and experiment (Specht, 2012), whether recurring bottlenecks can be addressed and discussed, and whether a navigator is equipped by his organization with sufficient knowledge, skills, and information. This relates strongly to the conditions for opening up and being able to recognize the potentials of opening up, as detailed in conclusion 1. This means that governments have to perform a double role. On the one hand, they need to fulfill their traditional role of representatives of the public, providing security, equity, and regulation by law, and living up to representation, entitlement, status, accountability, legitimacy, scale, and order of governance (Swyngedouw, 2005). On the other hand, they must facilitate the role of navigator within their organization. This challenge lies not so much in the preparation of plans, guidelines, or procedures that make navigation possible, as in creating methods with which the navigators can legitimately move along with the dynamics of citizens’ initiatives. But as navigation is an activity practiced by individuals rather than a specific institutional role, and therefore very performative, attention should also be paid to the connective and relational capabilities, competences, capacities and experience these navigators have (Van Meerkerk, 2014). As the importance of such navigators, from a civic, governmental, commercial, or not-for-profit position, will increase as the number and diversity of bottom-up citizen initiatives grows, if governments want to be responsive to these initiatives they should pay attention not only to the navigators’ institutional embeddedness, but also to the question how to educate and train such people (ibid.).

3

CONCLUSION 3: THE FLAT ONTOLOGY OF PLANNING STRATEGY

Perspectives on spatial planning

The first chapter of this thesis started with an opposition between civic initiatives and professional public planners engaged in participatory planning. However, by developing an understanding of civic initiatives as a form of post-structuralist self-organization in the chapters that followed, this opposition gradually dissolved. Whereas the first conclusion still discerned conditions that were (intentionally and unintentionally) created by, among others, professional planners in the favor of civic initiatives, the second conclusion elaborated on the importance of navigators within professional organizations and civic initiatives. As such, this second conclusion suggested a certain symmetry between the professional world and that of civic initiatives. The third conclusion goes a step further and reflects on processes of becoming, and self-organization as emerging, assemblages as an *equivalent of planning*. Thereby, it answers the third research question: What planning strategies are developed in, and in response to, the civic initiatives? It also relates to the first research objective to develop a vocabulary to address civic initiatives as self-organization, by taking the theoretical framework (developed in Chapter 4) slightly further. By doing so, it puts the third research objective, namely to develop insight into the role of the professional planner, into perspective.

When addressing planning strategy, first a short elaboration should be given on what planning is often understood to be. Renowned spatial planning theorists have generally stressed that the core of planning practice and theory comprises the collaborative development of strategies (Hillier, 2011), creating collective awareness around spatial issues (Forester, 1989), addressing collective concerns and offering ideas about the quality of local and regional environments (Healey, 1997), and operationalizing these ideas with a vision, coherent actions, and means for implementation that shape and frame what a place is and might become (Albrecht, 2006: 1491, also in Loepfe, 2014; Van der Stoep, 2014). Additionally, some Dutch practitioners have explained planning as the interaction between a given situation and a new program (Frieling, 2007), or as the shaping of the best reciprocal interaction between space and society, such for the sake of society (Commissie Van Veen, in Boelens, 2005; Vermeersch, 1994 in Leinfelder, 2007). Without explicitly stating so, these theorists and practitioners clearly had a professional planner in mind, more often than not working on behalf of public

government. The previously discussed post-structuralist planning approaches aim to go beyond this focus on the professional public spatial planner, by seeing planners foremost as proactive change agents in spatial becoming, and acknowledging that “*all* actants are engaged with some form of spatial planning and that decision-making is the emergent outcome of the interplay between this multiplicity of activities” (Hillier, 2007: 271). As such, planning is not a purely professional practice, in the sense of professionals working on the realization and implementation of prefixed plans in a predictable and calculable world; nor is it a practice that primarily concerns public policymaking, in which professional planners take a lead in shaping people’s attention to and understanding of situations (idem., 2002: 42). This corresponds to convictions that governments and their agencies are not the only, or the most prominent, actors, as various actors in business and civil society plan their actions in spaces beyond the confines of government (Kreukels, 1985; Boelens et al., 2006). In order to deal with the complexity that emerges from this open view on multiple planning agents, Hillier and Van Wezemaal (2012) argue that the professional planner should move as close as possible to the life world of citizens, and Boelens (2010) argues that the professional planner should focus on identifying opportunities and connecting them to possible actors who might want to associate with common opportunities, possibilities, or themes (Balducci et al., 2011: 493). So despite their acknowledgment of a multitude of planners, including non-professional ones, these planning strategies still have the professional planner in mind.

No matter how valuable these perspectives on planning are, the abovementioned theorists and practitioners still seem to find it hard to think beyond the confines of their own professional profession. Therefore, for the sake of this third conclusion, it is pertinent to look at how “planning” is defined outside the field of spatial planning, namely within psychology and organizational studies. For example, Portugali (2011) has an intriguing view of planning: He sees it more as a basic cognitive capability of humans than as a pure professional activity (Portugali, 2011). In psychology, planning is defined as thinking of a way to achieve a certain goal or desired action (Morris & Ward, 2005), and the ability to bring to actualization these thoughts about a desired goal by organizing activities and taking actions (Ajzen, 1999). This understanding of planning is also found in the organizational studies by Mintzberg (1994), who sees planning as thinking about the future and how such a future might be brought about through actions that are embedded in collective decision-making and a societal context (Dror, 1971; Mintzberg, 1994). This view also corresponds with the idealism that De Roo et al. (2012) see as an intrinsic mind-set within planning practice. According to De Roo et al. (ibid.: 7), planners compose and suggest desired outcomes to tackle difficulties faced at a particular time and place. These ideas about what would

be better are mental pictures of “reals-to-come,” ideas about how to improve things. Civic initiatives also emerge in order to make something better, to improve a certain situation from their particular perspective. Plans, in this perspective, are expressions of such intentions (Mintzberg, 1994) and, as the empirical studies of this thesis show, are made everywhere, at all times, at various spatial and time scales, comprehensive, specific, initiated by public, business, and civic actors. But despite their innumerable differences and immense diversity, all these plans are heading in the same direction: Toward the future, and toward a certain envisioned and desired spatial change. It is the ability to express such intentions and put them to action is what turns people into spatial planners. However, the distinction between intended and unintended behavior or action is often difficult to make (Ajzen, 1999; Wildavsky, 1973). Again, then, Mintzberg provides perspective by introducing the term “strategy,” as a certain consistency or pattern in behavior over time (Mintzberg, 1994). This pattern in behavior can then either be intended and deliberate with an overall goal in mind, or be emergent from a chain of little ideas or initiatives (*ibid.*). This view on planning as a mix of intentionalities and behavior (*cf.* Ajzen, 1999) brings into perspective the equivalence of planning and self-organization, as the process of organizing (activities, behavior) the actualization of a self (intentions, intentionalities). It also softens the relation between the term planning and the formalized procedures, rationality, integrated system of decisions and formalized documents it is often associated with (Mintzberg, 1994). By seeing planning as behavior, planning becomes performative, a consistency of behavior and intentions as part of the virtual, and individual actions, organization of, and interventions in space as part of the actual world (Hillier, 2007). In this line, the term “planning strategy” (not to be confused with strategic planning) addresses deliberate or emergent patterns of behaviors that are intended to achieve a certain goal within a world full of other intentionalities and behaviors and (with a wink to Mintzberg) formalized procedures.

Planning strategies in the cases

So what did the actors in the various cases do in order to improve things and actualize these desired “reals-to-come”? The previous two conclusions focused on the self-organizing behavior that was displayed by the various actors in the cases. The first conclusion explained how decoding and coding behavior revealed conditions that gave rise to initiatives. The second explained how the associations formed in decoding, expansion, contraction, and coding led to a gradual growth in the robustness and resilience of the initiatives, and brought them to materialization over time. These conclusions led to the definition of two planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship: Create conditions that enable an

opening up, and be a navigator for and in civic initiatives. When looking for more patterns in behavior in the various cases, most of the trajectories of the civic initiatives seem to move from decoding toward coding. However, some initiatives moved toward coding as soon as possible, whereas others tried to stay as close to decoding as they could, and coded *nolens volens*. Some initiatives, on the other hand, even started with coding, and found appropriate decoding only after a first round of expansion and contraction. Other initiatives tried to keep their coding and decoding light, and searched for small ad hoc partnerships in a continuous process of expansion and contraction. This shows that all four forms of behavior in processes of becoming were present in the cases, though in varying intensities and sometimes sequential to a certain extent.

But, as said, planning is not just about behavior: It is also about intentionality. So in order to identify the planning strategies within the cases, attention should also be paid to the intentionalities behind the various types of behavior. The case trajectories all moved unanticipated and more or less simultaneously through the four forms of behavior. Many things happened collateral, and only in hindsight did their trajectories seem to have evolved linearly. But still, all cases contained a certain degree of intentionality. The actors starting an initiative always had some sort of intention, regardless of whether that came from an idealistic perspective, a personal, individual interest, or a practical problem to solve. As described in Chapter 4, the three intentionalities derived from translation are interfering for change, networking for a fit, and assembling to maintain (see Chapter 4). When drawing up a schedule with decoding, expansion, contraction, and coding on the horizontal axis, and these three intentionalities on the vertical axis, 12 ontological archetypical planning strategies show up. These are described below. An example from the cases is given as an illustration of each planning strategy. For an overview of these 12 strategies, see figure 9.3. How these strategies were applied in the cases is described below and shown in figure 9.4.

- 1 **Interference for change** stands for agencement, making a difference, by redoing space and by changing perceptions. This intentionality is highly situated, externally oriented, and directed. The energy of this intentionality is released in short moments of high intensity, for instance, in small physical interventions and/or temporary events. The main focus is on changing the environment, and the organization of the initiative is fully instrumental in achieving that change. When this intentionality is combined with **decoding**, the interference is enacted by telling what should be different, and by creating events that point out new directions. This happened, for instance, in the first festival organized by the creative platform in Almere (showing the potential of a creative community), or in

	Decoding	Expansion	Contraction	Coding
<i>Interfering for change</i>	Showing what should be changed in order to point out the need for a new direction.	Exploring different options and opinions in order to point out possible futures.	Emphasizing the like-mindedness and common grounds in order to create support for a new direction.	Setting up rules and regulations in order to make a change happen.
<i>Networking for a fit</i>	Changing things and abandoning old practices in order to move along and find a fit with the environment.	Exploring different options and opinions in order to move along and find a fit between the initiative and an environment.	Creating like-mindedness and common grounds between the initiative and its environment.	Using existing and new rules and regulations (and sometimes tweaking them) in order to find a fit between the initiative and its environment.
<i>Assembling to maintain</i>	Defining what should be changed in order to maintain the quality and stability of the assemblage.	Disseminating and exploring the possibilities of and for the assemblage, in order to strengthen its stability and legitimacy.	Defining like-mindedness and common grounds in order to maintain the stability and strengthen the durability of the assemblage.	Upholding rules and regulations in order to maintain the security and stability of the assemblage.

FIGURE 9.3 Twelve archetypical planning strategies

the initial campaign against excessive clubbing on Broad Street (showing the need for a BID). When the intentionality of interference is combined with **expansion**, the will to make a difference is enacted by an exploration of options and opinions, and various possibilities of what could become. This planning strategy was used by, for instance, the municipal official involved in the creative platform in Almere, who deliberately tried to contact a variety of creative entrepreneurs in order to change the usual focus of cultural policy on major cultural institutions. When the intentionality of interference is combined with the behavior of **contraction**, attempts are made to create a common ground and like-mindedness around an envisioned change and new direction, either through events or by actual small physical interventions. This planning strategy was applied during, for instance, the activities of the Hoekwierde self-management experiment in Almere, where the local community is encouraged to join in the initiative, improve the quality of the green environment, and take a stronger stand against the municipal building plans. This planning strategy was also used in Fri og Fro, when the initiators organized an

exhibition about their plans for the local community, in an attempt to win their support. When the intentionality of interference is combined with the behavior of **coding**, the will to change and point out new directions is enacted by setting up new rules and regulations. Examples of this planning strategy are the introduction of the BID legislation and Birmingham BID model by the City Centre Partnership in Birmingham, and the introduction of rules and regulations to stimulate collective private commissioning by the municipality of Almere.

- 2 Networking for a fit**, the second intentionality, is much more fluent than interference or the maintenance of an assemblage. It has a rather moderate intensity, and is oriented toward both internal and external dynamics. Its main focus is on trying to find a fit between the internal world of the initiative and the external environment, in a process of mutual reconstitution, and its aim is a gradual strengthening of a network by collecting resources and knitting together events and interests. When this intentionality is combined with the behavior of **decoding**, awareness grows that in order to move along and find a fit between the environment and the initiative, old practices and ideas sometimes have to be abandoned and new routes need to be taken. This planning strategy was applied by, for instance, the municipal official involved in the Fri og Fro initiative in Denmark. In order to get the initiative established in Egebjerg and save the local village from decline, the decision was made to diverge from the original local plan. When combined with the behavior of **expansion**, the intentionality to organize a network is enacted by an exploration of all the various options that could create a fit between the initiative and an environment, like the creative platform and park in Almere, or the BIDs and the city's Planning and Regeneration Office in Birmingham. It was used by the co-housing initiatives when they were looking for a site to settle on. When combined with the behavior of **contraction**, the intentionality to build a network is enacted by the finding of a common ground and shared interest between the environment and the initiative, and perhaps even an internalization of the environment into the initiative. This planning strategy is closely linked with the previous one, as possibilities for projects and partnerships (including the co-housing initiatives) needed to be defined as a common goal and shared endeavor, before they could materialize. When combined with the behavior of **coding**, the intentionality of organizing a network is enacted by looking how existing or new rules can enable a fit between the initiative and its environment, sometimes even tweaking existing rules a little. This planning strategy was applied by, for instance, the municipal officials involved in the Hoekwierde self-management

experiment in Almere, where in deliberations with the initiatives, new rules and regulations for future initiatives for self-management were made.

- 3 *Assembling to maintain***, the third intentionality, is a rather stable, continuous, and durable one. It aims at coherence and homogeneity, the maintenance of stable and tight networks, a consolidation of goals, and the provision of a base of security and stability. The assemblage is more internally oriented compared to the other intentionalities, and can sometimes even be a little constraining. When combined with the behavior of ***decoding***, the focus on change and new directions is rather instrumental in keeping an existing assemblage functioning. This planning strategy was applied in, for instance, Broad Street, where the BID was seen as a way to maintain the qualities and potentials of the diversity of economic activities, without the neighborhood falling into decline. This planning strategy can also be seen in the Big City Plan, which points out areas for improvement in order to maintain and improve the quality of Birmingham's city center. When combined with the behavior of ***expansion***, the intentionality of maintaining an assemblage is enacted by disseminating and exploring the possibilities of, and for, the assemblage. This planning strategy can also be found in, for instance, all the BIDs, where plans and ideas are explored for further improvement of the neighborhood, but also to create more legitimacy for the BIDs. When combined with the behavior of ***contraction***, the intentionality of maintaining an assemblage is enacted by defining like-mindedness and common grounds in order to create a base of security and stability. This planning strategy was used in almost all cases, as the common grounds and the stability it offers is very important for the durability of an initiative. In Fri og Fro and Hallingelille, this planning strategy received even more attention soon after the building process was finished, as individual building activities had undermined some of the collectivity within the initiative. When combined with the behavior of ***coding***, the intentionality of maintaining an assemblage is enacted by upholding rules and regulations that create a base of security and stability. Without exception, all initiatives in some way or another applied at least one institutional form to their initiative, in order to achieve some sort of legal status. For instance, the Birmingham BIDs acted according to the BID legislation, which gave them trustworthiness in the eyes of their own business community, the local authorities, and potential investors in the area. But this planning strategy is also applied by, for instance, the municipality of Almere in the cases of Hoekwierde self-management experiment, the Association of Friends, and the Corsinies. In the first two, the municipality has stuck to its original plans

– building plans for the green areas and the original landscape design for the park. In the third case, the municipality maintains the set of rules and regulations put forward to stimulate collective private commissioning.

This overview of 12 ontological archetypical planning strategies, all enacted within the various cases at different moments in time, show how diverse these strategies can be. In a small attempt to generalize, it could be said that the BIDs perhaps focused a bit more on “assembling to maintain,” defining new interferences from that stable position and through networking with other actors. The co-housing projects perhaps put more emphasis on “networking for a fit,” as their interferences were more directed toward creating support and their assembling to maintain was directed toward keeping their group of initiators together. And some of the civic initiatives in Almere were perhaps a bit more focused on “interfering for change,” although they did network and assemble to maintain as well. However, various planning strategies can be present in one case simultaneously, enacted by different actors, and one actor can apply multiple strategies simultaneously, and even switch between strategies. It thus becomes evident that planning strategies can never stand alone; there is a certain need for diversity in planning strategies in order to get projects realized, to get initiatives materialized. This overview of planning strategies is therefore not an attempt to provide an overall structure to categorize initiatives and their planners, but is rather a method that can help in creating an understanding of difference and diversity of planning strategies, and moreover, the need for that diversity and difference. With the overall aim of materializing a civic initiative, the four forms of behavior more or less explain how the initiators deal with the interaction between their selves and the environment. The three intentionalities more or less explain the intrinsic drivers of the initiative and how the initiative aims at making a difference in its environment. The resulting strategies are not strategies aimed at a specific and well delineated endpoint, but are ways of navigating in a certain direction while retaining the flexibility for change and without a fixed and known endpoint.

	Decoding	Expansion	Contraction	Coding
<i>Interfering for change</i>	Fri og Fro Hallingelille		Fri og Fro	
	Broad Street		<i>City Council Planning</i> Broad Street Retail Birmingham Colmore B.D. South Side Jewellery Quarter	<i>City Center Partn.</i>
	Sjopping Mol EZH	Sjopping Mol <i>Sjopping Mol Mun.</i>	EZH	<i>Cascade Park Mun.</i> <i>Sjopping Mol Mun.</i> <i>Corsinies Mun.</i>
<i>Networking for a fit</i>	Fri og Fro Hallingelille <i>Fri og Fro Mun.</i>	Lange Eng Fri og Fro Hallingelille	Lange Eng Fri og Fro Hallingelille	<i>Lange Eng Mun.</i> <i>Hallingelille Mun.</i>
		<i>City Council Planning</i> Broad Street Retail Birmingham Colmore B.D. South Side Jewellery Quarter	<i>City Council Planning</i> Retail Birmingham Colmore B.D.	
	EZH	Sjopping Mol Cascade Park	Sjopping Mol Cascade Park <i>Cascade Park Mun.</i>	<i>EZH Mun.</i>
<i>Assembling to maintain</i>			Lange Eng Hallingelille Fri og Fro	
	Broad Street <i>City Council Planning</i>	Broad Street Retail Birmingham Colmore B.D. South Side Jewellery Quarter	Broad Street Retail Birmingham Colmore B.D. South Side Jewellery Quarter	<i>City Centre Partn.</i> Broad Street Retail Birmingham Colmore B.D. South Side Jewellery Quarter
			Cascade Park	<i>EZH Mun.</i> <i>Cascade Park Mun.</i>

FIGURE 9.4 Twelve archetypical planning strategies in the cases

Planning strategy as a flat ontology

What the strategies derived from the cases show is that, in principle, there is no difference between professional planners and lay planners, or between civic actors and public actors, when it comes to their planning strategies (apart from a little more presence of public actors in the fields of coding). There are, of course, differences between the perspectives of civic, business, and public actors, as business actors mostly focus on profit-making, public actors mostly focus on being representational, and civic actors mostly focus on specific partnership interests (Boelens, 2011: 557). Another difference is that resource interdependence is more pressing among civic actors, as they often do not possess a significant set of means like public or business actors do (although their resource interdependency has also increased). But when discussing planning strategy as a combination of intentionalities and behavior, there is not a whole lot of difference between lay and professional (Specht, 2012), formal and informal (Portugali, 2011), public and civic (Boelens, 2009). Even though the “assemblage of concern” can differ among actors (this can be an individual, an initiative, a commercial project, a neighborhood or city, or society as a whole), in the end, everyone who plays a proactive role in the creation of assemblages, in turning assemblages into *agencements*, in these processes of becoming, can be regarded as a planner. Civic actors are perhaps an emerging new actor within the field of urban development, but self-organization is not limited to their initiative: Self-organization as ontological quality present in all processes of becoming, in the emergence of new and the maintenance of existing selves.

Therefore, this third conclusion is in line with the flat ontology developed by Latour (2005) and DeLanda (2002). In a flat ontology, there are no transcendent principles or essences, only unique, singular individuals who can differ in spatio-temporal scale but not in ontological status (*ibid.*). This flat ontology is related to, for instance, the radical symmetry that Latour introduces between human and non-human actors. This symmetry, and thus the flat ontology, has been often criticized for ignoring issues like power and representation (Dijstelbloem, 2007). For example, Boelens (2009) argues that, within planning, non-humans cannot act as proactive normative agents the way planners act, and thus that non-humans can only be actors in decision making processes when represented by humans. This criticism is a confirmation rather than a rejection of the flat ontology though: Human and non-human actors are both unique singular individuals with the same ontological status, but with different roles in decision making processes. The same can be argued on the distinction between lay and professional, informal and formal, or civic and public planners. As the last-mentioned are trained and employed to perform their skills, they are presupposed to represent the common interest of all, whereas the first only represent a so-called specific self-interest,

and are presupposed not to have the capacity to overlook that interest. A flat ontology for planning strategy, however, implies a rejection of all such a priori existing scales or hierarchies, and sees organization – and thus scale and hierarchy – as the outcome of interactions between particular, historically locatable entities (DeLanda, 2002). The difference between civic lay and public professional planners is thus not a hierarchy that exists a priori, but a hierarchy that has evolved from the interactions between actors in planning processes and processes of urban development *over time*. Civic and public, lay and professional, informal and formal planners do differ in scale and hierarchy, but as the above overview of ontological archetypical planning strategies shows, they do not differ in ontological status. The way in which civic initiatives – as studied in this thesis – emerge, define their goals, and materialize their intentions toward actual physical interventions in space, does not differ that much from the way in which public authorities plan, or the way in which planning agencies work. Such a flat ontology of planning strategy serves a specific goal: “Action is possible only in a territory that has been opened up, flattened down, and cut down in size in a place where formats, structures, globalization, and totalities circulate inside tiny conduits, and where for each of their applications they need to rely on masses of hidden potentialities” (Latour, 2005: 252). With a flat ontology, dichotomies and paradoxes in planning can be overcome, when one looks solely at the ontological status (intentionality met with behavior) of planning strategy. It now shows not how civic initiatives follow from the planning system a priori or are obstructed by the planning system *per se*, but how the planning system becomes alive and is performed *through* these civic initiatives. Moreover, a flat ontology of planning strategy makes one look at the drivers of behavior (intentionalities) and the behavior itself, and enables planning actors to better relate to other planning actors.

4

CONCLUSION 4: THE ART OF CREATING CONSISTENCY

The role of the professional planner

The flat ontology of planning strategy stresses the importance of seeing planning as performance – a performance that does not differentiate between professional or lay, public or civic, formal or informal actors. This does not mean, however, that professional planners have become obsolete in an age of active citizenship.

The first conclusion does not exclude professional planners from being actors who can create conditions that open up and who can recognize the potentials of opening up. The second conclusion does not exclude professional planners from being actors who can navigate initiatives in their search for the resources necessary to materialize. The third conclusion presented a flat ontology of planning strategy and thus collapsed the distinction between professional, public, or formal planners and lay, civic, and informal planners. However, even this conclusion leaves a role for the professional planner, in the sense that this flat ontology should enable professional planners to empathize with and understand different kinds of behavior, intentionalities, and planning strategies performed by the civic actors he or she encounters. By taking the various archetypical planning strategies into consideration, the professional planner should be able to not only react to the behavior shown in the cases, but also to discern the intentionalities and thus also the psyche of the initiatives, in other words: To recognize the virtual intentions behind the actual behavior. Since the specific point of departure of this thesis was the perspective of civic initiatives, all three conclusions took individual cases as a starting point, and focused on planning strategies developed and applied within and in close interaction with these individual cases. Now, in this fourth and final conclusion, the time has come to transcend this individual level. The fourth conclusion argues that in an age of active citizenship, professional planners should be able to recognize the immanence behind what at first sight appears to be planes of organization, and to see the potential for organization within immanence. In other words, the professional planner should be able to perform the art of creating consistency between various processes of becoming. While developing an argumentation for this role for the professional planner, the fourth and final conclusion answers the overall research question on planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship, and to the second and third objectives concerning the role of professional planners and public authorities in an age of active citizenship.

As said, in this final conclusion, the time has come to transcend the individual case-level and to consider the consequences of the emergence of a multitude of planning actors and initiatives within a certain territorial environment. The second chapter of this thesis elaborated on a territorial approach to self-organization, which considered territorial environments as self-organizing systems based on feedback and feed forward loops. Plans and initiatives taken within such a system, or territorial environment, either stabilize or disrupt the system, and slowly make the system and the many plans and initiatives add up and bend toward each other. A romantic interpretation of this understanding of self-organization enabled researchers to explain the genetic codes behind emerging urban forms and patterns. A baroque interpretation took notice of

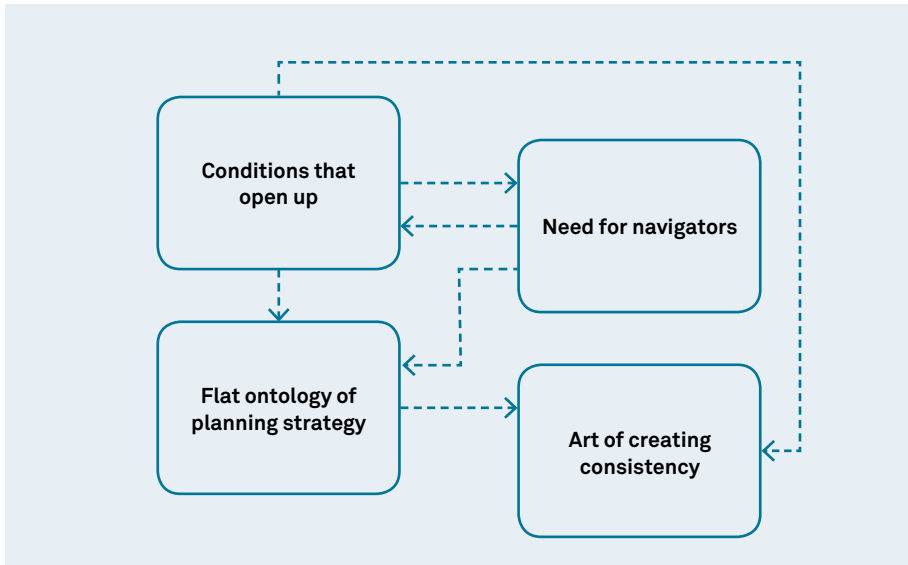


FIGURE 9.5 How the four conclusions rhizomatically interlink

the ever-evolving disorder and increasing complexity, and argued for the use of simulation models to train managers or planners in how to deal with this ever-increasing complexity (see section 2.4). This conclusion now does not propose to return to that territorial understanding of self-organization when speaking of transcending the individual cases. After all, the “feed forward systems” discussed in Chapter 2 keep the distance between societal system and planner intact, as though planning were an external force acting upon that system by introducing new planning policies (Batty, 2013). This view, however, would not enable the planner to move beyond the safe confines of a government-led, disciplinary, and inclusionary planning practice with frameworks and procedures. Instead, this thesis argued that planners should reason from the emerging civic initiatives themselves, following the view that society should be addressing planners instead of planners addressing society (Boelens, 2009: 188-9) and that “each urban agent is a planner – be it a single individual, a firm, or the city’s planning team – and the city comes into being out of the interaction between the many agents *and their plans*.” (Portugali, 2011: 288, original emphasis). This approach to self-organization refers to the idea that various actors plan and take initiatives at the same time, in a distributed fashion, and in networked, open, and dynamic ways. Complexity exists because no single actor can oversee all the dynamics of these self-organizations simultaneously taking place, or predict the starting points for such new ideas, control the dynamics that occur after initiation, or allocate these outcomes to an individual initiating actor, making

spatial developments in principle unpredictable and uncertain (Rauws & De Roo, 2011:272). Various actor-networks interact in space simultaneously, sometimes intensifying and reinforcing one another, sometime obstructing and antagonizing one another, sometimes indifferent and autonomous. Each civic initiative is a trajectory in itself, organized around an attractor or matter of concern, that aims at becoming actualized as a new spatial configuration. But as spaces and places are open and self-organizing actor-networks are open, civic initiatives as trajectories will be crossing the trajectories of other emerging, or more established, assemblages in space. Thus, struggles over meaning and identity of place and space, and even though an emergent actor-network will strive toward new order and closure, the result of self-organization will be an ever-increasing multiplicity of trajectories running through and encountering each other in space.

Researchers and planning professionals are struggling with this complexity, as was problematized in Chapter 1. This is, of course, natural, as it is difficult for any actor to fulfill the seemingly endless and conflicting needs and demands of society, and to deal with the multitude of self-organizing actors in processes of governance and spatial becoming, interferences by external events, unforeseen coincidences, and unexpected changes in what actors do and say (Boons et al. 2009: 249). As argued in Chapter 1, such complexity cannot be managed solely by traditional comprehensive approaches with a focus on command and control, by strategies that build on collaborative and communicative planning approaches (Rauws & De Roo, 2011:272). Some authors, including myself, have argued in the past that this complexity thus reduces the role of professional planners to a spectating and humble activity (e.g. Devisch, 2008; Portugali, 2000; Boonstra, 2010). Now, at the end of this thesis, I argue instead that professional planners *do* have a meaningful and active role in the management of change. Not for the sake of change itself, as transition management and the view on self-organization in systems in phase transition (see section 2.4), but change for a better reciprocal relationship between space and society, such for the sake of society and the promotion of a sustainable development of places (Boelens, 2009; 2013; Van der Stoep, 2014; also see section 3.1). Creating room for civic initiatives does not mean letting go and leaving planning activities to civil society completely. But what to do instead?

Co-evolution needs one self and many selves

What all these self-organizing trajectories have in common, is that they move toward self-desired futures, mutually affecting each other *without losing their selves*. This last remark is important to emphasize, as within all this opening up, navigating, and empathizing with others can become rather footloose and

empty when one loses sight of one's self. Therefore, a strong awareness of the self of a civic initiative is crucial in its process of becoming, even if these selves are normative, situated, contextual, and constructed along the way. A clear direction, but with the flexibility for change and without a fixed endpoint, is of utmost importance for civic initiatives in order to connect, align, and respond at all. But in order to connect, align, and respond, one first needs to know one's own perspective and position, and the frames through which the world is observed. Only then is one able to see others, and only then can the empathy with other planning actors, for which the flat ontology of planning strategy was developed, grow. Frames that follow from this self-consciousness, can give actors clear and stable ambitions, and consistency to their actions, without losing the capacity to affect, to be inspiring, manifold, and flexible (Loepfe 2014: 128; Van der Stoep 2014). This is not only important for civic initiatives, but for everyone who is entangled in the heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming. For the same can be said about professional planners, and planners working on behalf of public government, who also work under conditions of high resource interdependencies and decentralized developments. Also professional "spatial planning itself takes part in an ongoing struggle against those whose 'reading in space' could take priority, and could better be attached to new meaningful interrelations and therefore possible manage identities" (Boelens, 2009: 31). According to Boelens then, spatial planning is highly embedded and relational, and cannot take a general, moral stand on what is right and wrong. Instead, each individual planner has a self, a frame, a vision on how to improve things and goals to achieve, and thus also moral standpoints. But since there are as many planners as there are people who are willing to proactively engage in spatial becoming that affects them, planning also implies *multi*-morality. Awareness of such selves and frames is especially needed in moments of uncertainty, as these selves and frames can provide a feeling of consistency. Without that feeling, "quick closures" become very probable (Loepfe, 2014: 209-210).

And quick closures are not what an age of active citizenship asks for. When closing down the opportunities and thus frustrating the diversity and creativity of civic initiatives by the inclusionary and disciplinary practices that so often prevail in planning, few benefits can be gained from civic initiatives. Instead, an age of active citizenship asks for dynamism, diversity, openness, experiment, flexibility, navigation, etc. An age of active citizenship asks for a baroque harmony, in which different and independent voices are brought together through a web of reciprocal reference, interacting with each other and harmonically interdependent, but never losing one's individuality and independency in rhythm and contour (cf. Kwa 2002). In other words, an age of active citizenship asks for co-evolution, in which various trajectories and their environment are seen as interdependent (Gerrits,

2012), and in which goal dimensions can continuously be changed due to new insights. Co-evolution describes how various systems over a longer time could have a tendency toward closure and collectivization (Loepfe, 2014: 80). Within spatial planning, co-evolution can be understood in two interrelated ways: Spatial co-evolution or institutional co-evolution. The former sees spatial developments as the result of interactions between processes at multiple scales (Rauws & De Roo, 2011:271) at various localities or from various perspectives. Institutional co-evolution addresses how boundary-spanning activities transform existing institutionalized practices, evoke organizational change (Van Meerkerk, 2014: 195), and lead to a mutual adaptation of roles. Spatial co-evolution was visible in, for instance, Birmingham, where spatial interventions triggered the BIDs to propose additional projects, adding on and strengthening spatial developments that were already taking place. In Birmingham, institutional co-evolution was also visible in the reorganization of the City Centre Partnership from a liaison between city council and business community into a facilitating agency working on behalf of the Birmingham BIDs. In the Danish co-housing cases, institutional co-evolution took place when some local authorities translated the experience they had with the co-housing initiatives into new policy for sustainability or policy to attract more co-housing groups. In Almere, such co-evolution took place when the municipality defined new policies and working methods after its encounters with the civic initiatives. Such co-evolution, in which multiple trajectories move toward their self-desired futures, affecting each other without losing their selves, with reflective insight into their own and other's selves, can just happen un- or quasi-intentionally. But it can also be something that is deliberately enhanced, which brings me to the final planning strategy in an age of active citizenship: The art of creating consistency.

The art of creating consistency

Baroque harmony, in which different and independent voices are brought together in reciprocal reference without losing their independency in rhythm and contour, corresponds to the heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming that post-structuralist planning approaches speak of. In these processes, or in this baroque harmony of planning, professional planners are certainly “not the director, nor store manager, let alone an orchestra leader” (cf. Boelens, 2009: 31). Professional planners are just one of the many voices, one of the many performers. The harmony they can create does not follow from disciplinary frameworks or inclusionary procedures, but from their ability to relate, to empathize, to build upon the performances of others (the 12 archetypical planning strategies can be instrumental in this). A professional planning practice that fits an age of active citizenship, can only be achieved through this “the art

of creating consistency.” Consistency not in the actual sense of coherence and sameness in the appearance of the spatial performances planners engage in, nor in the sense of genuine discussion and undistorted consensus, but in a Deleuzian, virtual sense. Consistency in the sense of moving in the same direction, not because frameworks dictate such, but by actively empathizing with the emerging selves, by knowing and supporting their and one’s own intentionality, and by making strategies as open and known as possible. The flat ontology of planning strategy was about recognizing consistency in intentional behavior within an individual initiative. Now the challenge is to recognize consistency, as well as the inconsistencies and potentials for improved consistency in actual urban developments, and to pay attention to the non-intended, non-individual forms of emergent spatial strategies (Loepfe, 2014: 128). To create consistency requires planners who can recognize the potentials of specific and detailed projects of civic initiatives for longer term futures, and who are able to strengthened these initiatives with new and additional specific and detailed plans that move in that same direction. Such planning allows for immediate actions and adaptations of systems, and for the building of robust associations and visions along the way (Balducci et al., 2011: 491 in reaction to Boelens, 2010). To achieve such a planning, the proposition is to scan the various becoming selves and explore what potentials there are for consistency between them. This consistency can be created by affecting the internal dynamics of self-organization without controlling the behavior of individual citizens or their interactions, or imposing a blueprint for the project (Rauws, 2015). And by becoming multiple others, various points of references can be found that can be connected to the emerging world around the initiative, and to which professional planners can also add new projects and ideas. This opens up a perspective to multiple trajectories simultaneously planning in the same spaces, including civic initiatives, and accounts for both stability and the potential for dynamic change (Loepfe 2014: 89, Loepfe & Van Wezemaal, forthcoming). Creating these consistencies should then be a task for professional planners working on behalf of civic initiatives and public authorities. All of them can invest in relating civic initiatives and other spatial interventions to each other, and considering measures to increase the robustness, resilience, and sustainability of the outcomes of civic initiatives, how civic, public, and private interventions in space can add up to each other, and what areas could benefit from additional impulses for and by civic initiatives.

The first move for the professional planner, then, is to recognize both potential and emerging consistencies and inconsistencies. This relates to the analytical side of planning, the large-scale coordination of details – planning and policy-level thinking, above and beyond the details of the task itself (Taylor, 1976; Mintzberg, 1994). The ultimate goal of creating consistency for professional

planners is, of course, the development of high spatial quality, sustainable places, and resilient and robust cities. Professional planners could, for instance, be concerned about the influence that initiatives have on socially and environmentally “just” form, and the potential consequences of certain interventions for different actants (Hillier, 2011). They could also be concerned about inconsistencies that emerge out of a fragmented development within a certain territorial environment, due to the various autonomous drivers affecting areas (Rauws & De Roo, 2011: 280-1, see also Rauws & Van Dijk, 2013). The second move is to actually act upon the potentials for consistency. Connect fragmented developments and turn them into clustered patterns in order to make the area benefit from these drivers (Rauws & De Roo, 2011: 280-1, see also Rauws & Van Dijk, 2013). Suggest alternative ways of trying to activate other actors that can add to the consistency in which a certain area is moving (cf. Van Wezemaal, 2012; Boelens, 2009). This view relates more to the strategy making and synergy creating aspect of spatial planning (cf. Mintzberg, 1994). The notion of strategic navigation introduced in conclusion 2, can be instrumental in this. But now navigation not just between a particular initiative and its particular environment, but between the one and the many, between the actual and the virtual. Navigation as the art of finding viable paths into the future, negotiating unknown terrain and unprecedented complexity, creating links between places that do not belong to the same world.

In search of a new role for professional planners, working either on behalf of the government serving public, societal, or common interests, or on behalf of civic initiatives serving specific interests, I did not look for new systems of urban governance or governance arrangements. It was the intention not to step into the trap of promoting the transfer of state domains to civil society, while giving governments the instruments to directly or indirectly retain their control, with all the dangers of democratic deficits and a loss of democratic credentials (Swyngedouw, 2005; Van Meerkerk, 2014). Instead, I looked for a new practice, a practice in which the trajectories of all those involved in the heterogeneous processes of spatial becomings can evolve in synergy and consistency with each other. A planning practice in which civic initiatives can thrive, and that enables society to fully enjoy the benefits of planning in an age of active citizenship. This is planning “from and with, instead of against, differences, fragmentations, uncertainties, complexity [...], constitutionally interrelated, plural, heterogeneous and always ‘becoming’, instead of pre-determined, structured and/or locked into itself” (Boelens, 2009: 555).

5

THE GREAT BEYOND: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS AND A FLIGHT FORWARD

It's the performance that matters!

These four conclusions have been a journey away from and back again to professional planning, starting with conditions that open up the possibilities for civic planners to take initiatives for urban development. Next, the activity of navigation was undertaken by both professional public planners and the planners of civic initiatives, which suggested a certain symmetry between the two worlds. The third conclusion went even further by radically stating that there is no difference between planners, as planning strategies do not differentiate ontologically among actors. Then the fourth conclusion stepped back again into professional planning by saying that despite all this symmetry and ontological flatness, something more than just initiating projects can be expected from those who were professionally trained as planners by following a planning curriculum and receiving wages for performing planning activities on behalf of others (regardless of whether these “others” are civic or public actors). This brought in the last, and final, planning strategy for an age of active citizenship, namely the art of creating consistency. The three preceding conclusions are in a way instrumental to this last and final strategy. By opening the spectrum for many others, navigating between these emerging others, and being able to empathize with the behaviors and strategies of these many others, potentials for consistency can be recognized and acted upon.

It is this “acting upon” that has been the red line, the consistency within this thesis. The first chapter started with policy documents speaking sanguinely of active citizenship – but remaining rather vague about how this active citizenship would affect existing practices and what strategies would be effective in meeting the subsequent emerging civic initiatives. The empirical chapters showed how conditions that are deliberately set up to stimulate active citizenship, are by no means the only conditions that actually gave rise to civic initiatives. Therefore, around the topic of active citizenship, one could say that there is often a discrepancy between what is virtually said and intended, and what is actually done and performed. The perspective I chose in this thesis, enabled me to overcome this discrepancy by starting with the actual interventions and performances of civic initiatives – analyzing them from the viewpoint of self-organization as the emergence of networks/assemblages, and only in hindsight looking at the intentionalities, the strategies developed and applied,

and the contexts that came alive within the cases. What truly matters in an age of active citizenship, is what interventions are undertaken and whether these can grow into consistency with other interventions undertaken by (many) others. This in my view is the meaning of post-structuralism: It is not about creating a structure that represents, explains, or structures reality (or making plans that are the true, best, and only ones possible), but about creating structures (or initiatives) that “make sense,” that perform, and are able to actualize new realities. The theoretical framework presented in Chapter 4 should also be seen in this light. And from that perspective, it would be interesting to learn whether the framework of self-organized behavior can also be used proactively within still becoming initiatives. That the framework has performed as a means for tracing, has been proven in the empirical chapters. But whether it can also be useful for the exploration of future possibilities and trajectories (mapping), the experimentation with new connections by asking what-if questions (diagramming), and the building of the agency that is needed for transformation (machining) (Loepfe 2014: 69; Hillier, 2011), still has to be explored.

Criticism and recommendations for further research

Now, at the end of this thesis, more issues come to mind that were not taken up during the research, but that could be of great interest in a further exploration of planning strategies in an age of active citizenship.

When I started this research project in 2008, I was driven by an almost naive enthusiasm about what can be achieved when citizens are in the lead. Back in 2008, this was still a niche within planning research and practice, one that I felt needed to become more visible. Now, in 2015, civic initiatives are becoming a common practice. However, little is known about the large-scale and long-term effects of more civic initiatives in urban development. What issues are overlooked, what rebound effects are created? And how big is the movement? How many places and people are engaged in it? Now, having delved deeply into the ontological understanding of what these initiatives are and creating a suitable vocabulary to address them, I strongly recommend some critical quantitative and qualitative research on the size and effects of civic initiatives. Then, a pressing and socially very relevant question can be addressed concerning potential forms of exclusion (Warren, 2009), and whether public authorities and planners should take action to counter any potential dangers (Van Meerkerk, 2014: 198). Also other questions about effects can be asked, for instance, what the contribution of active citizenship is to grand societal challenges such as climate adaptation, economic development, or energy transition.

A second potential for further research lies within the capacities of those involved in or working with civic initiatives, and the potentials of capacity building. This last chapter already hinted in the direction of planning as a mental, or perhaps even a socio-psychological, activity that can be performed by every individual – whether or not trained as a professional (spatial) planner. In that line, it would be interesting to know more about the capacities one needs in order to become an effective planner. Van Meerkerk (2014) pinpoints some characteristics of boundary spanners (active listeners, entrepreneurs, and relationship builders), but states that more knowledge of the psychological characteristics could be developed. Interesting research in this line is being conducted by Bakker and José Kerstholt (M.H. Bakker et al., 2013). Also the concepts of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; 1982), the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1999), and socio-psychological influence techniques could be of use. Insights developed in these fields can also be used to develop and build capacities among lay, civic, and informal planners, in order to increase the number of civic initiatives and unleash an age of active citizenship.

A third possible area of future research lies within knowledge exchange and learning processes. Even if there is an “age of active citizenship,” individual initiatives often stay within their niches; they are often small, local, specific, and contextual. That makes it difficult to gain knowledge and experience of these initiatives and to scale them up toward, for instance, national level policy, or new routines and practices within local contexts. What the results of this thesis have shown, is that public authorities are asked to simultaneously perform multiple roles within the context of active citizenship: They have to take responsibility for decoding from undesired situations, providing security through offering and providing codes, navigating through expansion and contraction to realize partnerships, and finding new routines and ways of working. They will have to navigate through uncertainty and opportunity, and act as the disciplinary government at the same time. This means that public authorities can by no means lean back passively. On the contrary, active citizenship demands an active attitude on the part of public authorities, for which they are often not yet equipped (Specht, 2012). Some recent experiments within Dutch practice seem to be promising, though. For example, organic area development, an incremental urban development through a composition of a variety of local initiatives; “organic organizations,” an organizational concept that enlarges the room for maneuver within municipal organizations for their navigators; and area-based approaches for various municipal policy domains as a stimulus to improve the existing partnerships between the municipality and active citizens. Within all these new concepts or working methods, learning processes in which experiences are monitored, evaluated, and exchanged will remain crucial.

I started this thesis by stating that things have not become simple, even though word about civic initiatives had gotten round. Now, having reflected on both a theory of processes of becoming and self-organization, empirical research on civic initiatives, and an operationalization of planning strategies that fit an age of active citizenship, I dare to say that complexity can indeed only increase. I added layer to layer, trajectory to trajectory, notion to notion, conclusion to conclusion, all rhizomatically interlinked and performed through one another. This complexity should not, however, prevent anyone from taking an active part within the heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming of our contemporary environments and society. Because in an age of active citizenship, it all comes down to the actual performance. Civic initiatives need to be taken. They need to be acted upon. They just need to be done.

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21-03-2011 at 14.00
- Interview with Kommune Odsherred, 2011
Villum Sejersen – Municipality of Odsherred
22-03-2011 at 14.00
- Interview with Kommune Ringsted, 2013
Olav Scheunemann – Municipality of Ringsted
30-06-2014 at 20.00
- Interview with Residents FF, 2011
Mette Petersen and Anders Lauritsen – residents of Fri og Fro
22-03-2011 at 18.00
- Interview with Resident A HL, 2013
Rita Agesen – resident of Hallingelille, senior bofælleskab
16-05-2013 at 16.00
- Interview with Resident B HL, 2013
Camilla Nielsen-Englyst – resident of Hallingelille
16-05-2013 at 20.00
- Interview with Resident LE, 2011
Sanne Fraas – Resident of Lange Eng
21-03-2011 at 17.00

Birmingham

- Interview BS BID, 2010
Mike Olley – Broad Street Business Improvement District Manager
04-02-2010 at 11.00
- Interview BS BID, 2013
Mike Olley – Broad Street Business Improvement District Manager
09-04-2013 at 13.00

- Interview BS NF, 2013
John McDermott – City Centre Neighbourhood Forum, Broad Street BID Board
09-04-2013 at 9.30
- Interview CBD, 2010
Richard Brennan – Colmore Business District Board
03-03-2010 at 13.00
- Interview CBD, 2013
Michelle Wilby and Mike Mounfield – Colmore Business District Management Office
08-04-2013 at 11.00
- Interview CC, 2013
Gary Woodward and Marc Gamble – Birmingham City Council Planning and Regeneration Office
10-04-2013 at 16.00
- Interview CCP, 2010
Julie Moss – City Centre Partnership and Retail Birmingham
16-03-2010 at 10.00
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Julie Moss – City Center Partnership
10-04-2013 at 14.00
- Interview JQ NF, 2013
Mike Mounfield – Jewellery Quarter Neighborhood Forum, Jewellery Quarter Development Trust, Jewellery Quarter BID
09-04-2013 at 20:35
- Interview RB BID, 2013
Jonathan Cheetham – Pallasade Shopping Center, Retail Birmingham BID Board
10-04-2013 at 10.00
- Interview SS BID, 2010
Stuart Griffiths – South Side BID initiative and Hippodrome
16-03-2010 at 17:00

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Caroline Davis – Birmingham Hippodrome, South Side BID
08-04-2013 at 15.00

Almere

- Interview with 3CPO, 2013
Alex van Oogen, 3CPO and resident Villa Corsini
28-05-2013 at 10.00
- Interview with EZH, 2013
Ton Huijzer – Initiator EZH
13 mei 2013 at 10.00
- Interview with Gemeente Almere A, 2013
Frank Kramer and Astrid Meeuwsen – Department of Housing, Municipality of Almere
29-05-2013 at 13.00
- Interview with Gemeente Almere B, 2013
Janica Kleiman – Department of Culture, Municipality of Almere
13-06-2013 at 11.00
- Interview with Gemeente Almere C, 2013
Kirsten de Wit – Department of Maintenance, Municipality of Almere
06-06-2013 at 10.00
- Interview with Gemeente Almere D, 2013
Anja de Graaff – Area Manager Almere Poort, Municipality of Almere
29-05-2013 at 11.30
- Interview with SEV, 2013
Hanneke Schreuders – SEV, Experimentenprogramma Zelforganisatie in New Towns
05-06-2013 at 16.00
- Interview with SM, 2013
Bastiaan Gietema – Initiator City Sjopping Mol
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Probably like many other PhD candidates, I have often found myself saying the end was only a few small steps away. But today, at the very moment of finalizing this doctoral thesis, I all the more realize there will always be new steps to take. So perhaps a doctoral thesis is not so much an end point, but rather one of many steps on an challenging and exciting academic journey. And just as it is hard to delineate the end of such a journey, it is difficult to delineate a beginning. It has been, over the years, a hybrid journey, with many preludes, undertaken in a complex and dynamic environment full of unexpected encounters.

I have since long been fascinated by spatial developments that emerged outside of formal planning procedures. One prelude to this thesis took place in 1997, when as a 16 year old I closely followed the evacuation of Ruigoord, a nature area and artist community threatened by a new dock of the Amsterdam harbor. After these events, I promised myself that once I would find an argumentation in favor of such spontaneously emerged spatial developments. Other preludes happened at Delft University of Technology. In 1999, my first teacher in architecture handed me a book about “architecture without architects.” On a late winter night in 2002, I promised my two co-editors of the magazine Atlantis that I would once write about the subject. In 2005, my master thesis delivered the argumentation for cultural uses in the Harbor Area of Amsterdam, thanks among others to the supervision of Luuk Boelens. But theoretical conceptualization was still ahead. The final prelude to this doctoral thesis took place in 2007, when as an employee at Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research TNO, I started to search for more scientific body to my personal vision on spatial planning. A visit to Berlin that year opened my eyes again to the promise of informal urban developments for innovations in spatial planning.

From that moment on, I started a personal research project on this subject. When I ran into Luuk Boelens again at the train station of Rotterdam, this project “accidentally” transformed into a PhD proposal. At first, I worked on the project almost secretly at home. After some time, TNO developed an interest in what I was doing and supported me to visit my first international conference in Chicago, organized by AESOP-ACSP in 2008. It was recognition within the institute allowing me to work on the research for one day a week in various knowledge projects. In 2011, I was lucky to be included in the research program Knowledge for Climate – allowing me to work on the research for two continuous years for two days a week. I would especially like to thank Tejo Spit for this. In those years, I was also able to align my case study research with the master program of Utrecht University in research journeys to the United Kingdom (2010) and Denmark (2011). Moreover,

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inspired me, provoked me, made me think beyond my own mind. We collaborated in numerous ways: he supervised my master thesis, we lectured side by side and worked and researched together on many collaborate projects. I hope there will be many more collaborations and exhilarating discussions to come.

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Will there ever be an end to an academic journey? I certainly hope there isn't.

About the author



Beitske Boonstra (1981) works as research scientist TNO Strategy&Policy for Environmental Planning. She holds a Master degree in Urbanism (Delft University of Technology) (2005) and defends her PhD in Urban and Regional Planning (Utrecht University) in 2015. At TNO, where she works since 2006, her research projects are positioned on the crossovers between spatial planning, economic development, public administration, new technologies and process innovation. Her research is conducted under commissioning of

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Work experience

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Research Scientist – TNO, the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, The Netherlands.

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President of Polis, Platform for Urbanism – Study Association for Urbanism

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Planning Strategies in an Age of Active Citizenship

Civic initiatives in spatial development are on the rise. They emerge from civil society spontaneously and are unpredictable, dynamic, and multiplicit. Therefore, they are often at odds with the inclusionary and disciplinary confines of participatory planning and existing planning frameworks. Planning strategies that answer to the dynamics of civic initiatives, meeting the complexity of an age of active citizenship, have so far been seriously underdeveloped. Based on empirical studies of civic initiatives in Denmark, the Netherlands and England, and a theoretical hybrid of complexity theory (self-organization), actor-network theory (translation), and assemblage theory (individuation), this book argues toward a spatial planning that does fit the age of active citizenship. A spatial planning that focusses on conditions that open up, on navigation, and on creating consistency between a redundancy of spatial initiatives. And most importantly, the book argues toward a flat ontology of planning, in which there are no a priori differences between the intentions and performed behavior of planning actors – including citizens, entrepreneurs, governments, and many others.



Beitske Boonstra works as research scientist at TNO Strategy & Policy for Environmental Planning. She holds a Master degree in Urbanism (Delft University of Technology) (2005) and defends her PhD in Urban and Regional Planning (Utrecht University) in 2015. At TNO her research projects are positioned on the crossovers between spatial planning, economic development, public administration, new technologies and process innovation. She works under commission of local, provincial and national governments, and she is participant and initiator of national and international research consortia. Beitske is frequent speaker on conferences and (guest) lecturer at various Dutch universities.